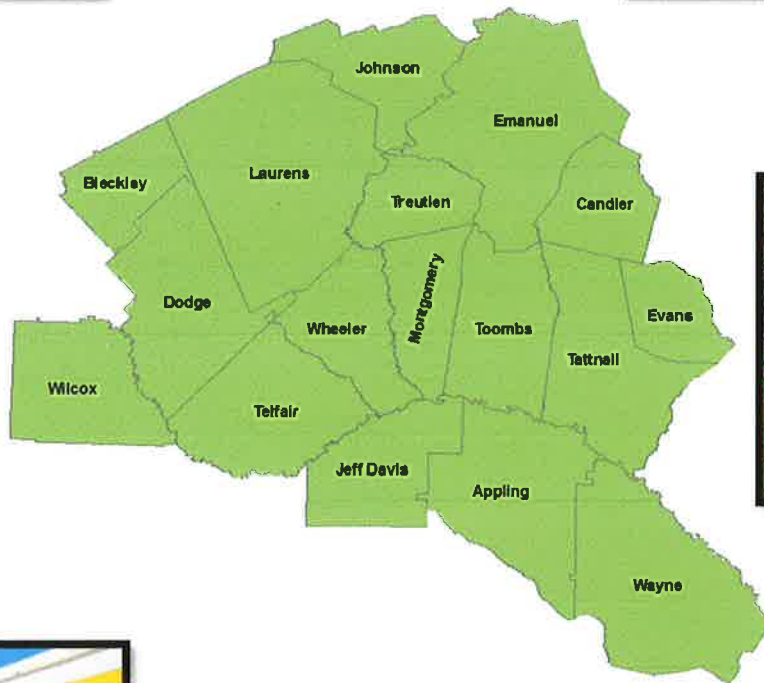
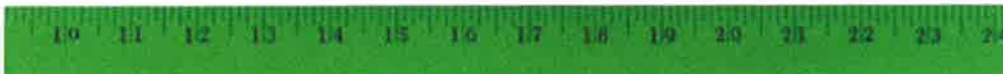


GREEN WITH GREENER DAYS AHEAD:

A Regional Plan for the Heart of Georgia
Altamaha
Regional Commission



REGIONAL ASSESSMENT



May, 2013

**GREEN WITH GREENER DAYS AHEAD:
A Regional Plan for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha
Regional Commission**

Regional Assessment



Prepared By

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

May, 2013

Regional Assessment

Table of Contents

Executive Summary and Introduction	I-1
Regional Analysis Summary	RAS-1
Population	RAS-1
Economic Development.....	RAS-6
Housing.....	RAS-12
Community Facilities and Services	RAS-15
Transportation.....	RAS-15
Intergovernmental Coordination.....	RAS-16
Natural and Cultural Resources	RAS-17
Analysis of Regional Development Patterns	RDP-1
Projected Development Patterns Map.....	RDP-1
Areas Requiring Special Attention	RDP-3
Regionally Important Resources	RDP-3
Areas Where Significant Natural/Cultural Resources Likely to be Impacted by Development	RDP-6
Areas Where Rapid Development or Land Use Changes are Expected.....	RDP-6
Areas Needing Redevelopment	RDP-7
Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities	RDP-7
Areas with Significant Disinvestment.....	RDP-7
Identification of Potential Issues and Opportunities	IO-1
Economic Development.....	IO-1
Natural and Cultural Resources	IO-2
Community Facilities and Services	IO-3
Housing.....	IO-6
Land Use	IO-7
Intergovernmental Coordination.....	IO-8
Regional Quality Community Objective Assessment	QCO-1
Development Patterns	QCO-2

Traditional Neighborhoods Objective	QCO-2
Infill Development Objective	QCO-3
Sense of Place Objective	QCO-4
Transportation Alternatives	QCO-5
Regional Identity Objective.....	QCO-6
Resource Conservation	QCO-7
Heritage Preservation Objective.....	QCO-7
Open Space Preservation Objective	QCO-9
Environmental Protection Objective	QCO-10
Social and Economic Development	QCO-12
Growth Preparedness Objective	QCO-12
Appropriate Businesses Objective.....	QCO-13
Employment Options Objective	QCO-13
Housing Choices Objective	QCO-14
Educational Opportunities Objective	QCO-15
Governmental Relations.....	QCO-16
Regional Solutions Objective.....	QCO-16
Regional Cooperation Objective	QCO-17
Supporting Data and Analysis	SDA-1
Population	SDA-1
Total Population	SDA-1
Age Distribution	SDA-2
Race and Ethnicity.....	SDA-2
Income	SDA-3
Economic Development.....	SDA-58
Economic Base	SDA-58
Labor Force	SDA-59
Economic Resources	SDA-59
Housing.....	SDA-73
Housing Types and Mix	SDA-73
Condition and Occupancy	SDA-74

Cost of Housing.....	SDA-75
Cost-Burdened Households.....	SDA-75
Special Housing Needs.....	SDA-76
Jobs-Housing Balance	SDA-77
Community Facilities and Services	SDA-85
Water Supply and Treatment.....	SDA-85
Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment.....	SDA-86
Other Facilities and Services	SDA-87
Transportation.....	SDA-89
Road Network.....	SDA-89
Alternative Modes	SDA-95
Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities, and Airports.....	SDA-96
Transportation and Land Use Connection.....	SDA-101
Intergovernmental Coordination.....	SDA-103
Service Delivery Strategies	SDA-103
Economic Development	SDA-103
Environmental Protection.....	SDA-104
Transportation	SDA-105
Regional Resource Plan.....	SDA-106
Natural and Cultural Resources	SDA-107

Tables

Table P-1 Current and Historic Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1980-2011	SDA-5
Table P-2 Population of Region Counties by Decennial Census Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1900-2010.....	SDA-6
Table P-3 Region Population by County as a Percentage Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1980-2010.....	SDA-8
Table P-4 Population and Change Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and the U.S. 1980-2010	SDA-9
Table P-5 Municipal Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region 1980-2010.....	SDA-11

Table P-6 Population of Municipalities Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region 1980-2010	SDA-17
Table P-7 Population and Change Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Adjacent Regions 1980-2010	SDA-18
Table P-8 Projected Population and Percentage Change Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2010-2040.....	SDA-19
Table P-9 Population by Age Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-22
Table P-10 Percentage of Population by Age Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-27
Table P-11 Median Age Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-31
Table P-12 Percentage of Population Age 65 and Older Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010.....	SDA-32
Table P-13 Percentage of Total Population Male/Female Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010.....	SDA-34
Table P-14 Racial Composition Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-35
Table P-15 Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-39
Table P-16 Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Adjacent Regions, and Georgia 1990-2010.....	SDA-43
Table P-17 Hispanic Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-46
Table P-18 Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	SDA-47
Table P-19 Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Adjacent Regions, and Georgia 1990-2010.....	SDA-49
Table P-20 Income Distribution by Households (by Percentage) Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010.....	SDA-51

Table P-21 Median Household Income Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1980-2010	SDA-53
Table P-22 Mean Household Income Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1990-2010	SDA-54
Table P-23 Per Capita Income Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1990-2010	SDA-55
Table P-24 Percent of Population Below the Poverty Level Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1990-2010.....	SDA-56
Table ED-1 Place of Work Employment by Type (Percentage) Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1990-2010.....	SDA-61
Table ED-2 Place of Work Earnings by Type (Percentage) Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 1990-2010.....	SDA-62
Table ED-3 Regional Employment and Wages by County Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2000-2010.....	SDA-63
Table ED-4 Regional Employment by Occupation (Percent of Persons Employed 16 Years and Older) Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2000-2010	SDA-65
Table ED-5 Unemployment Rates by County Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 2000-2011	SDA-69
Table ED-6 Percent of Derivation of Personal Income of Residents (Thousands of Dollars) Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S. 2000 and 2010.....	SDA-70
Table ED-7 Percent of Economic Base by County Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region 2010.....	SDA-71
Table H-1 Housing Stock by Type Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2010.....	SDA-78
Table H-2 Proportion of Existing Housing Units Constructed by Decade Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	SDA-79
Table H-3 Vacancy Rates Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia	SDA-80
Table H-4 Cost of Housing Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2000 and 2010.....	SDA-81
Table H-5 Percentage of Cost Burdened Households Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 2010.....	SDA-82

Table H-6 Jobs-Housing Balance, 2010 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	SDA-84
Table T-1 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Mileage of Public Roads By County and Paving Status	SDA-92
Table T-2 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Airports.....	SDA-100

Charts

Chart P-1 Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region	RAS-2
Chart P-2 Percent Population Change Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region	RAS-2
Chart P-3 Percent Population Change Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Surrounding Regions	RAS-3
Chart P-4 Projected Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region.....	RAS-3
Chart P-5 Median Age, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010	RAS-4
Chart P-6 Hispanics as Percentage of Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia 1990-2010.....	RAS-4
Chart P-7 Median Household Income Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.....	RAS-5
Chart P-8 Percent of Population Below Poverty Level Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.....	RAS-5
Chart P-9 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Percent of 2010 Region Population by County.....	SDA-7
Chart P-10 1980-2010 Percentage Change in Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Counties	SDA-10
Chart P-11 Change in Percentage of Total Region Population by Age Group 1990-2010	SDA-26
Chart P-12 1990-2010 Percent of Population Age 65 and Older Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia	SDA-33
Chart P-13 2010 Percentage of Total Population, White and Black Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Surrounding Regions, and Georgia.....	SDA-45
Chart P-14 Hispanic Population as Percentage of 2010 Total Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Population.....	SDA-48

Chart P-15 Hispanic Population as Percentage of 2010 Total Population Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Surrounding Regions, and Georgia.....	SDA-50
Chart P-16 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Household Income Distribution by Percentage 1990-2010	SDA-52
Chart P-17 2010 Percent of Population Under Age 18 Below the Poverty Level Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Region Counties, Georgia, and U.S.....	SDA-57
Chart ED-1 Employment by Type Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.....	RAS-7
Chart ED-2 Earnings by Type Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.....	RAS-9
Chart ED-3 2000-2011 Unemployment Rates Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.....	RAS-11
Chart ED-4 2000-2010 Percentage Change in Average Weekly Wages Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Region Counties, and Georgia	SDA-64
Chart ED-5 2010 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Economic Base by Sector Percentage	SDA-72
Chart H-1 2010 Housing Stock by Type Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	RAS-12
Chart H-2 Proportion of Existing Housing Units Constructed by Decade Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	RAS-13
Chart H-3 Cost of Housing Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	RAS-13
Chart H-4 Cost of Housing Median Rent Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia.....	RAS-14
Maps	
Projected Development Patterns, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region.....	RDP-8
Transportation System, Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region	SDA-102

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND INTRODUCTION

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is a large rural region spanning the Upper and Lower Coastal Plains of south central and southeast Georgia. The heavily forested Region is comprised of approximately 6,904 square miles with a 2010 Census population of over 303,000, encompassing 17 counties and 63 municipalities. The Region is primarily included in the Altamaha River Basin of Georgia which is steeped in much natural beauty, biological import, and long history. Counties included are Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox. The Region contains no metropolitan statistical areas, but does include the micropolitan statistical areas of Dublin (Laurens and Johnson counties), Jesup (Wayne County), and Vidalia (Toombs and Montgomery counties). Population density remains low in the large rural Region as its most dense county is lower than the U.S. average, and only about half of Georgia's average. The rural Region's abundant fields and forests were important to its history and development and remain so today. Yet the Georgia Department of Economic Development has described the Region as one of the state's most economically diverse regions. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region truly is "Green with Greener Days Ahead."

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission is the state authorized regional planning agency for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), under authority of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, requires each regional commission to develop, adopt, and implement a regional plan. This document is an update of the previous regional plan for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission first adopted in 2000, and last updated in 2004. The first part of the main regional plan is the Regional Assessment, although the previously prepared *Regional Resource Plan* (2012) is a foundation and background document for the Regional Plan.

The Regional Assessment is an evaluation and analysis of existing conditions, issues, and opportunities, and serves as a focal point for further analysis and delineation of a vision for the

Region in the Regional Agenda. It is a factual description and summary of current information on the conditions, needs, and issues of the Region. These identified strengths and weaknesses can be used as a guide for the development of a vision, policies, and strategies to further improve and advance the Region in the upcoming years through the Regional Agenda. The Regional Assessment is mandated by DCA to include the following information and topics:

- A list of potential issues and opportunities which the Region may choose to address. These will be finalized in the Regional Agenda
- An evaluation of current policies, activities, and development patterns in the Region for consistency with DCA's State Planning Goals and Quality Community Objectives
- An analysis of existing development patterns
- An analysis and summary of pertinent socio-economic data and information, especially for refinement and corroboration of identified issues and opportunities

The Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning established by DCA emphasize that a Regional Plan should generate a vision that fosters pride and enthusiasm about the future of a region. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is a unique rural region which continues to exhibit slow and steady quality growth and diversification. The Region has many assets for continued future growth and development amidst a backdrop of exquisite natural and scenic beauty. The chosen title for this Regional Plan, "Green with Greener Days Ahead," reflects these assets and future potential.

The Regional Resource Plan for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission portrayed a Region which has been at the epicenter of initial human and economic development within, and the focal point of the early natural and cultural history of Georgia. The Region continues to be of extreme import for the natural and cultural environments of Georgia, and even for those of the U.S. and the world. The world record largemouth bass was caught in Region waters. The river corridors of the Region are some of the most ecologically diverse and significant in Georgia and beyond. These resources also contain much untapped potential for enhanced economic development, increased nature-based tourism activities, and improved, scenic outlets for recreation and overall quality of life.

