

Draft Environmental Assessment
Phoebe Sumter Medical Center
Hospital Relocation Project
Americus, Sumter County, Georgia
FEMA-1686-DR-GA, PW No. 193
September 2009

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region IV
Atlanta, Georgia



FEMA

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ABFE	advisory base flood elevation
ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ACM	asbestos containing materials
AEC	Americus Engineering and Construction
AG	Georgia State Attorney General
amsl	above mean sea level
APE	Area of Potential Effect
Authority	Americus and Sumter County Hospital Authority
BFE	Base Flood Elevation
BMP	Best Management Practice
CAA	Clean Air Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CO	carbon monoxide
CWA	Clean Water Act
DAH	Georgia Department of Archives and History
dB	decibel
DEQ	Georgia Department of Environmental Quality
DFIRM	Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level
DNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
DOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
EA	Environmental Assessment
EO	Presidential Executive Order
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
EPD	Environmental Protection Division (division of DNR)
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standard (G/NGO identification code)
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
GASF	Georgia Archaeological Site File
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
GSU	Georgia State University
GSWSU	Georgia Southwestern State University
Healthplex	SRH Hospital Annex destroyed replaced with SHR East facilities
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
mph	miles per hour
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NADB	National Archaeological Database
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

Acronyms and Abbreviations (Continued)

NESHAP	National Emission Standards of Hazardous Air Pollutants
NFRAP	No Further Remedial Action Planned List (related to CERCLIS)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO ₂	nitrogen dioxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRIS	National Register Information System
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
O ₃	ozone
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
PM ₁₀	particulate matter less than 10 microns
PM _{2.5}	particulate matter less than 2.5 microns
PPHS	Phoebe Putney Health System, Inc.
PPMH	Phoebe Putnam Memorial Hospital
PSMC	Phoebe Sumter Medical Center
PW	Project Worksheet
PWD	Public Works Department of the City of Americus, Georgia
REC	recognized environmental condition
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
SPLOST	Special Local Options Sales Tax
SRH East	Temporary Hospital on site of former SRH “Healthplex” facility
SRH	Sumter Regional Hospital
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCB	U.S. Census Bureau
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
WSS	Web Soil Survey – USDA NRCS web site

1.0 Introduction

The City of Americus (City) is the county seat of Sumter County, in southwest Georgia (Fig. 1-1). On March 1, 2007 a tornado destroyed Sumter Regional Hospital (SRH) and its annex “Healthplex” building, both on the city’s east side. By April 2008 a temporary hospital, SRH East, was built and began operations at the former Healthplex building site. A new, smaller replacement hospital facility, Phoebe Sumter Medical Center (PSMC), is planned to be built on the city’s west side. Fig. 1-2 shows the three properties’ locations.

Because the replacement hospital is to be relocated to a new site, federal and FEMA policies define this proposed project as an “improved project”. Thus, the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and related federal Public Laws, Presidential Executive Orders, and agency regulations require FEMA to evaluate the proposed project’s likely affects on the “human environment”. This Draft Environmental Assessment Report (DEA) was prepared to comply with NEPA and related laws, orders, and regulations.

The three properties are identified as follows and described more fully within this EA (Fig. 1-2).

Phoebe Sumter Medical Center (PSMC) proposed “New Hospital” site

Sumter Regional Hospital (SRH) destroyed “Former Hospital” site

Temporary Hospital (SRH East) replaced destroyed “SRH Healthplex” annex site

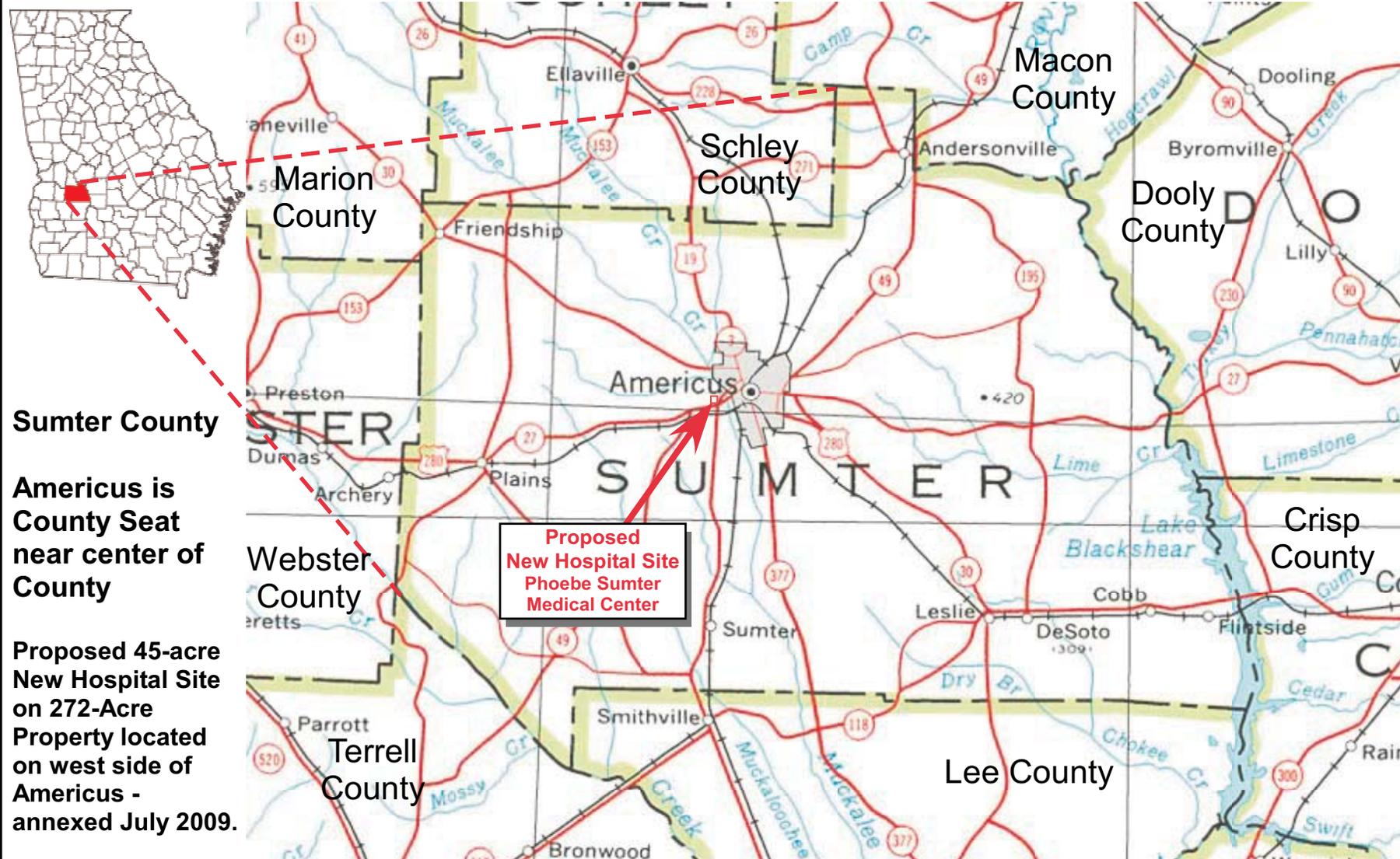
Since this disaster many local relationships to the hospital changed or evolved. The present status and future consequences of developments for the 76-bed New Hospital site for PSMC and 143-bed SRH Former Hospital site are the primary properties of concern in this EA.

