Colquitt County recently faced an unprecedented growth, as new businesses and residents were moving into the region. However, the county lacked a land-use plan, and regional leadership determined that developing such a comprehensive guide was a major priority for the community in order to sustain the rapid growth.

During a period of several months, the local Archway Professional facilitated meetings of a citizens’ work group appointed by local officials to draft a land-use plan that could also help the community improve its dated wastewater treatment facility and expand its wastewater treatment capacity.

To expand treatment capacity, community officials planned for a Land Application System (LAS), gathering expertise from UGA’s Department of Biological and Agricultural Engineering, Engineering Outreach Service, and the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources in regard to site possibilities. Additional assistance was provided by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, which helped through its Information Technology Outreach Services (ITOS) division, to map out site possibilities.

Expansion efforts were expected to be very expensive and finding ways to cut costs was a key priority for the community. Through the combined efforts of higher education and the community, alternatives to a Land Application System were established to significantly enhance the existing treatment plant. As these alternatives were developed, UGA also participated in joint meetings with the community and the Environmental Protection Division (EPD).

Plant enhancements were approved as a viable option and the community was able to fund much of the work in a SPLOST effort that also received planning and technical assistance from Archway in preparing educational materials to communicate critical information to the public. When the project was complete, it was determined that the alternative plan had saved the county more than $10 million.

**Advancing Community Priorities:** With an unprecedented period of growth in Colquitt County, planning for sustainability and future growth has been identified as a key community priority. Assisting the community in implementing an expanded and updated wastewater treatment facility through alternative routes worked to advance this priority by saving the community millions of dollars.