The green potential of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region does not stop at its river corridors. The Region is comprised of a rural landscape punctuated and painted green by many farms and acres upon acres of towering southern yellow pines. All of the Region's counties are more than 60 percent forested and nearly half have more than 75 percent of total acres in forest. With the inclusion of agricultural acres, nearly 85 percent of the Region is in agricultural/forest acres with all counties above 70 percent or so. The Region is steeped in agricultural/forest heritage, and the agricultural/forest sector remains a principal component of the economic structure of the Region. The Region relies on its fields and forests for economic strength and growth stimulus. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is Georgia's leading Regional Commission in forest industry employment as a percentage of total employment (5.2%). The forest industry employs nearly 4,500 persons in the Region, contributing nearly \$288 million in economic wages, and accounts for a total economic output impact of approximately \$1.5 billion.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is home to Georgia's official state vegetable, the Vidalia Sweet Onion. While onions contribute more than \$159 million in farm gate value to Georgia (the top vegetable), agriculture in total contributes more than \$1.3 billion in total farm gate value to the Region. The Region is home to one of Georgia's top ten counties in total farm gate value, 3 of its top ten counties in vegetables' value, one of the top ten in fruits and nuts, and four of the top ten in forestry and products value. Vegetable production and other agricultural production has room for further growth and potential in the Region.

Unlike many of Georgia's rural counties dependent on agricultural and natural resources, in the recent recession and last decade, the counties of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region continue to exhibit slow and steady growth. The Region was only 1 of 4 Regional Commissions in Georgia to have all of its counties experience a population gain, and none to suffer losses, from the 2000 to 2010 Census. The other three are the Atlanta Region and the two north Georgia mountain regions. This Region population growth, however, remains modest and relatively slow, but steady. Only three Heart of Georgia Altamaha counties grew with a greater percentage than Georgia's 18.3 percent, and two of those can be attributed to prison population growth. However, 10 of 17 Region counties exhibited growth percentages from 2000 to 2010 greater than that of the U.S. (9.7%).

Despite these positive trends, the Region does have serious issues needing to be addressed. All of the Region's counties have more than 20 percent of all ages in poverty as of 2011, according to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey estimates. Most of the Region's counties have been described as persistent poverty counties for a number of decades. The Region's population is older than that of Georgia as a whole, and incomes within the Region are consistently lower than those of Georgia as a whole. Education levels also remain lower than the state as a whole. The Georgia Department of Economic Development is reported by the Georgia Ports Authority in its 2011 Annual Report to have described the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region as one of Georgia's most economically diverse because of its hosting companies from Fram Renewable Fuels, to MAGE Solar, and advanced manufacturers like Rayonier Forest Products, and others all of whom use Georgia's ports. Despite this, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region led all of Georgia's regional commissions in unemployment levels in 2012, and continues to do so. There are diverse jobs available in the Region because of agriculture, forestry, light manufacturing, prison and other government employment, and varied other industry outlets, but there obviously are not enough jobs. There are also continuing needs for improved Region infrastructure, particularly water and sewer facilities and broadband internet availability. The Georgia Technology Authority has labeled the Region as Georgia's most underserved in broadband internet availability at appropriate speeds.

There are a number of reasons and assets for the Region to have a more prosperous future with continued sound growth and development. The Georgia Ports Authority's 2011 Annual Report showed the Region exported more than \$353 million in goods, while importing just \$94 million. Region exported goods were primarily wood/pulp products, but also included vegetable fibers, medical equipment and supplies, coated fabrics, furniture, and aluminum ware/buildings. This shows the Region has much to offer beyond its fields and forests. The Region's location just inland from Georgia's fast growing coast; its transportation access through rail, highways, and both of Georgia's ports; its water supply availability; its climate; and its rural quality of life and scenic landscapes are a few of these factors. The recently implemented T-SPLOST for highway/transportation improvements, one of only three Regions in the state to approve the TIA transportation sales tax, allows for increased investment and further improvement in the transportation infrastructure of the Region.

The Region's fields, forests, other natural resources, and economic diversity also offer much potential for further future growth and development. The 21st Century has been described as the "BioCentury" with agrobiosciences offering much potential for scientific and technological advancements providing innovation and new product development, as well as improved production from traditional products. There already are emerging industries such as wood pellets for biofuels, and new technology and uses developing, for wood and other fibers, such as nanocellulose and lignin, which are, and could be even more, important to the Region because of its many fields and forests. Several wood pellet plants have recently located within the Region. Despite the ongoing recession, there have been a number of new industries locating recently in the Region, primarily because of location and the available natural and other resources. Similarly Rayonier is investing several hundred million dollars to upgrade its Jesup pulp mill, already one of the world's largest, and convert completely to chemical cellulose production. Truly, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is "Green with Greener Days Ahead."

REGIONAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Population

The 2010 U.S. Census documented a Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region population of 303,199, despite the lack of a metropolitan area within its 17 counties. The Region was only one of four regional commissions in the state not to have a single county lose population from 2000 to 2010. Since 1990, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has increased in total population by one-fourth (25.5 percent), adding over 60,000 new residents. While all 17 Region counties experienced steady, consistent growth, the most noticeable growth has been primarily concentrated along the periphery of the Region adjacent to nearby growth areas, and internally among the Region's primary growth centers of Laurens, Toombs, and Wayne counties, which are Census Bureau recognized micropolitan statistical areas. Population growth in the Region has been at or slightly above that of the U.S. since 1990, while only about one-half or so that of Georgia as a whole. However, the Region's population has been growing at a higher rate than most of its surrounding regions, with the exception of the Coastal and Southern Georgia regions. The Region is projected to add another 110,000 residents by 2040, which would be a rate of growth just slightly more than one-third (36.3 percent).

The Region's population remains somewhat older than that of the state as a whole, with one-fourth of the population being age 55 or older. As is the case with the rest of Georgia, the most significant shift in the Region's population is the burgeoning increase in the number of Hispanics. Just since 2000 alone, the number of Hispanics living in the Region has more than doubled and grown at a faster rate than the state as a whole, although the percentage of the Region's population that is Hispanic is still slightly below that of the state. Incomes in the Region continue to remain lower than the rest of the state, as has been the case historically. Poverty rates in the Region remain consistently higher than the state, and growth in both per capita and average household incomes lag behind the rest of Georgia.

Chart P-1
Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region

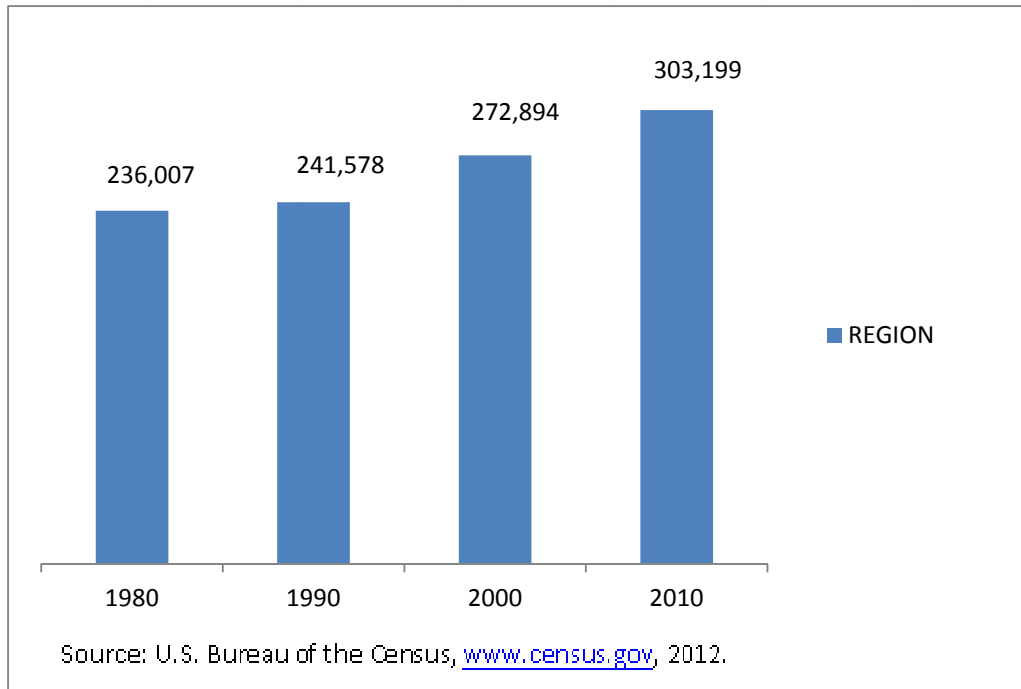
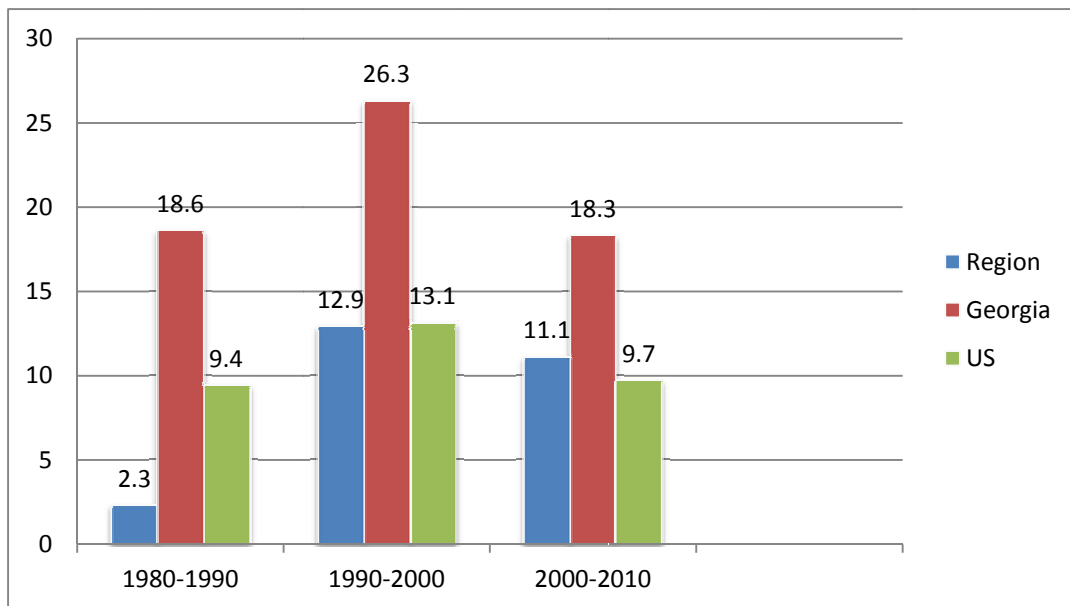
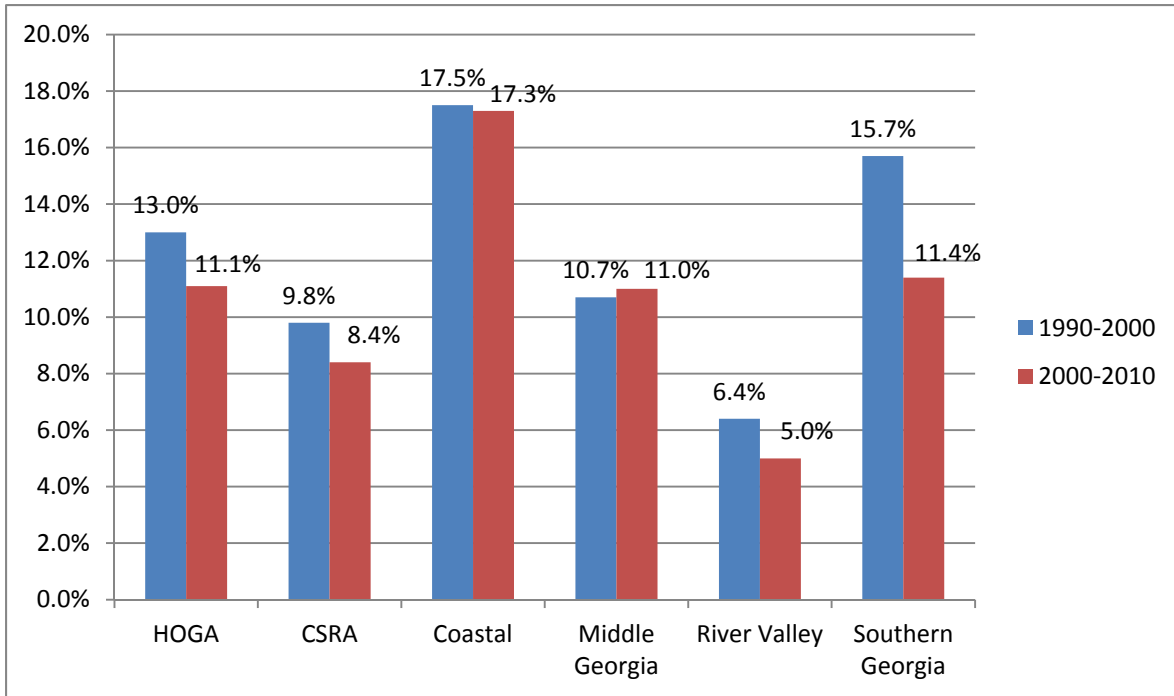


Chart P-2
Percent Population Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region



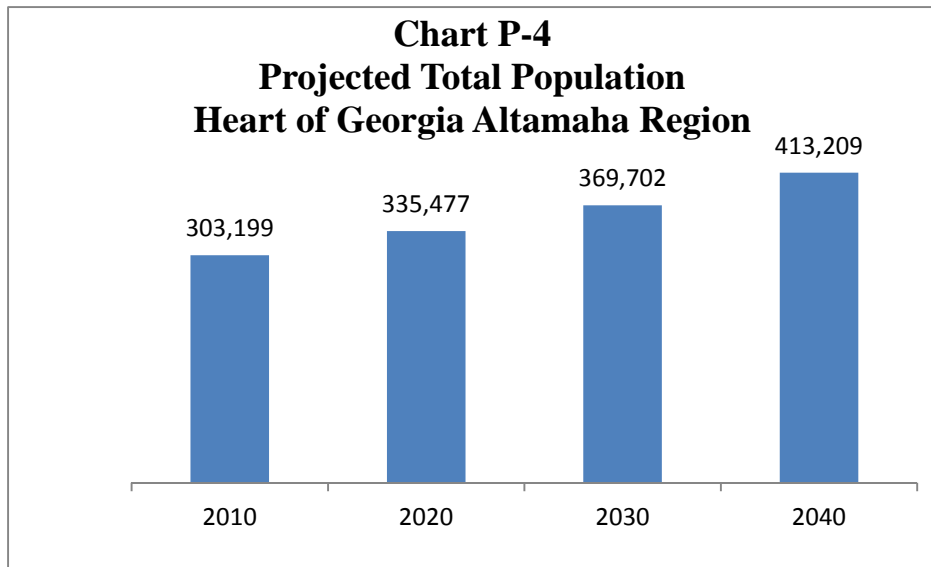
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-3
Percent Population Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Surrounding Regions