1.1 Project Setting and Background

Sumter Regional Hospital (SRH), started in 1908 as an 8-bed hospital, grew by 2007 to a 143-bed acute care nonprofit facility, located in Americus, Sumter County, Georgia and owned by the Americus and Sumter County Hospital Authority (Authority). The Authority, incorporated in 1949, is also known as the Sumter Regional Hospital, a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) with a Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) No. of 261-UJ4LD-00. The Authority has nine appointed board members: the Sumter County Commissioners appoint five members, and the City Council appoints four members. In 1991, the Authority leased Hospital management to a nonprofit company, Sumter Regional Hospital, Inc. (SRH Management Company). SRH Management Co. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of a nonprofit company, Southwest Georgia Healthcare Resources, Inc. The Hospital’s service area is primarily Sumter County, but also 10 other local counties: Dooly, Schley, Macon, Lee, Marion, Taylor, Crisp, Stewart, Webster and Worth Counties. The Authority terminated SRH Management’s lease as of July 1, 2009.

Figure 1-1: Vicinity Map

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Sumter County

Americus is County Seat near center of County

Proposed 45-acre New Hospital Site on 272-Acre Property located on west side of Americus - annexed July 2009.

**Proposed New Hospital Site
Phoebe Sumter Medical Center**

Source: Georgia DOT 2001 County Road Map

To - Albany, Georgia

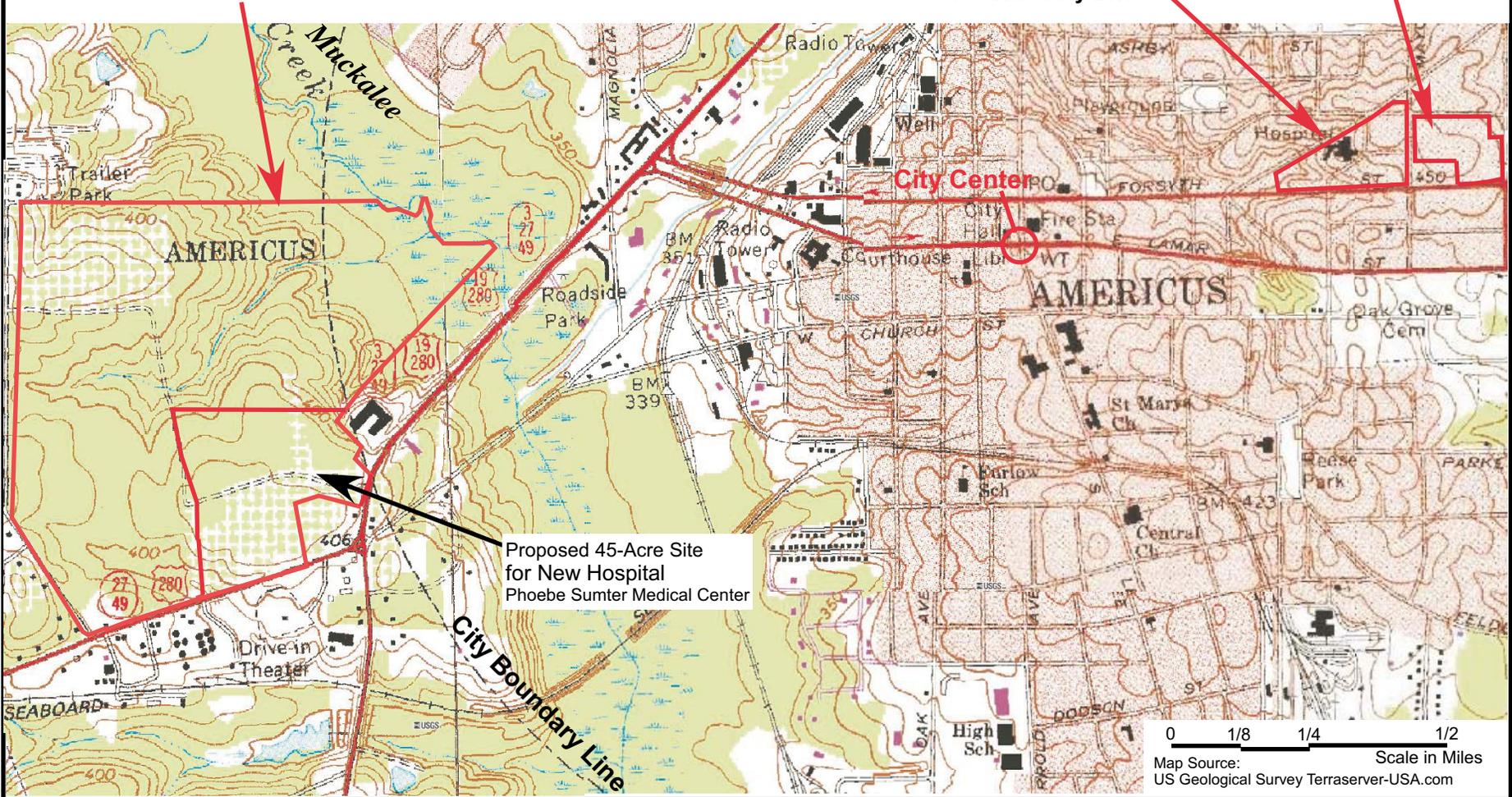
Figure 1-2: Properties Map - Former Hospital Site, 272-Acre Property & Proposed New Hospital Site

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Newly-Purchased 272-Acre Farmland Property
 located 1.3 miles west of Americus City Center -
45 Acre Site for New Hospital (south-center area)
 City annexed & rezoned July 2009 for hospital land use.
 At intersection of U.S. Highways 19 and 280 and county routes

Former-Destroyed Sumter Regional Hospital (SRH) Site on 12.5-Acre Site located 0.6 mile east of Americus city center
 100 Wheatley Drive

Temporary Hospital (SRH East) - Formerly "Hospital HealthPlex" Facilities
 1048 E. Forsyth Street



On March 1, 2007, the Hospital and its annex (Healthplex) building were severely damaged by a tornado that became part of a presidentially-declared disaster area, DR-1686-GA. Thus, the Hospital became eligible for disaster relief funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA).

Hospital operations were re-located to temporary facilities; FEMA-loaned metal frame structures set essentially on the footprint of the destroyed Healthplex building. The temporary Hospital opened on April 1, 2008 and is known as Sumter Regional Hospital East (SRH East). SRH East restored core medical, surgical, and labor and delivery services after a 13-month break. SRH East has medical, surgical, pediatric, and intensive care services in addition to emergency, ancillary inpatient, and outpatient services on a 24-hour basis. During the 13 months between the tornado and SRH East's opening, local surgeons and other physicians had no work facilities in the City. Fourteen physicians relocated to other communities or closed their practices (AG, 2009). This depleted the Hospital's available funds and the changed the area's classification to "medically unserved" (AG, 2009).

In addition to the Hospital, the Authority also owns a medical office building, certain physician practices, and other SRH-related assets (collectively "related assets"). The Authority, as Lessor, began on July 1, 2009 a 40-year lease of the Authority Hospital and related assets to a newly-created entity, Phoebe Sumter Medical Center, Inc. (PSMC or Lessee) in Americus, Georgia. PSMC is a newly-formed Georgia nonprofit corporation and a wholly-owned subsidiary of Phoebe Putney Health System, Inc., in Albany, Georgia.

The Authority and SRH's original goal was to rebuild the hospital facilities and functions on their own, to remain independent, and to ensure continuation of the commitment to provide charity and indigent care to that large part of the service area's population. The disaster damages to the hospital facilities and loss of supporting professional services put a severe drain on the Authority's finances. Although hospital rebuilding funds were due from insurance proceeds, and likely from FEMA and GEMA funding, the Authority did not have sufficient funds available to complete the replacement hospital construction.

The Authority then sought suitable candidates to help finance and manage the rebuilding and recovery of the hospital facilities and professional services. The Authority selected Phoebe Putney Health System (PPHS) for the Hospital's long term viability.

The transaction consisted of the following agreements: (1) a 40-year lease that includes the temporary SRH East facility and the replacement Hospital; (2) Core Services Agreement; (3) Hospital Construction Agreement; (4) Loss Minimization Plan; and (5) Transition Agreement (collectively, "Proposed Lease"). Hospital assets in the Proposed Lease transaction include the Hospital, a health clinic, certain medical office buildings and other assets. PPHS created a nonprofit wholly-owned subsidiary, PSMC, as Lessee. In the Proposed Lease, PPHS guarantees the financial obligations and commitments of PSMC, the Lessee (Authority, 2009).

The Proposed Lease provides that PSMC will assume and pay the Hospital's current operating losses and indigent and charity care for Sumter County residents. PSMC also committed to rebuilding the Sumter County physician community. The Authority will retain legal title to the Hospital and to all leased property.

1.1.1 Former Sumter Regional Hospital Site

The Former Sumter Regional Hospital site is about 0.6 miles east of the city center and included the destroyed SRH hospital and SRH Healthplex buildings. The interim/temporary hospital (SRH East) facilities were set on the Healthplex building footprint. It is bounded by residential properties to the west and north, and commercial properties to the south and east, that developed during the last 50 or so years (Fig. 1-3).

Former Sumter Regional Hospital Site

The former SRH site, at 100 Wheatley Drive, is a triangular 12.5-acre property comprised of three lots (Fig. 1-3). It is bounded by East Forsyth Street on the south, a residential lot on the west, Oglethorpe Street on the northwest, East Jefferson Street on the north, and North Mayo Street on the east. This site was used for medical services from 1953 until the March 1, 2007 tornado disaster. The former SRH site plan shows the last major building addition in 1997 (Fig. 1-4).

The present site use includes several modular office units on the site's northeast corner, used by SRH East staff. Much of the Former Hospital parking lot pavement surface remains essentially intact. Since March 1, 2007, the Former Hospital building was demolished, the site cleared and graded close to the original ground surface elevation, with about 20,000 cubic yards of crushed concrete debris and gravel in two piles remaining near the middle of the site.

Former SRH Healthplex & Present SRH East Site

The former SRH Healthplex site, at 1048 East Forsyth Street, is an irregularly rectangular 9-acre lot east of and adjacent to the destroyed SRH site. It is on a commercial block bounded by East Forsyth Street on the south, North Mayo Street on the west, East Jefferson Street on the north, and North Hudson Street on the east. A few small non-hospital commercial buildings/lots are at the southwest and northeast corners of this block.

Until the replacement hospital is built and operational in 2011, the SRH East site's 1048 East Forsyth Street, Americus, Georgia address will be PSMC's mailing and operational address. SRH East site services and functions will be transferred to PSMC New Hospital site and unused infrastructure and facilities will be sold or returned to FEMA.

1.1.2 Phoebe Sumter Medical Center Proposed New Hospital Site

Phoebe Putnam Health System recently purchased a 272-acres property 1.3 miles west of the city center (Fig. 1-5). The proposed PSMC New Hospital site is 45 acres of former farmland

Figure 1-3: Topographic Map & Aerial Photo of Sumter Regional Hospital (SRH) Former Hospital Site

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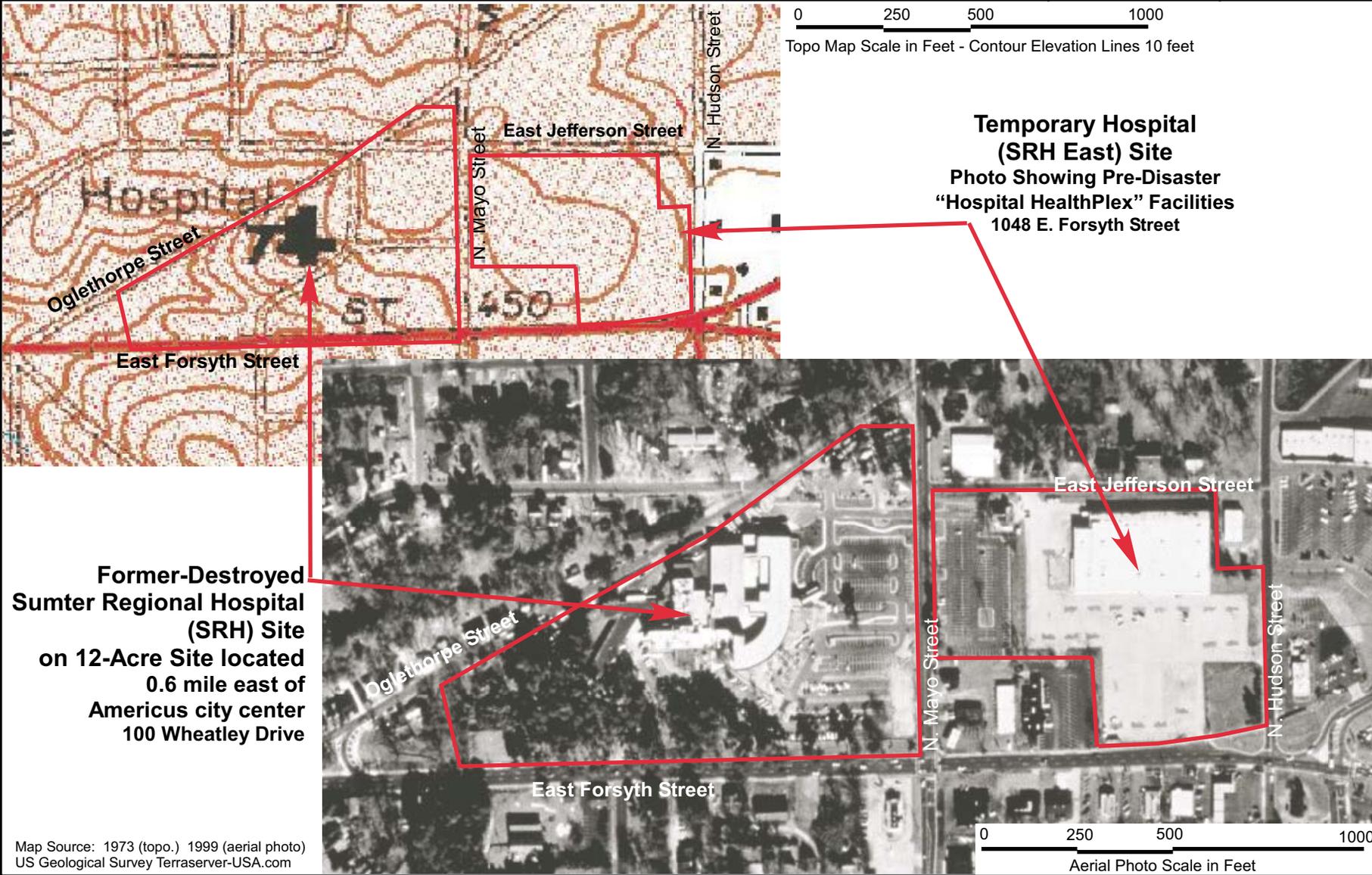