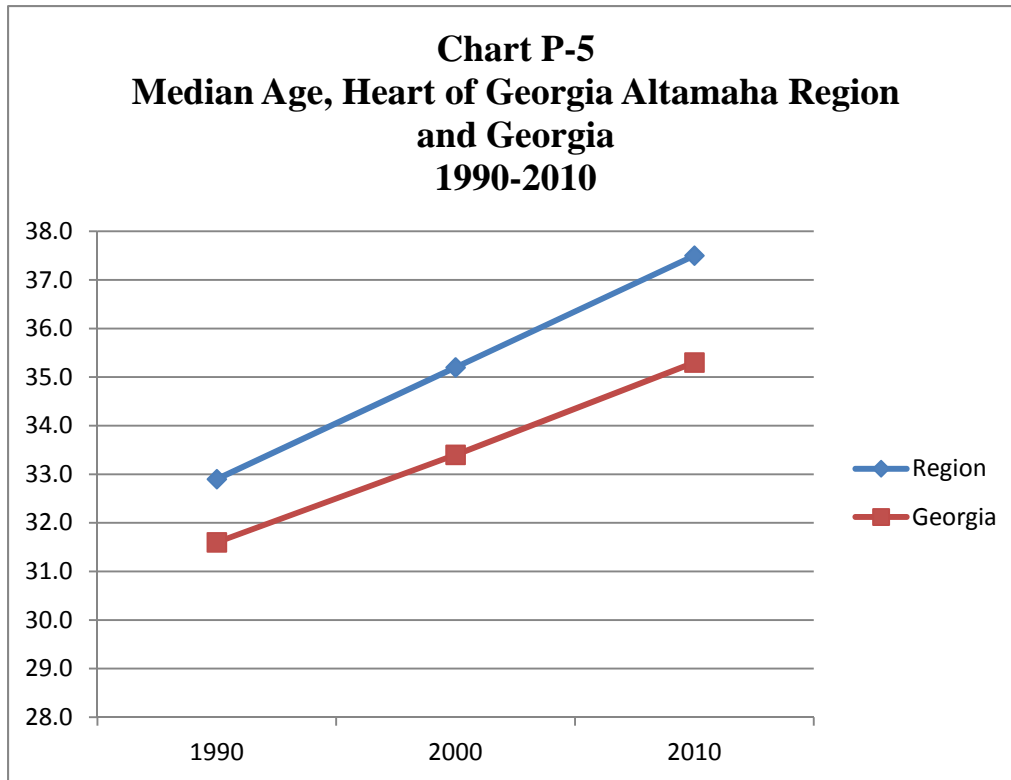


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

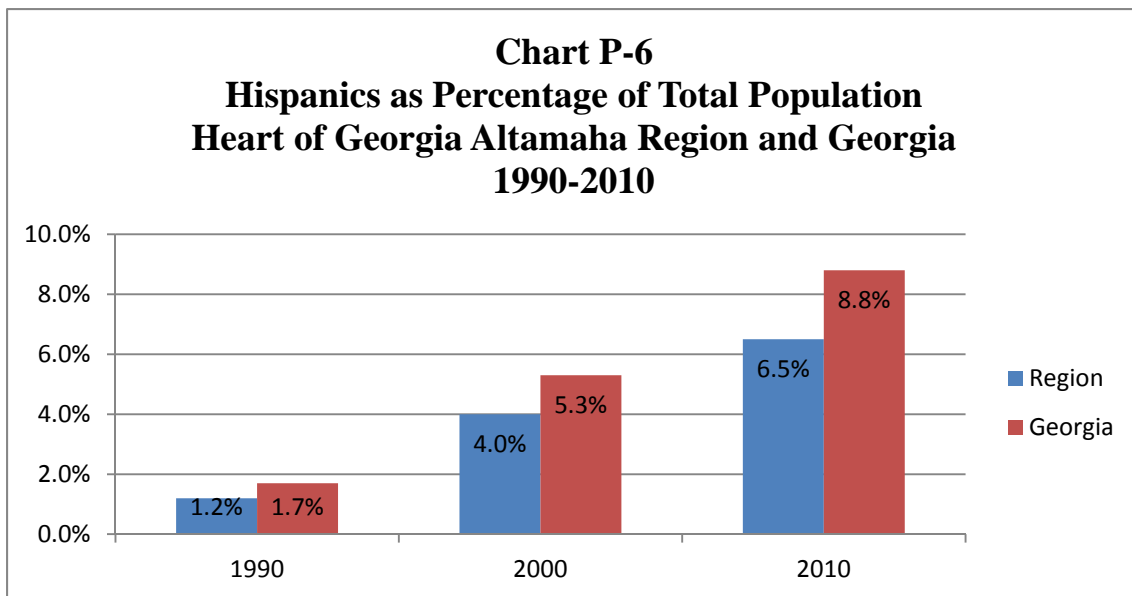
Chart P-4
Projected Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff projections, 2012.

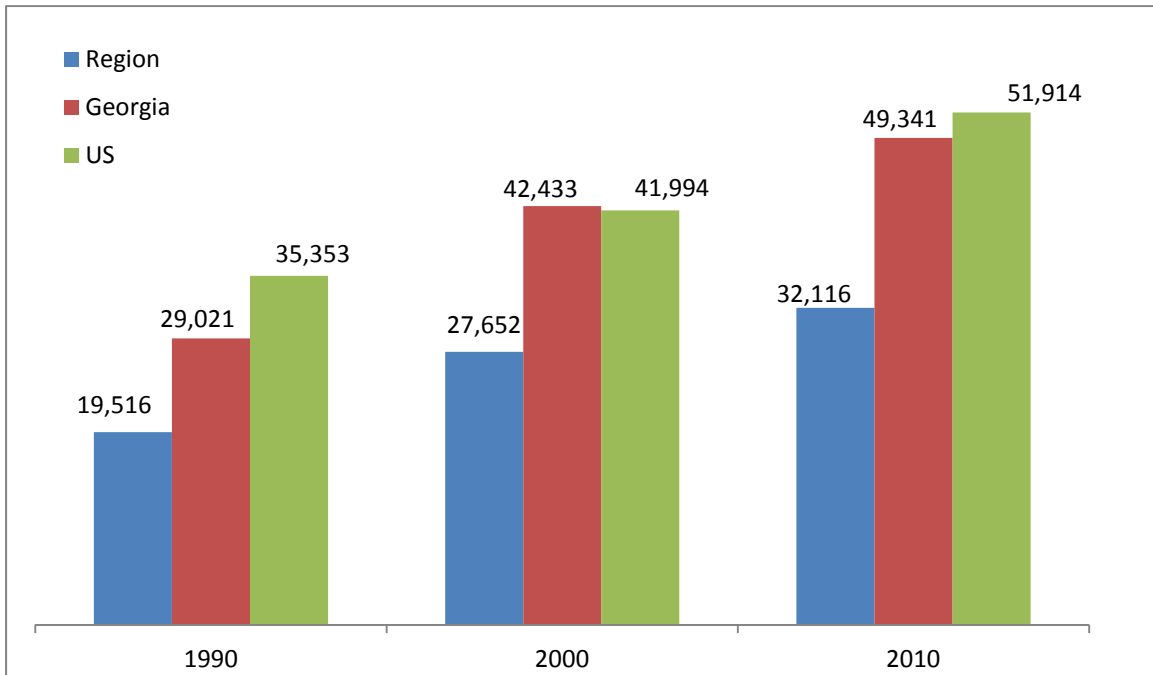


Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



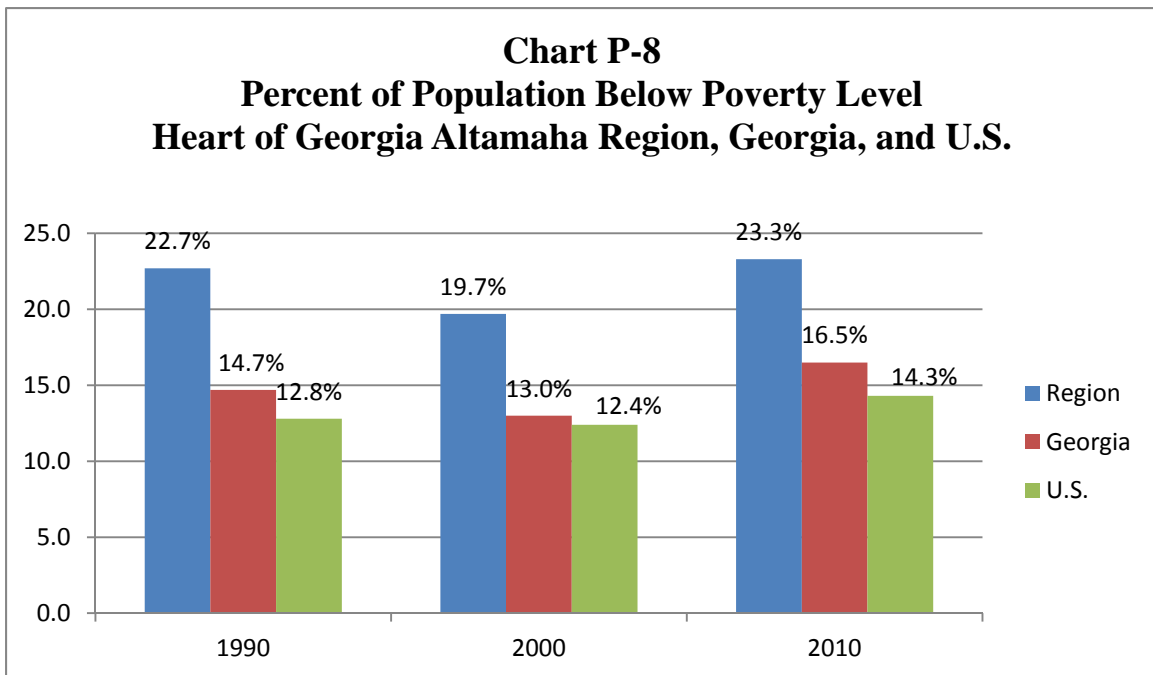
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-7
Median Household Income
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-8
Percent of Population Below Poverty Level
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Economic Development

Although down in terms of actual number and percentage of total employment, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region remains strongly reliant on agriculture and manufacturing as mainstays of the economy. The Region is home to Georgia's state vegetable, the Vidalia Sweet Onion, and has an expanding vegetable crop base. The Region remains at the heart of Georgia's timber belt and has the highest employment percentage of forest related jobs compared to total employment and the greatest dependency on forest based compensation compared to total compensation of any other region in Georgia. The Region's vibrant manufacturing sector makes the Region a net exporter to Georgia's ports, and has caused the Georgia Department of Economic Development to label the Region as one of Georgia's most diverse because of the wide variety of manufactured products. The Region's fields and forests continue to offer potential for future growth and new economic opportunities, both in agribusiness and manufacturing.

At the same time, the Region has become increasingly dependent on state and local government jobs as a stable and reliable source of employment and earnings, both of which are significantly higher as a percentage regionally than the rest of the state. Much of that employment can be found in the presence of a number of state, federal, and private correctional facilities that are located within the Region. While the Region has seen significant growth in the services sector, that growth has not been to the extent that has been seen both statewide and nationally. However, the fastest growing occupations in the Region are in service occupations, such as health care, and in specialized technology-oriented and computer-related jobs.

Unemployment rates in the Region have been consistently higher in the Region than the levels seen both statewide and nationally. Like the rest of the state during the recent economic recession, the Region saw the number of those unemployed more than double. However, the Region is positioned well to address its economic and workforce challenges. Eight (8) post-secondary institutions are present within the Region, and there are several regional and multi-county economic development organizations and authorities where local governments are pooling their resources to find shared solutions. The Region's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program administered by the Regional Commission has consistently been recognized as one of

the top performing regions not only in the state, but nationally as well. Local governments also take advantage of numerous state and federal assistance programs to further help promote increased economic development.

Chart ED-1
Employment by Type
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.