Figure 1-4: Sumter Regional Hospital Former Hospital Site Plan

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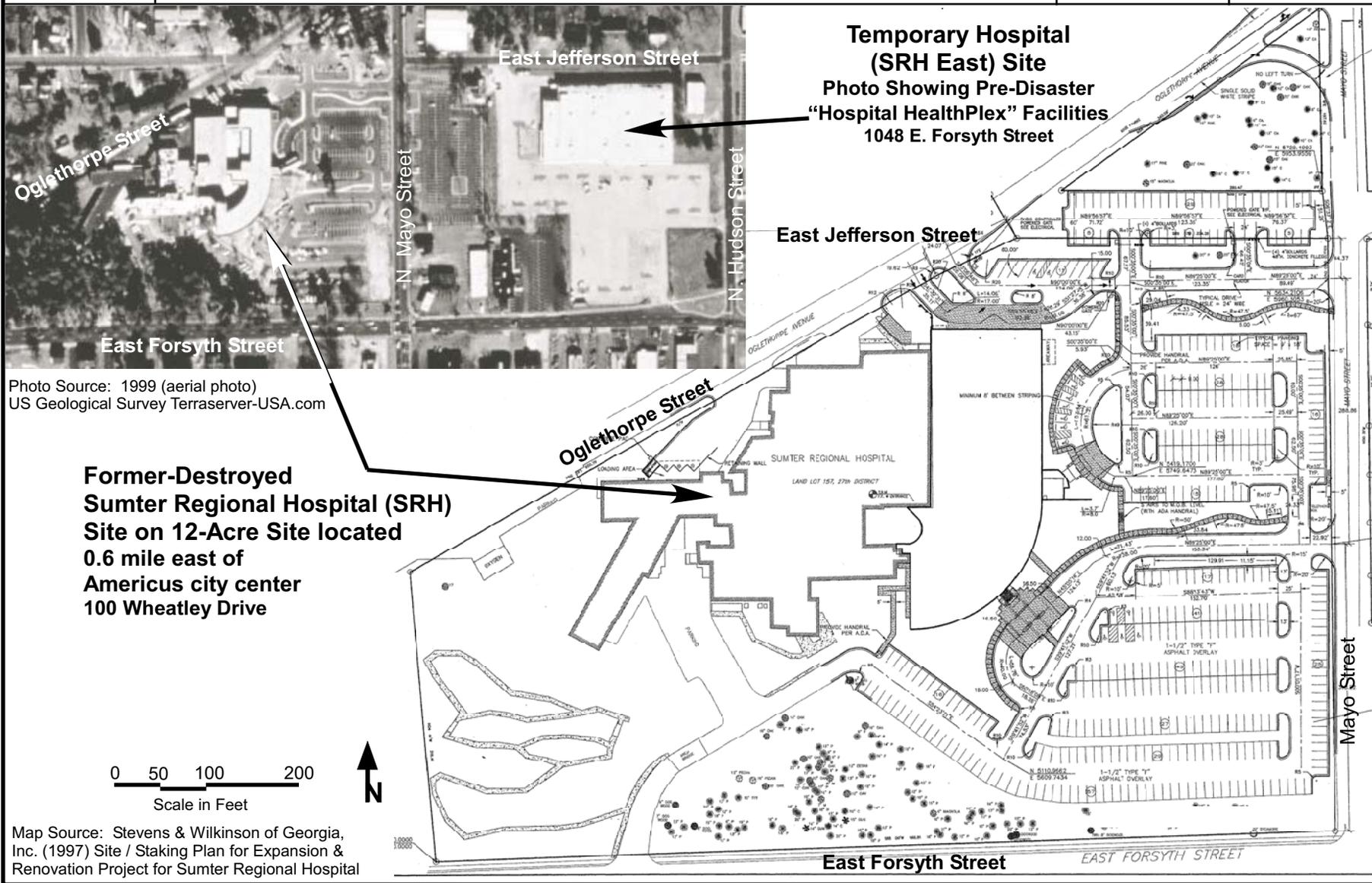


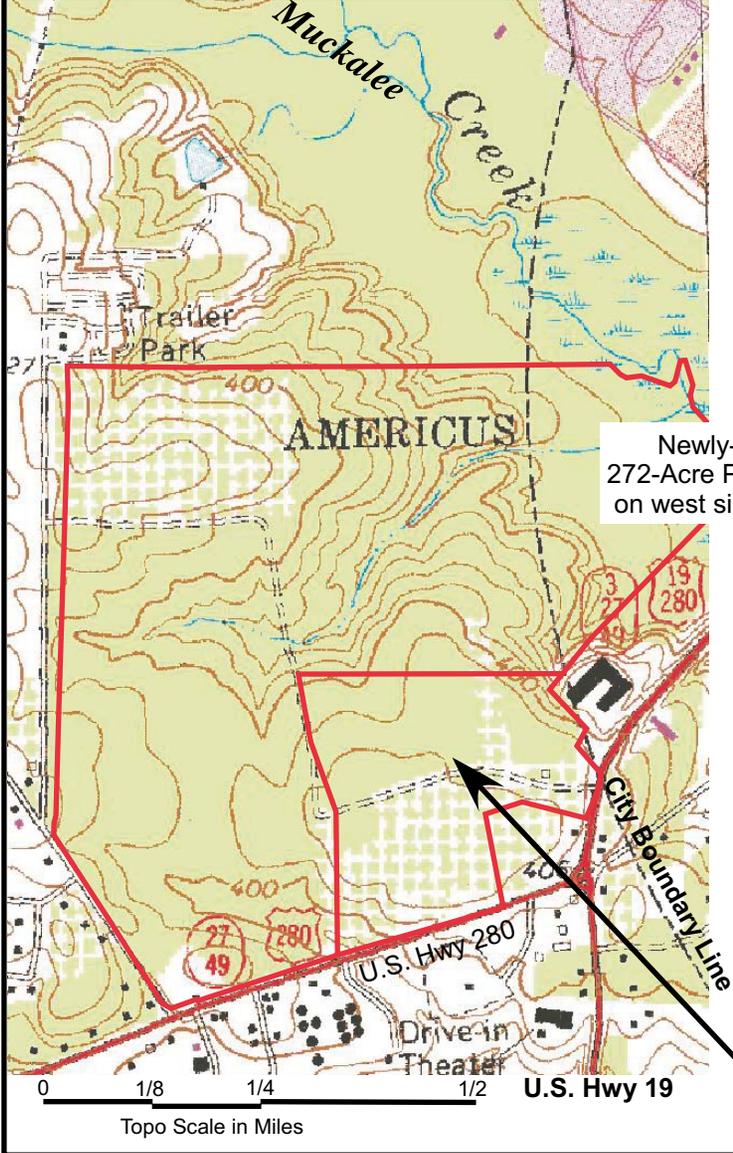
Photo Source: 1999 (aerial photo)
US Geological Survey Terraserver-USA.com

0 50 100 200
Scale in Feet



Figure 1-5: Topographic Map & Aerial Photo - 272-Acre Property & Proposed New Hospital Site

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Newly-Purchased
272-Acre Property located
on west side of Americus



Proposed 45-Acre Site for New Hospital
Phoebe Sumter Medical Center

Map Source: 1973 (topo.) 1999 (aerial photo)
US Geological Survey Terraserver-USA.com

on the south-center area of the 272-acre property (Fig. 1-6). The City annexed the 45 acres and rezoned it, from (C-2: Commercial Overlay Zone) uses to hospital (I-N: Institutional Zone) use, in July 2009.

The 272-acre property, including the new Hospital site, is bordered to the south by US Highway (US) 280, to the east by US19, and to the west by McMath Mill Road and Odom Road. The site is located in Land Lots 153, 154, 177, and 178 in the 27th Land District of Sumter County. The property is designated as Tax Parcel No. 2702 178 1, according to the Americus/Sumter County GIS documents. The parcel is about 272.5 acres; about 213 acres are developable. About 59.5 acres of wetlands are in the 272-acre property's northeast quadrant, limiting the property's total buildable area (TTL, 2009). The 272-acre property, 45-acre new Hospital site plans, parcel boundaries, and wetlands area are in Fig. 1-6.

The proposed main 4-story hospital building would be in the new Hospital site's property's north-central area, along with three nearby buildings on the south, for Womens, Oncology, and Wellness activities (Fig. 1-7, enlargement of site plans). The main entrance would be on the south from US280, and a secondary entrance would be off US19 on the east.

Bounding latitude and longitude coordinates for the 272-acre property are:

Southwest Corner: 32.0626 North, -84.2634 East
Northeast Corner: 32.0736 North, -84-2481 East

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment report was completed for the 272-acre property January, 2009 (TTL, 2009c). An aerial photo in that report shows seven areas across the property (Fig. 1-8). Six geotechnical borings were drilled to 20 feet below ground surface for this site assessment (TTL, 2009b).

The 272-acre property generally consists of heavily wooded areas (active farmlands in early 1900s), former pecan orchards, two utility easements, cleared trails, low lying areas with one significant intermittent stream and the Muckalee Creek floodplain. A private petroleum pipeline easement crosses the site from north to south, and a City of Americus sewer and water, power and natural gas easement crosses the site from west to east. A cellular telephone tower is in the outparcel at the property's southeastern corner. The wooded area in the property's northeast corner is mostly low lying with small streams and is in the Muckalee Creek floodplain.

For discussion, the 272-acre property is divided into seven sections (Fig. 1-8):

- **Section 1** – south-central 13.1 acres, an upland pecan orchard. Section 1 comprises proposed New Hospital site south area).
- **Section 2** – southwest corner 16.5 acres, densely wooded with a swale running from west to east through the section's middle. No standing or flowing water was observed in the section's swale during TTL's field work in December, 2008 (TTL, 2009b).

Figure 1-6 Parcel Map - 272-Acre Property & Proposed New Hospital Site Plan

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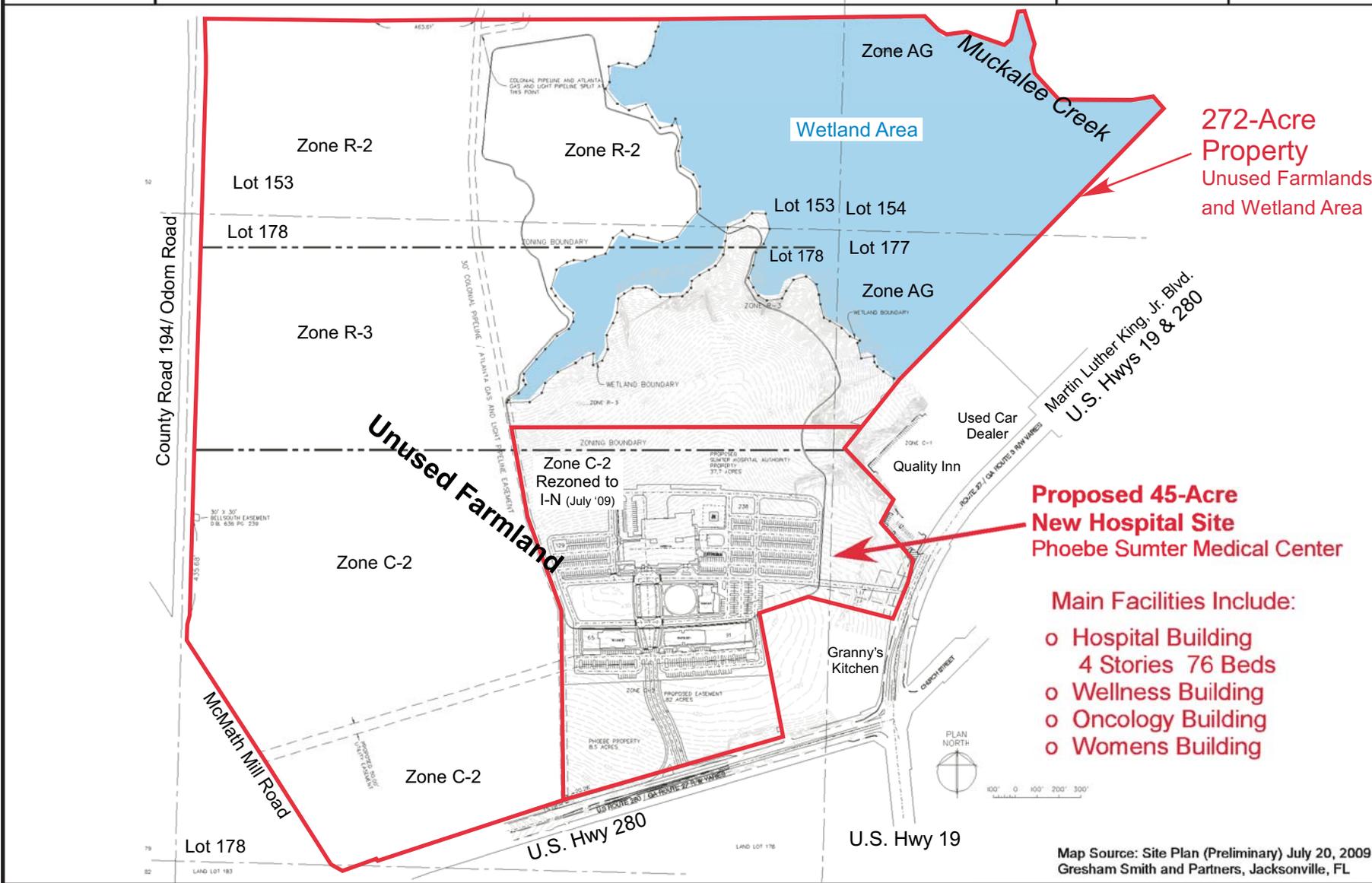