2000

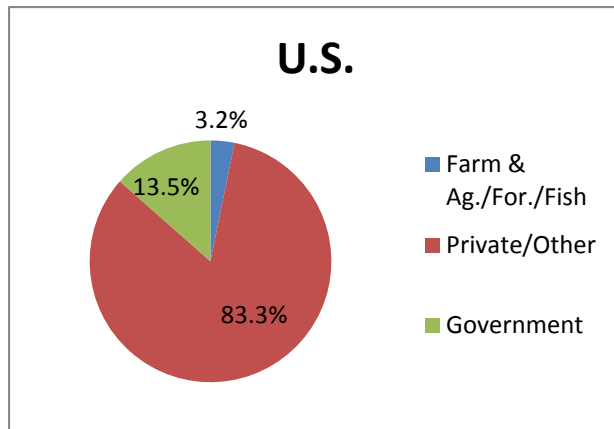
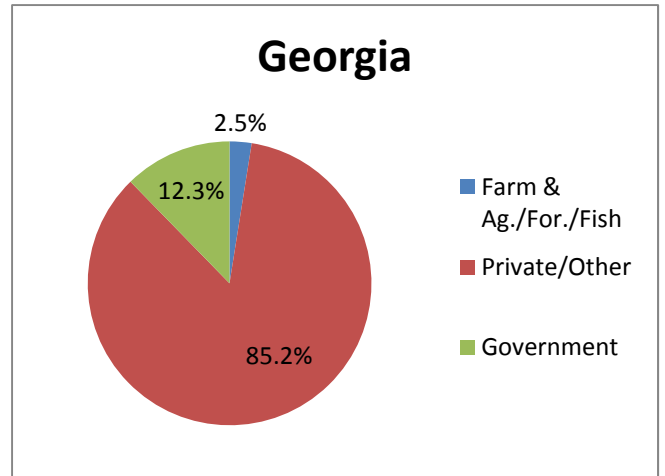
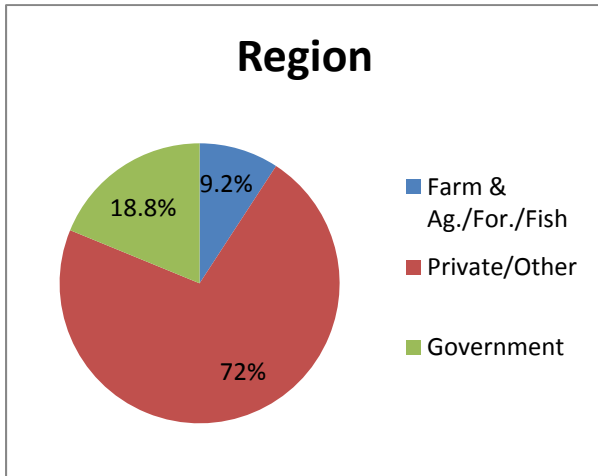
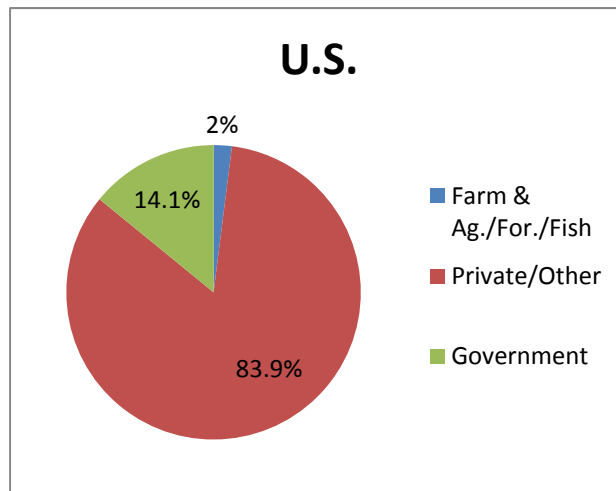
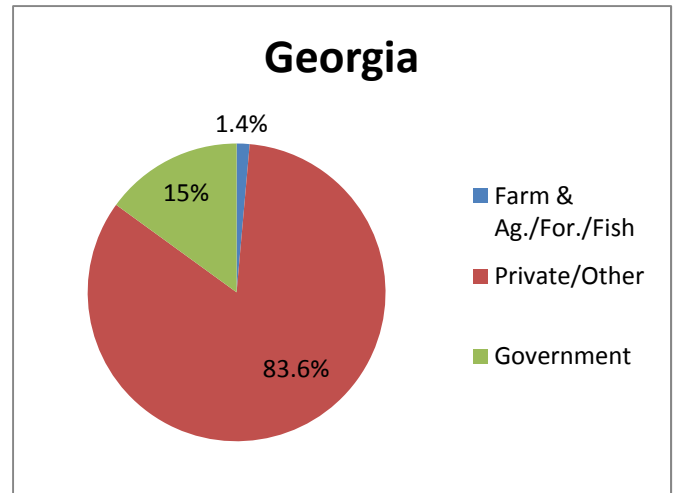
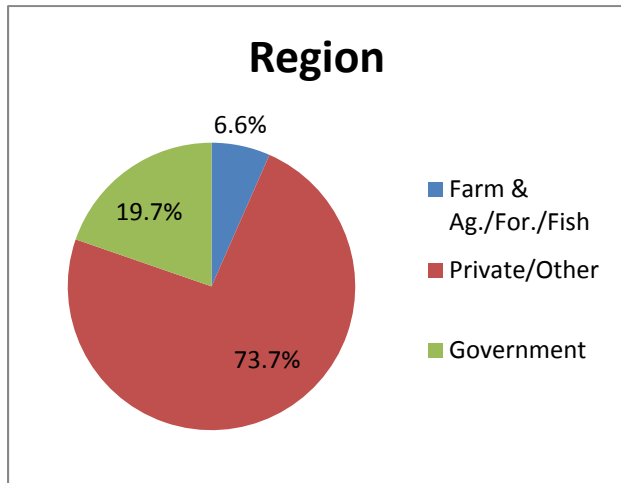


Chart ED-1
Employment by Type
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.

2010



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census and Bureau of Economic Analysis data, 2013.

Chart ED-2
Earnings by Type
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.

2000

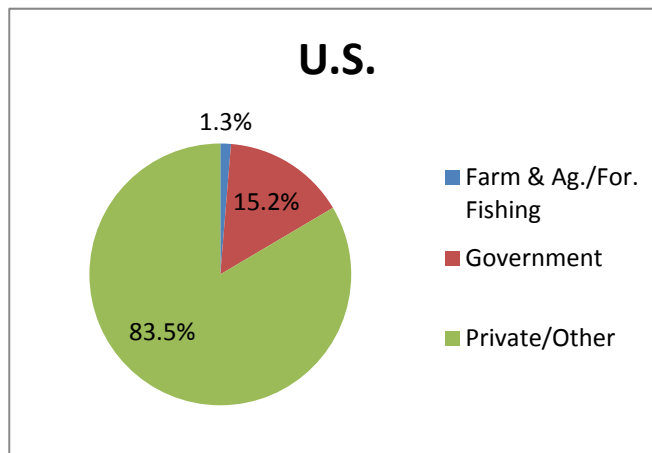
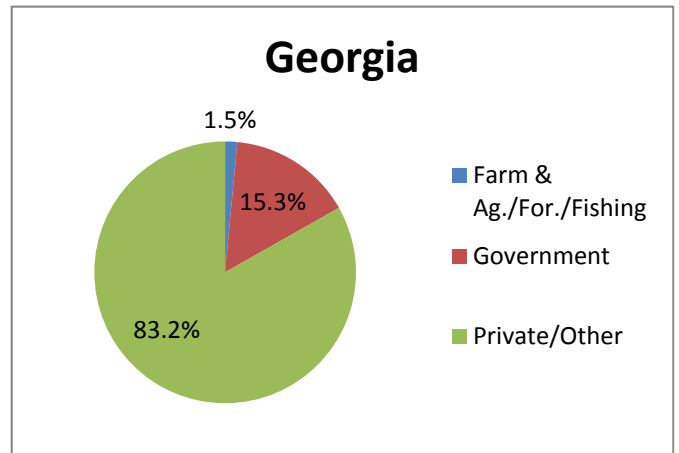
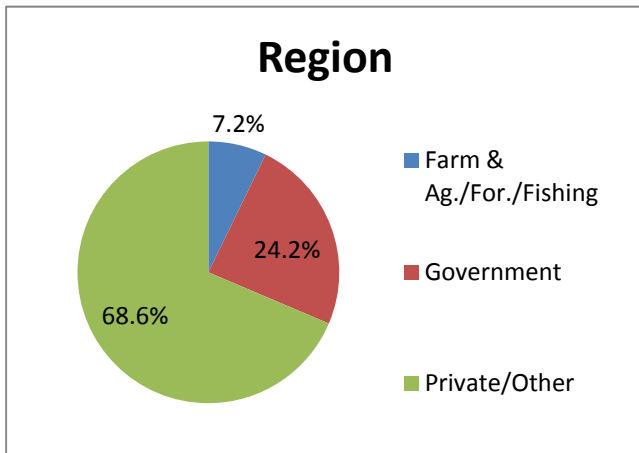
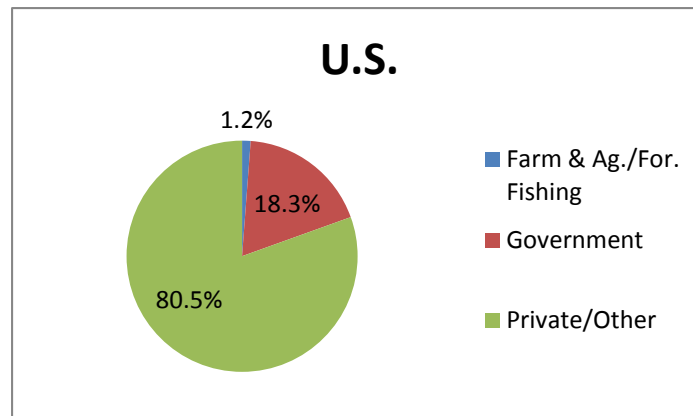
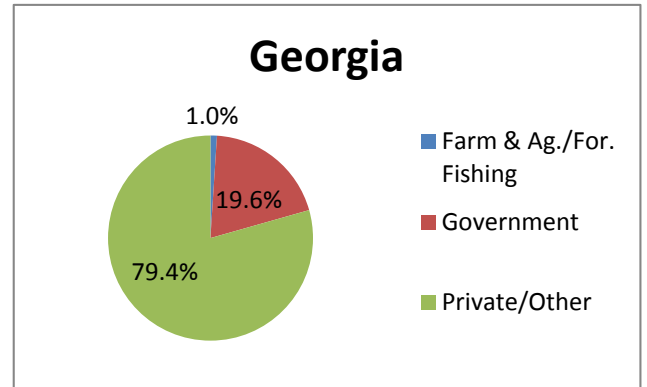
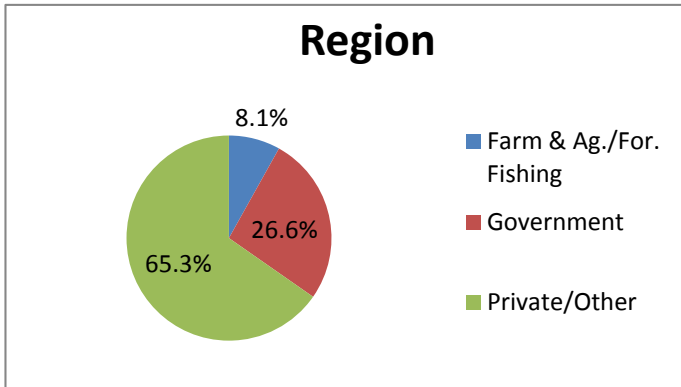
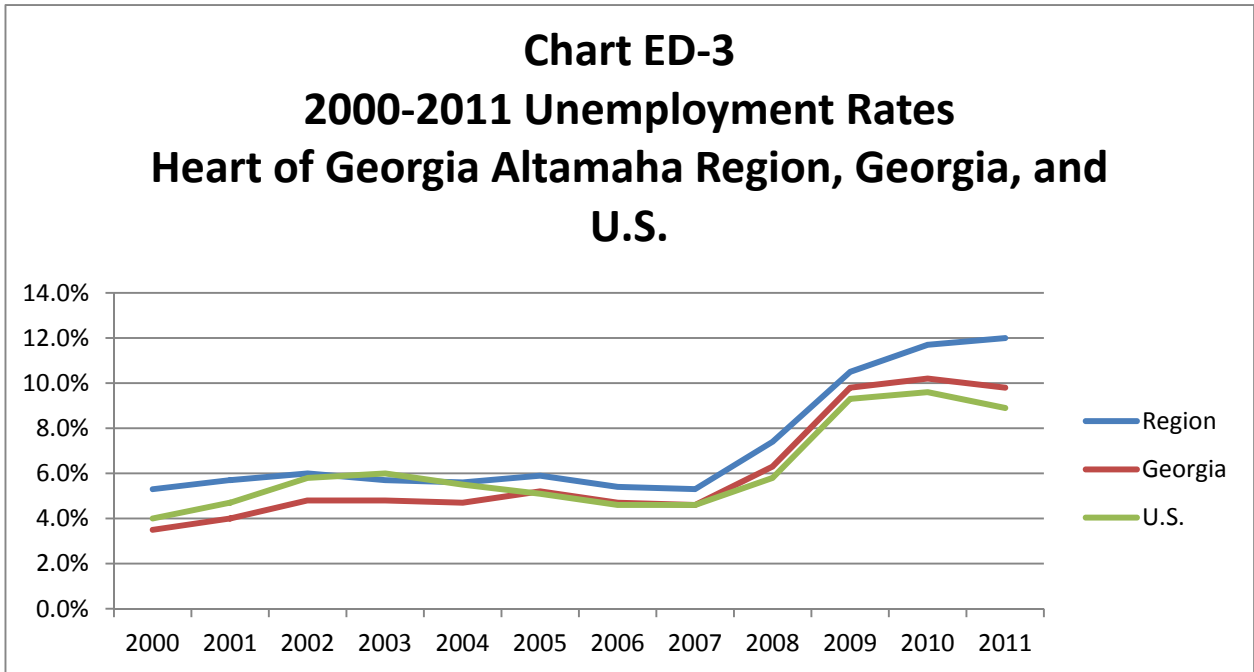


Chart ED-2
Earnings by Type
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.