Figure 1-7: Proposed New Hospital Site Plan

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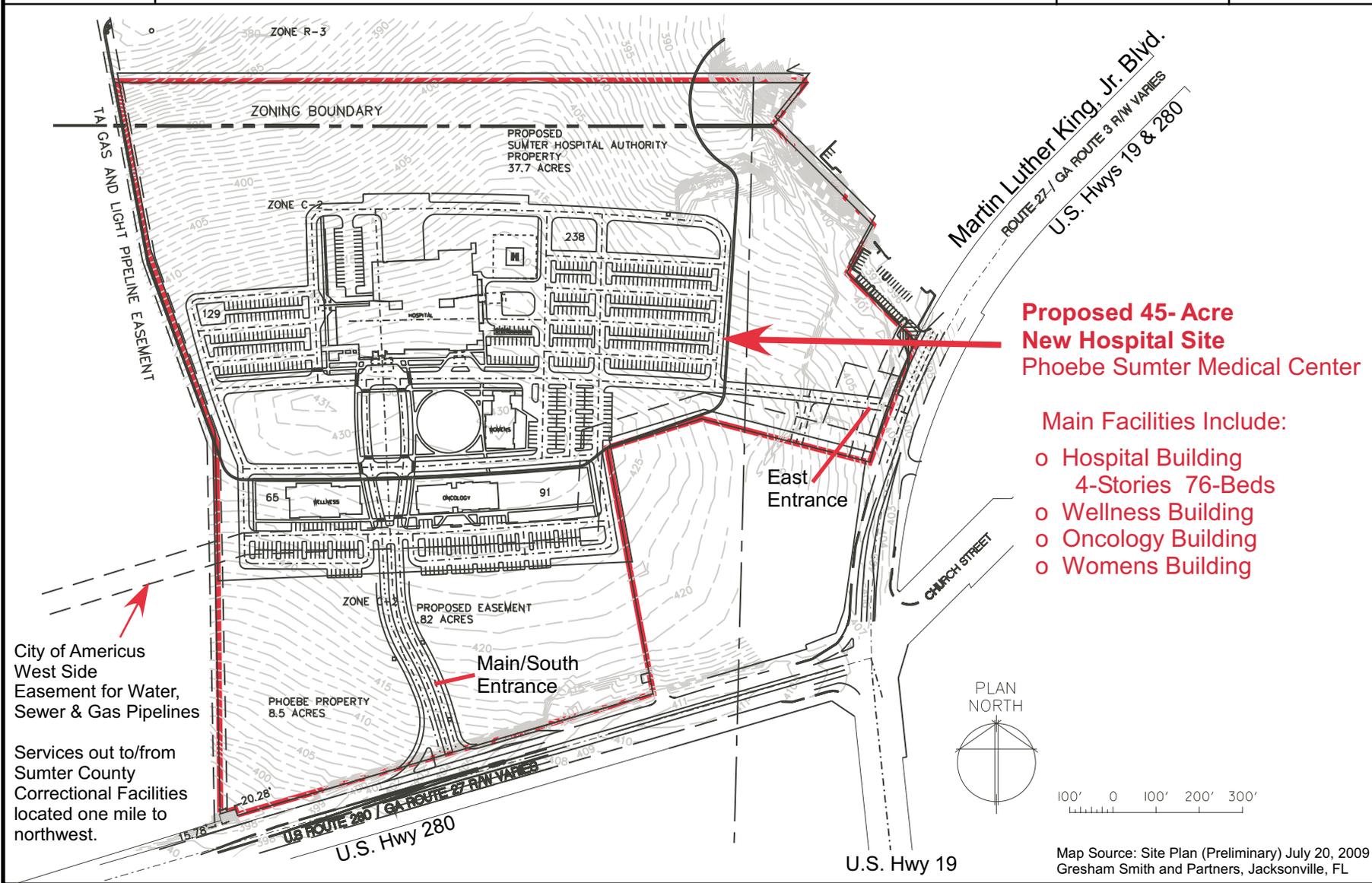


Figure 1-8 Utilities and Aerial Photo of 272-Acre Property & Proposed New Hospital Site

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Explanation

Section 7 Designated Areas on 272-Acre Property Described in Section 1.1.2 of EA Report (TTL, 2008)

 Originally Proposed (TTL, 2008) Geotechnical Soil Boring Locations (to 20-foot deep)

 Utility Pipeline Alignment Easement Areas
 North-South Pipeline
 TransMontaigne Petroleum
 East-West Pipelines
 City of Americus Water & Sewer

City of Americus Water, Sewer, & Natural Gas Pipelines Out to Sumter County Law Enforcement and Correctional Facilities Located West of Site



Map Source: TTL, 2008, Preliminary Geotechnical Report



- **Section 3** – central-south 38.6 acres; uplands, heavily wooded with a strip of former pecan orchard on section’s southern edge. Standing water was observed in a swale just outside the section’s northwest corner. The lower part of Section 3 comprises most of proposed New Hospital site north area.
- **Section 4** – southwest-central 39.6 acres; uplands, densely wooded with hardwoods and planted pines.
- **Section 5** – northeast wetlands 43.4 acres; mostly in wetlands and the Muckalee Creek, has dense hardwood stands. A small unnamed intermittent stream enters from Section 6. Some water was observed in the swale in Section 5’s southwest corner, next to the Quality Inn property along US19/US280.
- **Section 6** – north-central, about 35 acres; mostly uplands, heavily wooded former pecan orchard in its northwest quadrant. A small unnamed intermittent stream originating in Section 7 enters Section 6 at the southwest corner and runs through the northern half of its eastern boundary and into Section 5. Standing or flowing water was noted in this intermittent streambed just east of the pipeline easement with increasing flows toward the east. The low lying area along the swale/streambed in Section 6 is generally 100 to 200 feet wide. Groundwater seepage was noted at several locations at the base of adjacent ridges.
- **Section 7** – northwest 60.3 acres; generally uplands with dense woodlands in the southern half and a former pecan orchard in the northern half. An intermittent streambed originates in this section, runs into Section 6. No standing or flowing water was observed in the streambed.

1.2 Purpose of and Need for Action

The Authority determined the SRH Former Hospital site is essentially “land-locked”, with limited potential and significant drawbacks for construction and future development, a difficult challenge for building a new hospital. The existing 12.5-acre property only has the existing paved parking lot on the east side covering the more level building area, as the west side had the former 3-story hospital buildings with relatively steep slopes up to 12 degrees. Building on the steep slope would be difficult and more expensive.

Expansion outside the existing 12.5 acres property would have to dislocate existing adjacent land owners. The property is surrounded by commercial properties on the south and east, and residential properties to the north and west. Purchase and dislocation of businesses within the existing developed commercial properties south of East Forsyth Street would be expensive. Dislocation of residential homes to the west and north of the site would also be expensive and have a potential negative cultural impact on the neighborhood. The SRH East site, east of the site, needs to remain in place with the temporary hospital facilities until the replacement hospital is built and operational.