2010



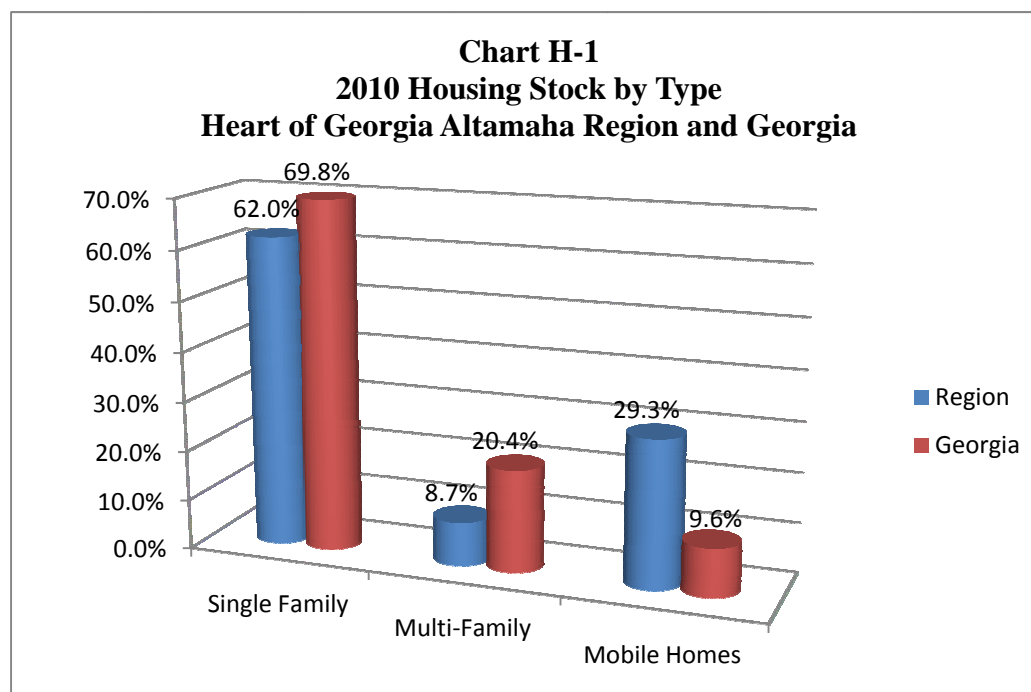
Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census and Bureau of Economic Analysis data, 2013.



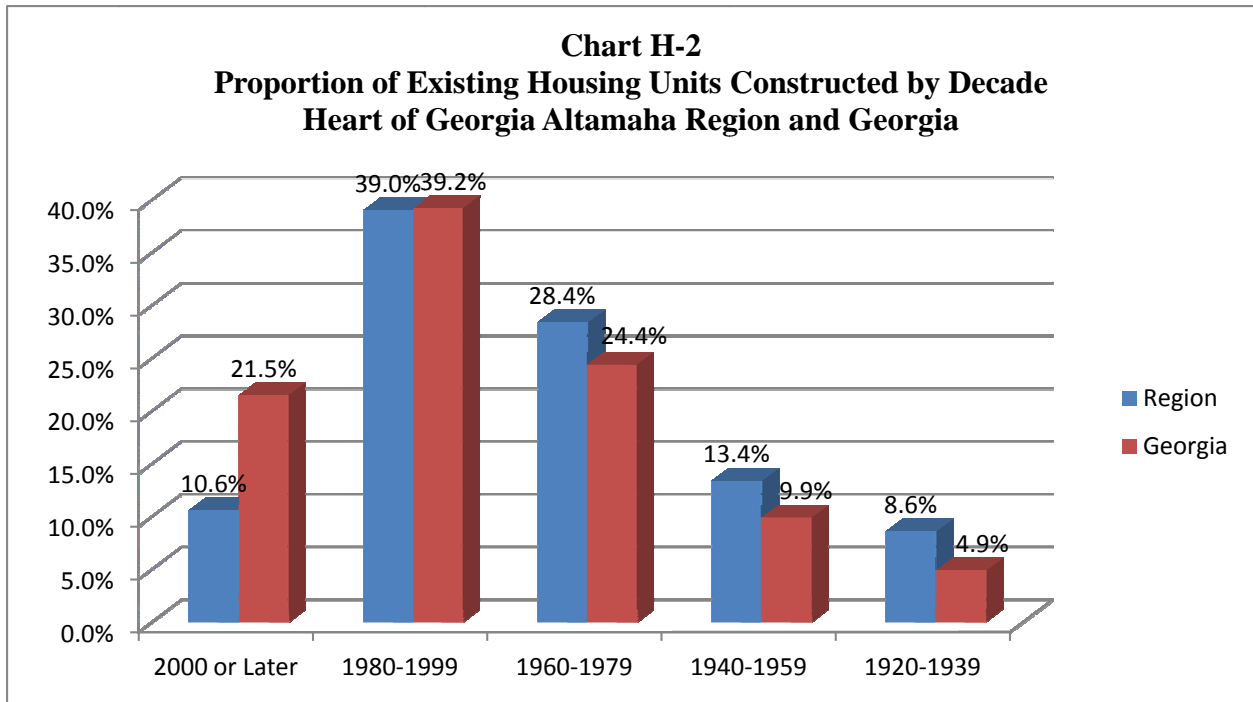
Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2012.

Housing

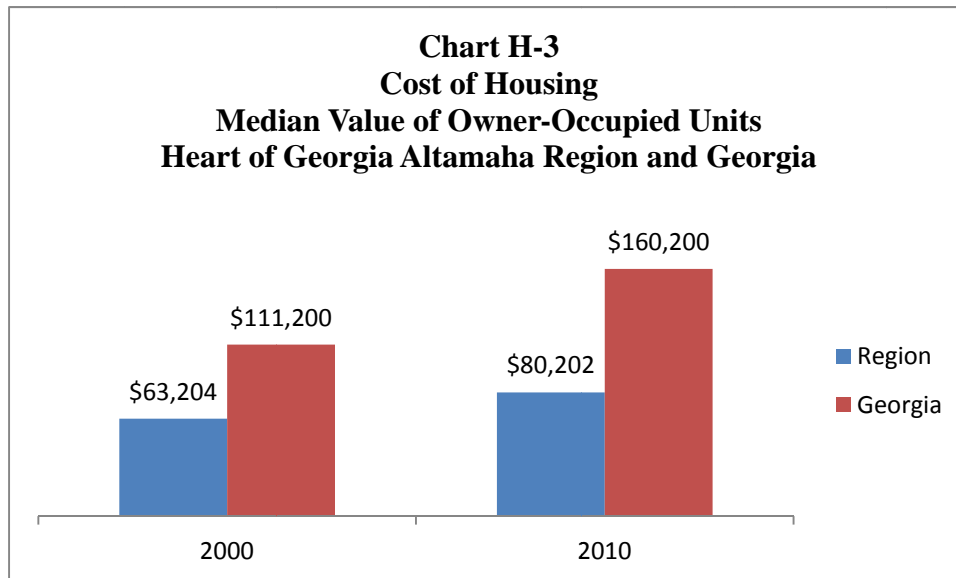
A lack of diversity in housing choices remains an issue in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. The most significant change in the Region's housing stock in the last two decades has been the dramatic rise in the number of manufactured housing that is present, with a growth rate that was double that of the growth in the overall housing stock. While multi-family housing did grow at a faster rate than the housing stock as a whole, it still remains a small percentage of the Region's overall housing stock. The Region has an older housing stock than the state as a whole, as slower population growth regionally, compared to the rest of the state, resulted in fewer new units being constructed locally than elsewhere. Housing costs, both in terms of median home values and median rent, are also much lower in the Region than Georgia as a whole, largely due to the higher volume of manufactured housing. The percentage of households in the Region that are considered cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened is also at or even slightly below state levels. The need for increased code enforcement to deal with the presence in some areas of substandard, dilapidated, or vacant housing remains a primary issue, as is the need for improved planning and subdivision regulations. There is an existing need, as well as likely an expanding need in the future, for housing rehabilitation and revitalization throughout the Region.



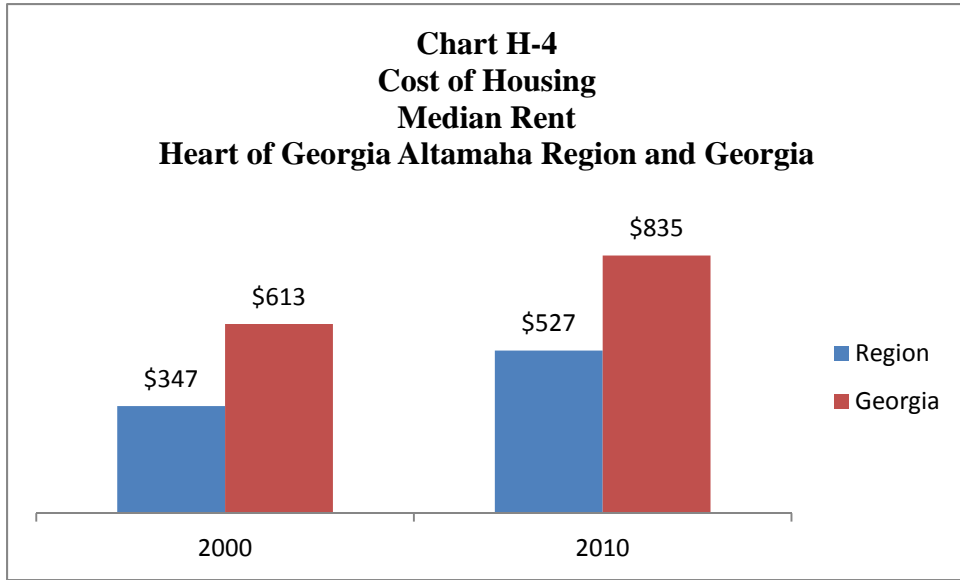
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Community Facilities and Services

The local governments in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region have adequate facilities and services to meet current and future needs in some areas while still lacking somewhat in others, although many local governments continue to work to improve and upgrade their infrastructure as the opportunity and need arises, and sufficient resources are available. The Region is blessed with an abundant supply of groundwater from the Floridan Aquifer, which gives many local governments an excellent source of water supply. Adequate sewer service, however, is not as readily available in a number of smaller communities, mainly due to a lack of feasibility resulting from limited tax bases. Another primary concern for many local governments is the need for increased manpower, equipment, and facilities upgrades to improve the level of public safety services, particularly in the area of fire protection. Many local recreation facilities and services are in need of upgrades and improvements, and the Region's rivers, which could be major assets for increased recreation and tourism, remain largely underutilized. Although existing solid waste facilities and services appear to be generally adequate to meet the Region's current and future needs, an increased emphasis on establishing greater opportunities for recycling is much needed. The lack of availability of adequate broadband and other telecommunications services in many areas of the Region remains another major issue in need of significant attention. The Region has the greatest percentage of residents unserved and underserved with adequate broadband levels of any in the state. Greater access to, and availability of, high-speed internet and other forms of telecommunication will be vital to further economic development and recruitment efforts.

Transportation

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is well-served by an extensive network of highways, and is well-positioned to take advantage of its location near Georgia's ports and access to metro markets. The Region also has an impressive rail network comprised of both of Georgia's Class 1 railroads and three (3) shortline railroads with service to all 17 counties. Logistics and economic development of the Region are further boosted by the presence of 13 of Georgia's 95 general aviation airports, including five (5) which classify as Georgia Department of Transportation Level III Airports of national or regional significance.

Improvements to this significant and important transportation infrastructure will be possible through the Governor’s Road Improvement Program, the Region passage of T-SPLOST, and ongoing federal/state/local improvements. There are transportation infrastructure and other issues in the Region, including significant percentages of unpaved roads, large local paving maintenance needs, the limited availability of public transit and appropriate funding, and the lack of alternative facilities and development. There is also significant Region potential to improve transportation infrastructure and access through the T-SPLOST, Governor’s Road Improvement Program completion, development of bicycle and other multi-use trails, and intergovernmental cooperation and promotion.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Cooperation among local governments, particularly in a rural area, is essential to adequately addressing issues facing the Region. The Region’s local governments generally work well together, and often meet on both an intra-county level and among one or more counties to discuss issues as the need arises. The strong level of coordination and cooperation in the Region is bearing some significant fruit through the presence of several successful joint ventures. The Altamaha River Partnership, initiated in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, has had much success in seeking to preserve, protect, and promote the Altamaha River for recreational and nature-based tourism purposes. The annual “Peaches to the Beaches” weekend, established by the Golden Isles Parkway Association, which was largely formed within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, has become highly successful in attracting large numbers of visitors to the Region each year in March. More recently, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region was one of only three (3) regions statewide to pass a regional Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST) to further the improvement of the Region’s transportation infrastructure and bring about much needed improvements region-wide. Continued coordination and cooperation among local governments gives the Region much potential to achieve common solutions to address critical needs across the Region.

Natural and Cultural Resources

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has significant cultural, historic, and natural resources important not only regionally, but also of state, national, and even global importance. This outstanding array of resources and history was profiled in depth in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's 2012 Regional Resource Plan. These resources hold much potential for not only needed resource protection, but also for a green infrastructure network backdrop important to Region character, quality of life, recreational uses, economic development, and tourism. There is much unrealized potential.

ANALYSIS OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

As noted, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is a large rural region with no metropolitan areas. The Region's past, and to a large extent, its present and future are closely tied to an agrarian economy and a rural landscape dominated by fields and pine forests. More than 80 percent of its current land use remains in agriculture and forest. The Region does contain the U.S. Census Bureau designated micropolitan statistical areas of Dublin (Laurens-Johnson counties), Jesup (Wayne County), and Vidalia (Toombs-Montgomery counties). These micropolitan areas are the Region's growth centers with other secondary growth areas around larger municipalities, mostly along principal arterials. The low population densities of the Region, slow growth trends, and abundance of open space translates to a lack of serious or immediate development threats. Intense development will continue to concentrate in existing growth and water/sewer service areas around municipalities. Residential development in unincorporated areas will remain of relatively low density.

The Regional Planning Requirements dictate that the Analysis of Development Patterns contain two components: a Projected Development Patterns Map and identification of Areas Requiring Special Attention.

Projected Development Patterns Map

The Projected Development Patterns Map for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is shown following this section. This map was based on Regional Commission staff analysis, including existing and future land use of the Region compiled from local comprehensive plans and other sources, local water/sewer service areas, and knowledge of local trends, regulations, facilities or other circumstance. As required in the DCA Regional Planning Requirements, the following general categories of development patterns were utilized in preparing this map:

- *Conservation*

Areas to be preserved in order to protect important resources or environmentally sensitive areas of the region. Areas shown as conservation must correspond to the Regionally Important Resource Map for the region.

- *Rural*

Areas not expected to become urbanized or require provision of urban service during the planning period;

- *Developed*

Areas exhibiting urban type development patterns and where urban service (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) are already being provided at the time of plan preparation;

- *Developing*

Areas that will likely become urbanized and require provision of new urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) during the planning period.

The “Conservation” areas are those identified on the Regionally Important Resource Map of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission’s *Regional Resource Plan* (2012). The “Rural” areas are essentially the same as those currently existing within the Region outside the municipalities and their growth areas, and outside the identified “Conservation Areas.” The green “Conservation” areas are truly a special component of the “Rural” areas, which are shown in white on the map. As shown, most of the Region is expected to remain in low density, rural uses. While such rural uses will have some residential and other uses, these will remain of relatively low density with surrounding prominent agricultural/forest/conservation uses, and will not significantly impact the rural character.

All of the Region’s municipalities are shown as “Developed” simply because of their “urban” nature and municipal infrastructure, especially given the scale of the map. Many of these “Developed” areas, especially the smaller populated ones, will have land uses and open spaces of a more rural nature. Many have significant infill development opportunities.

The “Developing” areas are known areas of growth and potential growth, primarily around the Region’s larger municipalities. Not surprisingly, the larger “developing” areas of the Region are located near/around the major growth centers of the Region: Dublin, Jesup, and Vidalia. Following these are other secondary growth centers concentrated around Baxley-Hazlehurst, Swainsboro, Cochran, and Eastman. A third tier of “developing” growth areas include areas around Glennville and Reidsville, Claxton, Metter, and McRae/Helena, as well as more limited ones around Abbeville, Alamo, Mount Vernon, Soperton, and Wrightsville. A few smaller municipalities, including Dudley, Dexter, Oak Park, Pulaski, Rentz, and eastern Wayne County have expected developing growth areas primarily because of infrastructure service areas, school locations, or adjacent growth influences.

Areas Requiring Special Attention

The 17-county Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region remains largely rural, without any metropolitan statistical areas within its boundaries, although the population continues to grow at a slow, but steady pace in all Region counties. There is a strong desire throughout the Region to retain the area’s rural, agrarian, and small town heritage, while balancing compatible green growth and economic development. Analysis of existing and future land use trends regionwide has resulted in identification of the following areas requiring special attention to protect existing resources and to utilize them appropriately, as applicable.

Regionally Important Resources

A large portion of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region contains Regionally Important Resources, which are identified in the 2012 *Regional Resource Plan: Regionally Important Resources for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission*. The resources are divided into four major categories: Green Infrastructure Network; State Vital Areas; Potential Conservation Opportunity Areas; and Cultural Resources. Each is shown as a layer on the Regionally Important Resources map contained in the Regional Resource Plan.

The Green Infrastructure Network encompasses both “Primary Corridors” and “Secondary Connectors,” as well as existing conservation lands within the Region, including the

three state parks, the 14 state-owned wildlife management areas/public fishing areas/natural areas owned by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources; other State-owned lands; and land trust or other privately protected lands. The “Primary Corridors” consists of the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ohoopsee, Canoochee, Ogeechee, Alapaha, and Little Satilla rivers and Gum Swamp/Little Ocmulgee River and Beard’s Creek, with their floodplains, a 1,000 foot buffer area, and/or the boundaries of any publicly or privately conserved lands (now and in the future) along the corridor, if greater in width. The “Secondary Connectors” are important tributaries of the “Primary Corridors.” Three or more of the approximately 110 “Secondary Connectors” are located in each of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region counties, where they provide plant and animal habitat protection and facilitate green network connection within and beyond the Region.

The State Vital Areas formally designated as Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Regionally Important Resources are “protected rivers,” “jurisdictional wetlands,” and “significant groundwater recharge areas.” All are addressed as important natural resources requiring special protection under the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. The Region’s “protected rivers” include the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ohoopsee, Canoochee, Little Satilla, and Ogeechee. These are also considered Regionally Important Resources under the previously discussed Green Infrastructure Network as “Primary Corridors.” The Region has an abundance of wetlands, with many of the most significant ones located in floodplains associated with the numerous rivers, streams, and creeks and their tributaries throughout the 17 Heart of Georgia Altamaha counties. There are also a large number of significant groundwater recharge areas within the Region, including those which recharge recent shallow aquifers (Miocene/Pliocene Recent Unconfined Aquifers) as well as some in Bleckley, Laurens, and Wilcox counties that recharge the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer System. The Floridan/Jacksonian System is the major source of public drinking water in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and much of South Georgia, as well as parts of Florida and South Carolina. Most of the significant groundwater recharge areas identified within the Region have high or medium pollution susceptibility, with those which recharge the Floridan/Jacksonian Aquifer having high vulnerability to pollution.

The Region’s Potential Conservation Opportunity Areas are comprised of high priority natural areas the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has identified as part of its

official Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy and State Wildlife Action Plan, which are not currently conserved. Many of these areas are located along the rivers and streams of Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region counties. In addition, existing leased, not owned, DNR State Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and lands within the Region used for wildlife management and public outdoor recreation opportunities are also designated RIRs. These are recognized areas in need of more secure conservation ownership. The portions of the Fort Stewart Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB), as designated by the Fort Stewart Joint Land Use Study and the U.S. Army, which are located in Evans and Tattnall counties, are also formally designated RIRs for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. This is due to the area's value, although not yet fully realized, to the natural and cultural heritage within the Region, as well as its economic and social values related to protection of the military missions of the Fort Stewart Military Installation.

Those Cultural Resources in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region formally designated as RIRs are divided into two sub-categories: "National Register Rural Landscapes" and "Known Significant Archaeological Sites." The National Register-listed Rural Landscapes include four properties: Mitchell J. Greene Plantation (Evans County); McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (Toombs County); Willie T. McArthur Farm (Montgomery County); and Woodland, also known as the Winship-McArthur Homestead (Wheeler County). All are listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the state or national level of significance, rather than at the local level (which is the case for the vast majority of National Register properties). They are important examples representative of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region's agrarian, forestry, and rural heritage. None of these farms are located within the previously described Green Infrastructure Network, which makes their RIR designation even more significant.

The "Known Significant Archaeological Sites" formally designated as RIRs in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region are: Sansavilla WMA; Doctortown; the Fernbank Glass Site; Fish Trap Cut; The Forks (Altamaha and Ochoopee); and The Forks (Oconee and Ocmulgee). All of these sites are located within the RIR designated "Primary Corridors" of the Altamaha River Basin and are likely of national significance in terms of pre-historic, Native-American, early exploration and settlement, military, economic, and/or other areas of history.

All of the natural and cultural resources identified as Regionally Important Resources in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region are subject to a variety of existing and/or potential threats of differing degrees. In general, these include: environmental degradation; habitat fragmentation; inappropriate land use; incompatible development; lack of resource understanding; vandalism; and specific to historic structures/landscapes, neglect and deferred maintenance. For more detailed information on the Region's Regionally Important Resources, consult the Regional Resource Plan.

Areas Where Significant Natural/Cultural Resources Likely to be Impacted by Development

Currently, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is experiencing only minor problems concerning development impacts on areas with significant natural and/or cultural resources, which is consistent with the Region's slow, but steady growth. There is future potential for such impacts on the previously discussed Regionally Important Resources, many of which are located within or adjacent to the Region's rivers and their tributaries, but few areas of current conflict. Other areas where development is more likely or has occurred are the micropolitan and developing areas near Dublin, Jesup, Vidalia/Lyons, and to a lesser extent, Swainsboro, as well as areas between Baxley and Hazlehurst, and to a lesser extent, near Cochran and Eastman.

Areas Where Rapid Development or Land Use Changes are Expected

While there are no areas within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region where truly rapid development is expected, there are developing areas adjacent to most of the larger cities, as shown on the Projected Development Patterns map. Those counties experiencing and/or expecting the most growth are Laurens (Dublin area); Toombs (Vidalia/Lyons area); Wayne (Jesup/Odum area); Appling and Jeff Davis (Baxley/Hazlehurst area); and Emanuel (Swainsboro area). Most of these areas, however, need additional water and sewer infrastructure to facilitate and accommodate expected and desired growth and development.

Areas Needing Redevelopment

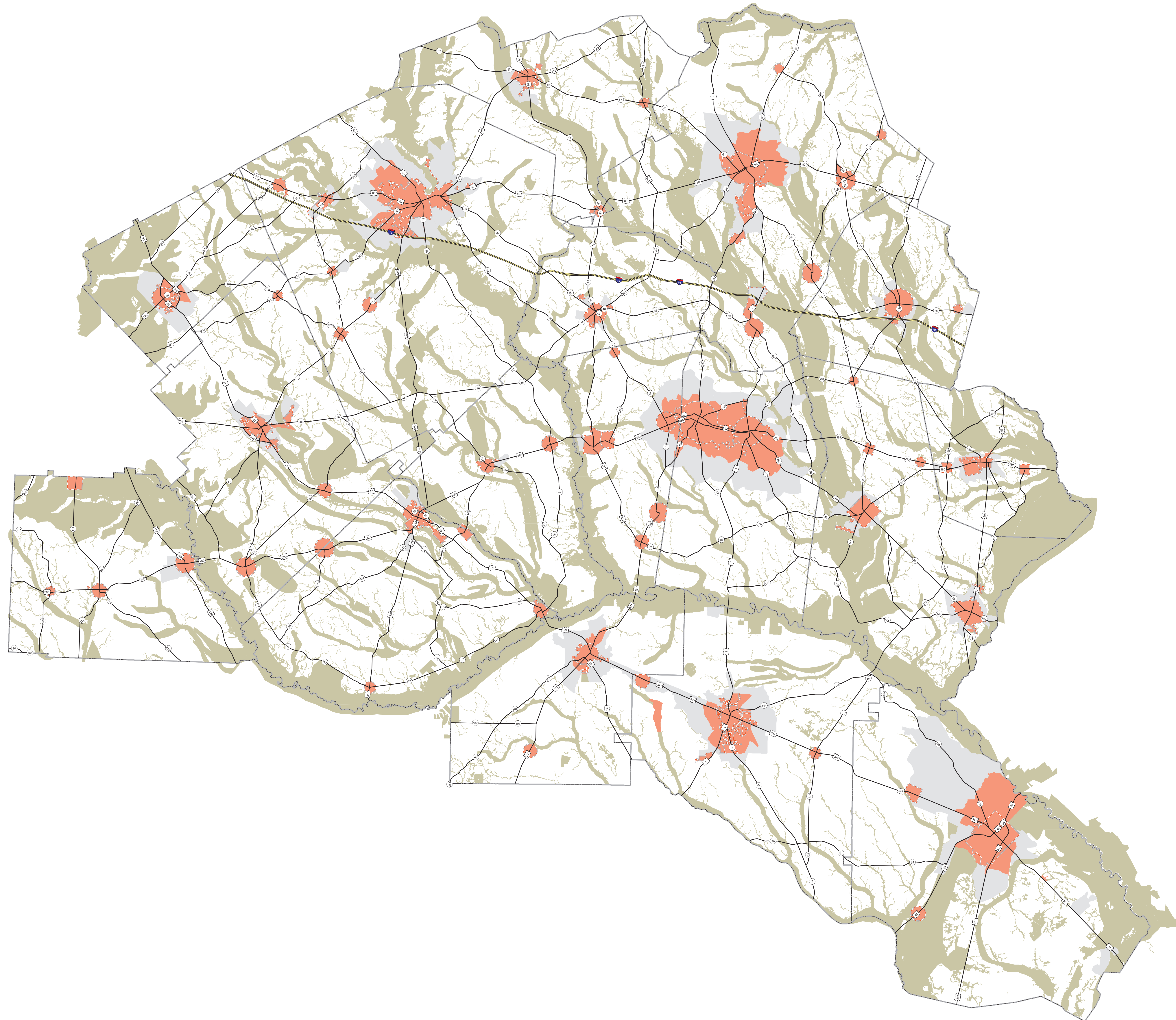
The need for redevelopment exists Region-wide in most municipalities' existing developed areas, but most especially in downtowns, historic areas and other older neighborhoods, and early commercial areas. There are also some former industrial areas in need of redevelopment for new industrial or other use, including passive recreation, such as the former Amercord site in Lumber City in Telfair County.

Areas with Significant Infill Development Opportunities

There are significant infill development opportunities scattered throughout the Region in currently developed areas, particularly in the smaller towns, and in previously serviced water/sewer areas. These include vacant lots/properties in both residential and commercial areas, which usually already have access to water and sometimes sewer infrastructure.

Areas with Significant Disinvestment

The Heart of Georgia Region has such areas scattered throughout its 17 counties, as all have persistent or high rates of poverty. The Region also contains a number of Census tracts identified as having high levels of poverty. Most of the residential redevelopment areas, which are often eligible CDBG target areas, have significant levels of disinvestment. In addition, portions of some or entire older downtown commercial areas fall into this category, particularly in the Region's smaller towns.



Legend

- State/US Hwys
- Interstate
- City/Town Limits

Projected Development Patterns

- Developed
- Developing
- Rural
- Conservation

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Economic Development

Issues

- Lower levels of educational attainment than the state as a whole.
- Additional workforce development/job skills improvement efforts to ensure that the population has the skills and training necessary to allow the Region to better attract and retain businesses and industries.
- Greater infrastructure development (e.g. water, sewer, telecommunications, etc.) to guide/attract growth.
- Greater development of modern, up-to-date transportation network (increased access to four-lane highways, rail, airport upgrades).
- Lack of access to high-speed technology infrastructure in all areas.
- Lack of an enhanced economic development marketing strategy that seeks to promote a regional identity.
- Small number of active leadership development training/programs to educate communities on importance of growth and development.
- Need for increased downtown revitalization efforts, particularly in smaller communities.
- Greater promotion/development of tourism efforts with a focus on venues and activities that capitalize on the Region's heritage and resources (agricultural, natural, cultural, etc.).
- Significant presence of migrant/seasonal workers presents challenges concerning the delivery of public services (education, health care, etc.).
- Greater focus on water supply planning needed in conjunction with regional and statewide water management plans.