PPMS contracted engineering consulting firms to evaluate other potential suitable candidate hospital sites in and near Americus. Among the 8 suitable sites on the market, the candidate 272-acre former farmland and present wetland property on the city's west side was determined to be the best choice for the New Hospital site (see Sec. 2.2). The 45-acres picked for hospital site is relatively flat and near the intersection of north-south US19 and the east-west US280, the two main transportation routes in Sumter County. Traffic to the New Hospital site should be less congested than the Former Hospital site. The west side of Americus has more farmland and less commercial and residential development. The distance of this site from the Americus city center is 1.3 miles, which is slightly more than the 0.6 mile of the former hospital site. It is also significantly above the Muckalee Creek 100-year floodplain area.

1.3 Previous Study and Agency Coordination

In response to the March 2007 tornado disaster, several recovery activities were proposed by the City of Americus and Sumter County and their representatives on the Authority. FEMA initiated the environmental documentation process, in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA). NEPA was enacted by the U.S. Congress to require Federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of Federal actions as part of the decision making process.

Under NEPA, Federal agencies must conduct an investigation and evaluation of alternatives as part of the environmental documentation process, prior to making decisions that may impact the environment.

Many other state and Federal agencies are involved, along with FEMA, in supporting the overall tornado recovery effort. Other agencies are participating by reviewing FEMA's actions and documents to ensure that all potential NEPA compliance issues have been adequately addressed. It is FEMA's goal to expedite and coordinate the development and review of NEPA documents in response to the needs of the communities in Sumter County devastated by the March 2007 tornado disaster, while meeting the intent of NEPA and complying with all NEPA requirements.

To achieve this goal, FEMA has, from the onset, encouraged the participation of funding and review agencies, and the public in the proposed new Sumter Hospital NEPA compliance process. Copies of the Draft EA were placed in two information repositories located in the City of Americus, the Clerk's Office in the Municipal Building and the Blackshear Regional Library, for a 21-day public review and comment period starting September 16th. The Draft EA could also be viewed and downloaded from FEMA's website: <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm>. Ads notifying the public of the availability of the Draft EA were placed in the Americus Times Recorder on September 11th and 15th. No substantive negative comments have been received to date.

2.0 The Site Selection Process

This section describes project action and no action alternatives that were considered to address the purpose and need stated in Section 1.2. Two alternatives were evaluated in more detail:

2.1 Site Selection Process

After the March 2007 disaster, the Authority sought funds and funding partners to rebuild the Sumter Regional Hospital. The Authority – PPHS partnership evaluated eight alternative locations. PPHS provided a lesson-learned from their Albany, Georgia, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital campus project. Properties surrounding their campus are fully developed and do not allow future expansion of the campus and related facilities. They recognized the Former Hospital site had a similar situation, surrounding properties were already developed for other uses and their existing site has steep slopes and a relatively small area for future expansion.

2.2 Alternatives Considered But Dismissed

Several alternative sites were identified by local real estate brokers and were evaluated for feasibility for new hospital construction and future expansion. These included:

- Site 1-** 12.5-acre SRH (Former Hospital) site
- Site 2 -** 272-acre property at intersection of US19 and US280 on west side of Americus (south-central 45-acre area for proposed New Hospital site)
- Site 3 -** 124.46-acre property on US280 East
- Site 4 -** 80.53-acre property on State Route 27 East
- Site 5 -** 101.42-acre property on State Route 27 East
- Site 6 -** 153.10-acre property on Southerfield Road
- Site 7 -** 304.22-acre property on South Georgia Tech Parkway
- Site 8 -** 301.35-acre property on US19 North and South Georgia Tech Parkway
- Site 9 -** 197.37-acre property on US19 North

Each of these sites was evaluated based on the following criteria: location, size, terrain, traffic/highways, access to water and sewer utilities, zoning, and price. Access to utilities and the cost to bring utilities to each site were frequent issues.

- Site 1** – Former Hospital site was rejected because it is considered “land-locked” with limited potential for future expansion of hospital facilities and services, and patients’ site access is through a developed, congested area.
- Site 2** - 272-acre property to contain the south-central 45-acre are proposed New Hospital site was accepted as the preferred site because it is 1.3 miles from the city center, in an uncongested area, has access to major U.S. Highways 19 and 280 that pass through Sumter County, city utilities already pass through the site, and about 200 acres of uplands above Muckalee Creek wetlands allow for future hospital and city development.
- Site 3** - 124.46-acre property on US280 East was rejected mainly because of traffic, utilities, zoning, and price issues.
- Site 4** - 80.53-acre property on State Route 27 East was rejected because of location, traffic, utilities, and zoning issues.
- Site 5** - 101.42-acre property on State Route 27 East was rejected because of location, traffic, utilities, and zoning issues.
- Site 6** - 153.10-acre property on Southerfield Road was rejected because of traffic and zoning issues.
- Site 7** - 304.22-acre property on South Georgia Tech Parkway was rejected because of traffic and zoning issues.
- Site 8** - 301.35-acre property on US19 North and South Georgia Tech Parkway was rejected because of utilities and zoning issues.
- Site 9** - 197.37-acre property on US19 North was rejected because of utilities and zoning issues.

Since sites 3 through 9 were rejected, this EA will not evaluate these sites in further detail.

2.3 Alternatives for Detailed Study

There are three alternatives that will be considered in this EA: the No Action Alternative; the Former Hospital Site Alternative; and the Proposed New Hospital Site Alternative.

Alternative 1: No Action

The Former Hospital would not be replaced. Access to comparable service professional health care services would be available from the Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital in Albany, about 36 miles south of Americus. Health care access would also be available from

The Medical Center of Central Georgia, in Macon, about 75 miles northeast of Americus. The Georgia Southwestern State University (GSWSU) now has a contract for its 300 athletes to go to the Columbus Regional Healthcare System hospitals in Columbus, about 60 miles northwest of Americus. Its Houston Hospital has well respected sports injuries specialists (Young, 2009).

Alternative 2: Rebuild Regional Hospital on Former Hospital Site

The Authority determined the Former Hospital site is essentially “land-locked”, with limited potential and significant drawbacks for construction and future development, a difficult challenge for building a new hospital. The existing 12.5 acres property only had the existing paved parking lot on the east side covering the more level building area, as the west side had the former 3-story hospital buildings with relatively steep slopes up to 12 degrees. Hospital reconstruction on the steep slope would be difficult and more expensive. Plans may include rebuilding on the level east side where the parking lot exists, and parking on site in an expensive multi-story parking structure on the triangular-shaped and steep-sloped west side of the property.

Alternative 3: Rebuild Regional Hospital on New Site (Proposed Action)

The Authority evaluated eight potential New Hospital sites and chose the 272-acre property located on the west side of Americus. Among many other reasons the property has potential for additional development of the related health care facilities and has more immediate access to the regions’ main transportation arteries, US19 and US280. Figs. 1-6 and 1-7, respectively, show the location of the 45-acre south-central area proposed New Hospital site on the 272-acre property, and the proposed site plan for the New Hospital.

The Authority also plans to build the New Hospital in accordance with modern LEED architectural standards to attract and retain top physicians. LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, provides a suite of standards for environmentally sustainable construction, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Buildings and grounds are designed by trained and Green Building Certification Institute-certified professionals. LEED certified buildings often provide healthier work and living environments, that contributes to higher productivity and improved employee health and comfort. The initial capital cost for LEED construction, higher than conventional construction cost, is typically offset by the lower long-term operational and maintenance costs. As the Former Hospital site has limited property for construction, it may be difficult to feasibly achieve LEED building standards.