Opportunities

- Capitalize on the presence of several technical colleges and post-secondary institutions to further workforce development and educational level improvement efforts.

- Passage of the Transportation SPLOST in the HOGARC Region and ongoing transportation improvements (e.g. four-laning of U.S. 1, airport upgrades, etc.) to increase connectivity.
- Proximity to the Georgia Coast and the ports at Savannah and Brunswick.
- Continue to support/enhance the Region's economic base (agriculture/forestry, etc.).
- Enhance ongoing leadership development training and foster new programs.
- Several regional partnerships to support economic development efforts: joint development authorities, Altamaha River Partnership, Woodpecker Trail Association, I-16 Corridor Alliance, Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, Golden Isles Parkway Association, and currently organizing Ocmulgee River Water Trail Partnership.
- Increase efforts at downtown development/small town revitalization to enhance and maintain vibrant and attractive downtowns throughout the Region.
- Continue support of tourism promotion efforts and seek to develop additional activities/venues.
- Support/enhance promotion of new markets and uses and alternative agricultural and forestry crops/resources.
- Capitalization of Region's advantages in logistics/location.
- Utilize HOGARC Regional Resource Plan and Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study to encourage increased conservation and sensitive utilization of natural and cultural resources for nature-based and heritage tourism.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Issues

- Need for increased focus on public educational awareness efforts emphasizing the importance of conservation/protection of the Region's natural/cultural resources.
- Encouraging compatible utilization of the Region's natural/cultural resources through efforts to promote/attract nature-based/adventure, heritage tourism, and agri-tourism, along with increased development of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Lack of growth management/regulation/enforcement that would seek to preserve the Region's rural character.

- Need for increased utilization/promotion of historic preservation in downtown development efforts.
- Continued promotion/enhanced knowledge of the Region's history/historic sites.
- Greater focus needed for aesthetics/beautification improvements.
- Continued protection of water quality and availability. A number of water bodies in the Region are included on the EPA 303 (d) List of Impaired Streams. The need exists for greater enforcement of EPD's Part V Environmental Planning Criteria. Increased attention to water supply planning also exists with the recent development of regional water management plans and a statewide plan.

Opportunities

- Continue to support efforts to retain, enhance, and promote the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities (i.e. three (3) state parks, numerous Wildlife Management Areas and Public Fishing Areas) and seek development of additional venues and linkages.
- Significant number of protected river corridors.
- Capitalize on the Region's history and numerous historic sites to promote heritage tourism.
- Utilize HOGARC Regional Resource Plan and Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study to encourage increased nature-based tourism and conservation efforts.
- Newly designated Certified Local Government (CLG) status for Dublin, the first local historic preservation program in Region to achieve this recognition.

Community Facilities and Services

Issues

- Region's communities are continuously seeking funding to maintain/upgrade/expand public infrastructure (particularly water and sewer) to maintain adequate capacity to serve existing residents as well as to accommodate and provide for future growth.
- Significant upgrades to the Region's transportation network are needed (especially increased road paving/resurfacing in many communities and widening of major highways, but also rail system improvements and continued airport upgrades) to increase connectivity and to attract/promote future development.

- Lack of adequate access to alternative forms of transportation (i.e. bicycle/pedestrian).
- Many communities are seeking funding to expand access to/upgrade telecommunications/technology infrastructure to provide broadband and to meet current and future demand.
- Need to upgrade broadband service levels in Region.
- Enhancements to public safety services/facilities are much needed throughout the Region.
- The affordability of maintaining adequate access to solid waste services/facilities, including the expansion/development of stable markets for recycling programs, is a concern.
- A critical need exists for the continued provision of access to quality health care, including needed improvements/upgrades to facilities, retention of local hospitals, and the continued recruitment of health care professionals in all communities.
- Increased funding is needed to assist the Region's communities in maintaining/improving parks and recreational facilities in order to enhance quality of life and protect greenspace.
- There is an ongoing need for improvements to educational facilities/services in order to maintain state-of-the-art programs and services.
- Communities are continuously seeking funding to enhance cultural facilities/services to promote improved quality of life.
- The ability to continue to provide adequate government facilities/services and support for professionally managed governmental operations remains a concern.

Opportunities

- There are opportunities throughout the Region to utilize ongoing and/or planned infrastructure expansions to guide growth to desired areas and prevent sprawl.
- Passage of the T-SPLOST in the HOGARC Region and the presence of several state-designated developmental highways (e.g. U.S. 1, U.S. 280, U.S. 441) and their planned upgrades will be instrumental in attracting future growth.
- Ongoing efforts to upgrade/improve airports in numerous communities in the Region (runway extensions, new terminal buildings, etc.) will be essential in attracting future

industrial growth in particular, in addition to providing quicker, easier transportation access.

- Continuing expansion of Region's rail network, and inclusion of Region's federally designated Macon-to Savannah-Jacksonville high speed rail corridor.
- Public transit programs throughout the Region provided through DHR and other entities offer increased mobility for residents.
- Greater alternative access to destinations along the East Coast will be provided through the continued retention of an Amtrak passenger rail hub in Jesup in the newly renovated depot.
- The opportunity exists for improved access to alternative forms of transportation through sidewalk improvements in many communities, the presence of several state bicycle routes in the Region along with numerous designated regional routes, and the potential for the development of local bike routes, and multi-use trails within/near Region's river corridors.
- The continuing development of the Middle Georgia College Aviation Campus in Eastman offers vast potential for the unique existence of a highly-skilled aviation workforce in the Region.
- The presence of an abundant supply of groundwater provides great potential for drawing future growth to the Region.
- Ongoing efforts to expand/upgrade telecommunications infrastructure present opportunities to extend modern, high-speed technology access to all areas of the Region.
- Improved access to parks/recreational facilities helps create greater outdoor recreation opportunities that promote an improved quality of life.
- Continued support/expansion of the Region's technical colleges presents opportunities for increased access to post-secondary education and a more skilled workforce.
- Ongoing enhancements to various cultural facilities and services in the Region can lead to increased opportunities for entertainment and enrichment.

Housing

Issues

- Many communities are seeking assistance to help citizens in need of pursuing housing rehabilitation and other improvements to upgrade housing quality, especially low to moderate income housing.
- The lack of sufficient availability of affordable housing choices, due to the recent decline of the housing market, presents existing and future residents with limited housing options.
- The lack of diversity of the Region's housing mix has led to an increased reliance on manufactured housing as the most viable option for many residents, which in turn creates concerns dealing with tax revenue and structural maintenance.
- The prevalence of substandard housing due to a lack of code enforcement in many communities has presented a growing need to seek solutions to reduce and eliminate areas of blight and help revitalize declining neighborhoods.
- A lack of land use/growth management regulations, primarily in the unincorporated areas, presents major challenges to guiding/directing future housing growth to desired areas served by existing and/or planned infrastructure.
- An emerging concern regionwide is developing solutions to deal with the need to provide adequate housing options for migrants and seasonal workers.
- Many communities have a significant need for aesthetics/appearance improvements, particularly in gateway areas.
- A growing need exists to address the issue of special needs housing (i.e. senior, disabled) to assist in making more housing options available.

Opportunities

- The availability of ample land throughout the Region presents substantial opportunities and potential for attracting future residents.
- The increased utilization/promotion of available assistance programs from various state and federal agencies presents opportunities for creative solutions to address regional issues, such as workforce housing, rehabilitation, blight elimination, and neighborhood revitalization.
- A greater focus on constructing more single-family dwellings on smaller lots can present a more affordable alternative to manufactured housing and create a better diversity of housing choices.

- Opportunity for infill development within Region municipalities or their current service areas.

Land Use

Issues

- Public and political support is significantly lacking in many communities, especially the unincorporated areas, for the development of coordinated land use management planning regulations to guide and direct growth.
- A number of jurisdictions have yet to adopt enforcement of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes that would ensure that structures are maintained and prevented from becoming substandard.
- The lack of growth management regulations makes it difficult for communities to properly manage and guide the expansion of infrastructure to desired areas and to limit the potential for sprawl.
- A greater focus is needed on developing regulations that emphasize the protection, conservation, and sensitive utilization of the Region's natural and cultural resources, particularly the conservation of agricultural and forestry lands and the retention of the Region's rural character.
- Renewed efforts are needed for community aesthetics/beautification improvements in many areas, particularly concerning community gateways/entranceways, in order to create a more attractive first impression to visitors and travelers.
- Many communities are seeking assistance to revitalize their downtown areas and central business districts in order to revitalize local economies, attract more people to the core urban areas, and to reduce sprawl.

Opportunities

- The utilization of alternative zoning and land use regulations may present communities with a more palatable option for addressing the need for growth management regulations than traditional zoning.
- The increased presence and utilization of geographic information systems allows communities a valuable resource in assessing existing land use patterns and projecting future trends.
- Due in large part to its existing and attractive rural character and abundant, outstanding natural and cultural resources, the Region is well positioned to attract

future residents from those seeking a more relaxed setting and a higher quality of life than is often attainable in larger urban centers.

- Because of its rural nature, land values in the Region are typically lower and more affordable than in more urbanized areas. This presents another key factor in being able to attract future growth.
- Underutilized, but especially significant, regionally important natural and cultural resources hold much unrecognized potential for tourism and general economic and community development.
- There are no major conflicts between existing land uses in the Region at present, and there is opportunity to expand current growth areas without conflict.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Issues

- With financial resources being limited, there is a greater need for cooperation and coordination among local governments in the areas of services sharing, the joint delivery of services, and/or consolidation.
- Improved coordination is needed among jurisdictions in establishing/enforcing growth management regulations to prepare for future growth.
- Greater enhancement of the management and structure of local governments is needed, particularly in smaller communities.

Opportunities

- There exists a significant amount of cooperation among cities and counties, both intra-county as well as regionally, in addition with state agencies, particularly in the area of economic development. This should continue to be encouraged and expanded.
- The Region's river corridors hold much potential for enhanced and coordinated protection, resource utilization, and expanded tourism/economic development opportunities through additional cooperation/partnership.
- Improved cooperation and services sharing among local governments would allow communities to better maximize their resources and lead to greater efficiencies in service delivery.
- Continued utilization of/participation in regional partnerships (e.g. HOGARC, Altamaha River Partnership, U.S. 341 Association, Woodpecker Trail Association,

etc.) presents increased opportunities to promote further regional cooperation and coordination and to encourage communities to think regionally.

REGIONAL QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES ASSESSMENT

The following assessment presents an evaluation of the current policies, activities, and development patterns of the Region's local governments for consistency with DCA's Quality Community Objectives. These smart growth principles consist of 15 Quality Community Objectives which are divided into four areas of community development: Development Patterns, Resource Conservation, Social and Economic Development, and Governmental Relations. Consistency with these objectives, derived from the Statewide Planning Goals, is more problematic since many do not seem to be especially applicable to the rural counties that typify the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, and since many also assume the existence of local land use regulation, which is not present in the Region's unincorporated areas at this time. A supplemental Quality Growth Assessment Tool was utilized to evaluate current policies, activities, and development patterns within the Region. In addition to focusing on a regional level, the individual Quality Community Objectives assessment from each local government comprehensive plan was also reviewed.

The responses to individual questions in the Assessment Tool by the Region's local governments are summarized here. This is designed to give a broad perspective of where the Region stands in regards to meeting the Quality Community Objectives while also providing examples of specific circumstances in individual communities. This analysis will help to delineate areas in need of improvement or further development, identify additional issues and opportunities, and provide a framework for developing the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Regional Work Program, as well as Strategies in the Regional Agenda.

Development Patterns

Traditional Neighborhoods Objective

“Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of a more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.”

All zoning ordinances in the Region separate different uses and do not allow neo-traditional development “by right.” However, a number of cities do have a provision for “planned unit developments.” In addition, the City of Metter was assisted by the Regional Commission in establishing a specific infill development ordinance to encourage new development compatible with existing neighborhood patterns. Many municipalities are small enough that they could be considered a “traditional neighborhood.” There are no identified local markets for neo-traditional developments at the current time. People generally desire to live either in the municipalities, near them on relatively large lots, or more likely, large lots (an acre or more) in the unincorporated areas to preserve rural character. A small number of municipalities participate in the “Tree City USA” program and have organized tree-planting campaigns. Several other cities do have tree ordinances, although these are mostly confined to regulating trees along public rights-of-way rather than required in new subdivisions. All communities keep their public areas clean and safe through the use of one of several methods, primarily the use of regular prison inmate details, those in community service programs, and/or public works/local staff.

All of the Region’s communities generally maintain their existing sidewalk networks, which are located primarily in downtown areas and within older residential neighborhoods. Sidewalks are generally not required for new developments. With many traditional residential neighborhoods situated adjacent to downtown central business districts, several errands can typically be done on foot, if so desired. Many communities have elementary schools that are located in or near residential areas. However, most middle and high schools tend to be located in higher traffic areas along major roads. Although sidewalks are present in many of these areas,

walking or biking to school generally is not encouraged. To date, only the Dublin City School System has taken a pro-active stance to address the issue of increased pedestrian access through participation in the Georgia Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to Schools program. Two other communities, Bleckley and Wayne counties, have given previous consideration to participating but have determined that it was not feasible to do so at this time.

Infill Development Objective

“Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.”