The Authority provided the following “vision” for the eventual full development of the 272-acre property.

“Phoebe Sumter Medical Center will be the nucleus of a medical destination for the citizens of Sumter County and surrounding communities, providing primary and enhanced health services for generations to come. The 272-acre property is adequate to accommodate

projected growth. Medical office buildings, housing women’s and family services, oncology and surgical clinics, and wellness and outpatient rehabilitation, would be constructed first to stabilize the healthcare delivery system in this community. Other healthcare-related concerns and business, such as pharmacies, non-profit agencies and services, would be logical and encouraged elements for future growth. The proposed site plans include green spaces and perimeter walking trails to promote physical fitness. The development concept, therefore, is community-focused to meet immediate medical needs and simultaneously support productive lifestyle choices. By extension, the vision for the short- and long-term development addresses the healthcare elements and resources that enable people to maintain a high quality of life and productivity in the community where they live and work.”

Table 2-1 summarizes the potential impacts associated with each of the three alternatives evaluated in this EA. No significant impacts were identified and potential adverse impacts can be effectively mitigated. Following a characterization of the affected environment, a detailed evaluation of the environmental consequences associated with each of the alternatives is provided in Section 4.0. Mitigation measures for potential adverse impacts associated with the alternatives are identified in Section 4.8.

Table 2-1: Impact Summary Matrix			
Description	No Action Alternative	Former Hospital Site Alternative	Proposed New Hospital Site Alternative
Description of Alternative	No hospital rebuilt using FEMA funds.	Rebuild hospital on 12.5-acre Former Hospital site on developed east side of Americus northeast of intersection Mayo St. & Forsyth St.	Rebuild hospital on Proposed 45-acre New Hospital site on undeveloped west side of Americus at intersection of US19 and US280.
Potential Impacts			
Geology and Hydrogeology	No effect.	Minor impact from earthmoving and excavation. BMPs should be employed to reduce potential for erosion and runoff during construction.	Minor impact from earthmoving and excavation. BMPs should be employed to reduce potential for erosion and runoff during construction.
Geologic Hazards	No effect.	Design and construction BMPs will minimize sinkhole formulation.	Design and construction BMPs will minimize sinkhole formulation.
Topography	No effect.	Minor effect from site grading	Minor effect from site grading
Soils	Minor impact: continued loss of soil from stormwater and wind.	Development and site drainage plans need to account for limitations associated with west side site soil with steep slopes eroding. Need to follow sediment and erosion control BMPs.	Development and site drainage plans need to account for limitations for some site soils to erode. Need to follow sediment and erosion control BMPs. Landscaping should be completed with vegetation capable of reducing stormwater runoff to downgradient wetland areas and Muckalee Creek.
Floodplain Management	No effect.	Construction of hospital would comply with EO 11988 and FEMA regulations.	Construction of hospital would comply with EO 11988 and FEMA regulations.
Prime and Other Important Farmland	No effect: no agricultural land affected.	No effect: no prime or other important farmland affected, rebuilt hospital on existing urban land.	Negligible impact: loss of insignificant amount of prime and important farmland.

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Potential Impacts			
Plant Communities and Wildlife	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	Minor effect: rebuilt hospital on older developed urban land, following tornado disaster demolition cleared site of vegetation.	Minor impact from earthmoving and excavation. BMPs should be employed to reduce potential for erosion and runoff during construction to protect downgradient wetland areas and Muckalee Creek.
Threatened and Endangered Species	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	No effect: no threatened or endangered species known to exist on the site.	No effect: no threatened or endangered species known to exist on the proposed 45-acre site. BMPs should be employed to reduce potential erosion and urban runoff to potential threatened or endangered species in downgradient wetland areas and Muckalee Creek.
Wetlands	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	No effect: no wetlands exist on the site.	No effect: no wetlands exist on the proposed 45-acre site. BMPs should be employed to reduce potential erosion and urban runoff to potential threatened or endangered species in downgradient wetland areas and Muckalee Creek.
Jurisdictional Streams	No effect: no existing open space use would continue.	No effect: no jurisdictional streams exist on the site.	No effect: no jurisdictional streams exist on the site. BMPs should be used to reduce potential erosion and sedimentation in downgradient, jurisdictional streams off site.
Land Use and Zoning	No effect.	No effect: site used for 57 years for regional hospital.	Minor effect: July 2009 City of Americus annexed and rezoned 45-acre site for hospital (I-N: Institutional Zone).
Demographics and Housing	Adverse impact: existing healthcare professionals and supporting staff and businesses would leave region.	No effect: existing and recruited healthcare professionals, supporting staff, and businesses would return to support hospital and community growth. Limited change for demographics and housing.	Beneficial effect: existing and recruited healthcare professionals, supporting staff, and businesses would return to support new hospital and community growth. It would also improve housing and business development of lands to west side of Americus.
Local Economy and Employment	Adverse impact: existing healthcare professionals and supporting staff and businesses would leave region.	No effect: existing and recruited healthcare professionals, supporting staff, and businesses would return to support hospital and community growth. Limited change for demographics and housing.	Beneficial effect: existing and recruited healthcare professionals, supporting staff, and businesses would return to support new hospital and community growth. It would also improve housing and business development of lands to west side of Americus.

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Potential Impacts			
Community Facilities and Services	Adverse impact: existing healthcare professionals and supporting staff and businesses would leave region. Significant supporting tax base and community services likely to decline.	No effect: continued same level of facilities and services.	Beneficial effect: expected increase in level of facilities and services to community as housing and business develop lands on west side of Americus anchored by Proposed New Hospital site.
Environmental Justice	Adverse impact: no hospital nearby to maintain health of community. Low-income populations may not afford to travel to remote healthcare facilities.	No effect: continued same level of local hospital facilities and services at same site.	No effect: continued same level of local hospital facilities and services at site location 0.7 mile further from Americus city center than Former Hospital site.
Noise	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	Temporary impact: construction.	Temporary impact: site preparation selected removal of forest and regrading activities, and buildings construction.
Visual Resources	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	Beneficial impact: additional planting of trees and landscaping will enhance neighborhood.	Beneficial impact: on-site hospital building and landscaping using LEED design standards will enhance productive "Green" living and working conditions.
Historic Structures	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	No effect: March 2007 tornado disaster and site demolition cleared site of potential historic structures.	No effect: no historic structures identified on this 45-acre former farm site unused for about 41 years.
Archaeology	No effect: existing open space use would continue.	No effect: March 2007 tornado disaster and site demolition cleared site of potential artifacts.	No effect: no artifacts identified on this 45-acre site used for farming for at least 44 years and unused for at least 41 years.
Water Supply	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Wastewater Disposal	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Other Public Utilities	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.
Transportation	No effect.	No effect.	No effect.

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Potential Impacts			
Hazardous Waste and Materials	Potential significant effect: unknown extent and type of soil and possibly groundwater contamination from former USTs. Soil borings and monitoring wells on site will confirm contamination. Remediation may be required.	Potential significant effect: unknown extent and type of soil and possibly groundwater contamination from former USTs (RECs). Soil borings and monitoring wells on site will confirm contamination with state agencies. Remediation may be required before construction of replacement hospital.	No effect: no evidence of hazardous waste and materials on the 45-acres Proposed New Hospital site.