Many communities in the Region typically maintain an informal inventory of vacant sites and buildings available for infill development or redevelopment through local leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Development Authority. More formal inventories can be found in the Region's larger communities, where development tends to be more active and frequent. There are several brownfield sites scattered throughout the Region, such as the former Amercord site in Lumber City, the former landfill site in Wayne County, and pockets of vacant industrial sites and buildings in several areas, mostly former textile mills and apparel manufacturing facilities. Development authorities are actively working to promote these sites either for re-use as industrial sites or for redevelopment. There are some opportunities for grayfield development in several communities, particularly in regards to vacant strip mall shopping centers, as well as abandoned downtown buildings in some smaller communities. While most communities do not have plans for nodal development at present, a few opportunities do exist, such as at the I-16/GA 112 interchange in Bleckley County, the Wal-Mart/Terry Coleman Bypass area in Eastman, and the I-16/U.S. 1 interchange area near Oak Park in southern Emanuel County.

There is some vacant land, particularly infill residential lots, with more in need of redevelopment, in many of the Region's municipalities, and there is a desire for more intense residential, commercial, and industrial developments to locate in or near municipalities, major corridors, and principal growth areas. This is likely to happen due to the presence of

infrastructure in the municipalities, available and affordable lands, transportation facilities, and the existence of several regional growth centers. However, past extensions of services outside municipal boundaries in some areas, the availability of relatively cheap land and subdivisions on the fringes of urban areas, and the lack of coordinated land use regulations do work against this objective to some extent. To date, most intense growth within the Region is concentrated near larger municipalities and in desired and serviced locations. As noted earlier, the City of Metter does have a formal residential infill development ordinance.

Sense of Place Objective

“Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community, or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.”

Throughout the Region, each community has its own distinctive characteristics that help define their sense of place, both locally and regionally. Many communities are known for their distinctive downtown areas and residential areas, and even in smaller communities lacking a traditional downtown, the desire exists to encourage development appropriate and compatible with their historic residential character so as to preserve as much of that character as possible. The Region has a rich history and heritage, and although there are only a small number of nationally designated historic districts at present, many others are eligible. Several communities have expressed interest in pursuing the designation of historic districts, whether locally or through the National Register of Historic Places. There is also an abundance of natural resources that help give the Region its character and which played a vital role in U.S., Georgia, Native American, and European history and geography, among them four major rivers (Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Ohoopsee). Other significant natural resources within the Region include the Moody Forest, a portion of the Enduring Farmlands Georgia Scenic Byway, 13 Wildlife Management Areas, four (4) Public Fishing Areas, and three (3) state parks (George L. Smith, Gordonia-Alatamaha, and Little Ocmulgee).

Many communities have made at least some downtown streetscape improvements, with further needs still existing in all of the municipalities. Although there is only one local historic preservation commission in place (Dublin, which was recently designated the first Certified Local Government (CLG) in the Region), potential historic districts exist in many communities, mostly encompassing historic commercial structures downtown as well as adjacent historic residential areas. Very few formal design or aesthetics ordinances exist, and are primarily limited to zoning ordinances in several municipalities, and Metter's infill development ordinance. However, a handful of municipalities have sign ordinances, while several others address the regulation of signs through their zoning ordinances. Only minimal basic land use regulations exist at the county level, such as subdivision regulations, manufactured housing regulations, and solid waste management ordinances. There are no local plans in existence to protect designated farmland.

Transportation Alternatives

“Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternative transportation should be encouraged.”

This is not truly applicable to the Region as large scale alternatives to the automobile in such a rural area are not realistic. All counties are served by DHR's Coordinated Transit Program, while half of the Region's counties support a 5311 rural transit program. All of the municipalities have a good network of well-maintained sidewalks in their downtown areas and some in historic neighborhoods, but only the City of Glennville has a sidewalk development ordinance in place. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC's GIS staff inventoried sidewalks in all municipalities as part of a regional sidewalk survey conducted for GDOT in 2005. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan (June, 2005) identifies numerous regional bicycle routes for possible future development. The plan seeks to create a network of regional routes that would connect the three state parks located in the region (George L. Smith, Gordonia-Alatamaha, and Little Ocmulgee). An update to the Regional Bike/Ped Plan is scheduled to

begin during Fiscal Year 2014. Although there are no local bike plans, several communities do sponsor annual bike rides, in recognition of a growing interest in venture cycling activities. Among the annual events and venues in the region are: Biking Bleckley (Bleckley County), Cruisin' in the Country (Evans County), the Yamassee Bicycle Trail (Montgomery County), and the Southern Pride Agricultural Ride and Ride for the River (Wayne County). Shared or joint parking for commercial and retail development is allowed in most jurisdictions.

Regional Identity Objective

“Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity,” or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.”

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region lies within Georgia's Coastal Plain region and has always been predominantly an agricultural area. The historic 19th and 20th century architecture that can be found throughout the Region conveys the small town, agrarian heritage of the area. Agriculture and agri-business, including vegetable production/processing and forestry, continue to be vital staples of the Region's economy. This importance is well-illustrated with the Region being home to the well-known Vidalia Sweet Onion. Buurma Farms, one of the nation's largest growers and processors of vegetables, has a vegetable processing facility located in Evans County, which is also home to the Claxton and Georgia Fruitcake companies. Two leading manufacturers of timber-related products, Rayonier and Great Southern Wood, have production facilities located in Wayne County.

All but two of the Region's counties participate in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Magnolia Midlands regional tourism partnership to promote heritage, nature-based, and agri-tourism. The other two counties, Emanuel and Johnson, are members of the Classic South travel region. Several counties have designated tourism boards to help promote tourism opportunities and venues, while in other communities the local Chamber of Commerce fills the role of local tourism promotion. Toombs and Montgomery counties have partnered resources together to form the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau in order to address

the need to promote increased tourism efforts from a regional perspective. The Region is rich with such unique tourism opportunities as the Southern Cushman RV Festival (Bleckley County), the Woodpecker (Appling, Tattnall, Candler, and Emanuel counties) and Wiregrass (Candler and Tattnall counties) trails, the Cruisin' in the Country annual bike ride and the long-running Rattlesnake and Wildlife Festival (Evans County), the month-long St. Patrick's Day Festival in Dublin and the annual Redneck Games in East Dublin (Laurens County), the annual folk play "Tales of the Altamaha" (Lyons, Toombs County), the Million Pines Arts and Crafts Festival (Soperton, Treutlen County), and the Wild Hog Festival (Abbeville, Wilcox County). Three (3) state parks, 13 local and state-designated Wildlife Management Areas, and four (4) Public Fishing Areas are scattered throughout the region as well. The Golden Isles Parkway Association covers six Region counties (Appling, Bleckley, Dodge, Jeff Davis, Telfair, and Wayne) in the promotion of the Golden Isles Parkway (US 23/US 341) for tourism and economic development purposes, while the US 441 Heritage Highway Association serves the same purpose in Laurens, Telfair, and Wheeler counties. Several communities located along other such major highways as U.S. 280 and U.S. 301 have also expressed interest in possibly pursuing promotion of these highways. Communities in the Region that are located along U.S. 341 all participate in the annual "Peaches to the Beaches" regional yard sale. All counties and cities also share a regional identity as part of the 17-county Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC Region.

The recently completed 2012 Regional Resource Plan points out that the Region's Green Infrastructure Network holds much promise for economic opportunity and cooperation. It provides a unique Regional identity and marketing opportunity and lends itself to enhancement of Regional character, quality of life, and pride.

Resource Conservation

Heritage Preservation Objective

"The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is

compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.”

There are currently five (5) communities that have National Register historic districts (Metter, Dublin, Vidalia, Rochelle, and Twin City), while several other communities are pursuing possible future designation. In addition, there are other districts in the region that are eligible, encompassing areas of downtown and/or historic residential neighborhoods. 46 individual properties and 13 courthouses in the region are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, while many other properties are known to be eligible. Federal Transportation Enhancement funds have been utilized in many communities for downtown streetscape improvements.

Currently the lone historic preservation commission in the region is in the City of Dublin. A couple of communities have previously pursued developing a preservation ordinance, but no formal ordinance has ever been implemented. 14 of the Region's 17 counties have a historical society, although how active each organization is varies by community. Dublin is the only jurisdiction in the region with a formal ordinance that regulates the manner in which new development must complement the community's historic development in terms of design, scale, materials, and the like. It was recently designated the Region's first Certified Local Government (CLG). There is local interest in and support for heritage preservation; however, this is especially difficult in the unincorporated areas due to lack of zoning and other formal land use regulation.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's recently completed Regional Resource Plan (2012) identifies both natural and cultural resources designated as Regionally Important Resources (RIRs). While there are RIRs located throughout the 17-county Region, many are found in the major river basins, including the six (6) Known Significant Archaeological Sites so designated under the category of Cultural Resources. They are: Doctortown and Sansavilla WMA (Altamaha River, Wayne County); Fernbank Glass Site (Ocmulgee River, Telfair County); Fish Trap Cut (Oconee River, Laurens County); The Forks (Altamaha and Ochoopee rivers, Tattnall and Appling counties); and The Forks (Oconee and

Ocmulgee rivers, Wheeler and Jeff Davis counties). The remaining Cultural Resources designated as RIRs are four (4) National Register-listed Rural Landscape properties, which were selected as representative of the Region's long and continuing agrarian heritage. These properties are: the Mitchell J. Green Plantation (Evans County); the McLemore-Sharpe Farmstead (Toombs County); the Willie J. McArthur Farm (Montgomery County); and Woodland (Winship-McArthur Homestead, Wheeler County). It is important to note that both the archaeological sites and agricultural landscape properties recognized as RIRs are of state and/or national historical significance. Their preservation and conservation is of extreme importance to understanding the history and traditional character of the Region and may provide potential for increased heritage tourism opportunities.

The Regional Resource Plan also notes that while not designated "Regionally Important Resources," there are many other National Register and other cultural resources which may be important to local character, history, economic development, tourism and other avenues. They are certainly worthy of preservation and protection, and are significant to local, and even regional, community identity.

Open Space Preservation Objective

"New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation."

The City of Jesup and Wayne County are the only jurisdictions in the region to have a greenspace plan. The City of Dublin and Laurens County do have an Oconee River Greenway plan. This has not been a local issue in most communities because of the large amount of farmland and timberland which dominates existing land use. Evans County, however, does have a requirement in its subdivision ordinance for greenspace retention in new developments. Evans and Tattnall counties are participating in the Fort Stewart Joint Land Use Study to encourage continued agricultural/forestry uses in an identified buffer area adjacent to the military

installation. There are no mechanisms to achieve future set asides, especially given the low tax bases and the lack of zoning and comprehensive land use regulation in the unincorporated areas of the region.

Eight Region counties along the Altamaha River are among the 11 to participate in the Altamaha River Partnership, which partners with communities to preserve, protect, and promote the natural and cultural heritage along the river corridor. Another such group is currently being organized along the Ocmulgee River, which involves six Region counties. In addition to a number of small-scale recreational trails projects, there are a number of larger active projects in the region to promote the retention and utilization of greenspace. Among such projects are the McMillan Creek Greenway in Jesup, the Dublin Riverwalk and its future linkage to the proposed Oconee River Greenway, and the ongoing development of Town's Bluff (Jeff Davis County). A significant number of counties also have a long-standing working relationship with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in support of the region's public fishing areas, wildlife management areas, and three state parks.

These local, regional, and multi-regional efforts are addressed and expanded upon in the recently completed Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Resource Plan and Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study, which both identify potential greenways/multi-use trails within the Region's river corridors and beyond. As required by DCA's planning rules for Regionally Important Resources, a continuous green infrastructure network was identified in the Regional Resource Plan, which links as many of the Region's significant natural and cultural resources as possible. The RC is currently promulgating these documents with the hope that they will be used to encourage open space preservation and other conservation efforts, while balancing sensitive utilization of these resources for economic development benefit.

Environmental Protection Objective

“Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or

quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.”

Communities throughout the Region recognize the importance of their natural resources and the need for their protection. However, outside of the municipalities there is only minimal existing protection through such measures as subdivision, solid waste, environmental planning criteria, floodplain management, and soil erosion and sedimentation ordinances, as well as health department regulations. Environmental protection is not perceived as a strong local issue, but instead one for the state. The only known comprehensive natural resources inventory in the Region, other than that of the Regional Resource (RIR) Plan, is one prepared for the City of Jesup in association with the McMillan Creek Greenway. Under contract with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the HOGARC completed and is now promulgating a two-phase Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study, which encourages conservation and sensitive development of multi-use trails and greenways within and linking the Region’s river corridors with each other and other regions for increased compatible nature-based and heritage tourism and recreation uses. Each local comprehensive plan further identifies the defining natural resources specific to each individual community, along with measures to encourage their protection. An ordinance implementing the Part V Environmental Planning Criteria covering protected river corridors, wetlands, and significant groundwater recharge areas has been adopted by jurisdictions in all but five region counties, and those communities plan to do so in the near future. Enforcement of the ordinance is carried out primarily through the state and the local health department. While there is generally a local desire to protect natural and cultural resources and quality of life, there is also generally a lack of supportive land use regulation.

A small number of municipalities participate in the Tree City USA program and have organized tree planting campaigns. Several other municipalities do have tree ordinances, although these are mostly confined to regulating trees within the public right-of-way and in public spaces primarily in downtown areas.

Social and Economic Development

Growth Preparedness Objective

“Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.”

All local governments in the Region have completed a full or partial update to their comprehensive plan since 2006, which includes a public participation/awareness component and population projections for the next 20 years to help guide community decision-making in terms of infrastructure construction and extension. No local government has a formal Capital Improvements Program, but they do maintain informal lists through their local SPLOST as well as local management. The recent passage of the T-SPLOST in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Region will help fund a number of major regional projects as well as numerous local transportation upgrades in all 17 Region counties and most cities beginning in 2013. Most municipalities do have a zoning ordinance to help guide and direct future growth, and these ordinances are reviewed and amended within individual communities as needed. However, zoning remains non-existent at the countywide level, primarily due to the persistent lack of sufficient public and political support. Only minimal basic land use regulations exist at the county level, such as subdivision regulations, manufactured housing regulations, and solid waste management ordinances. In some areas, individual growth management or nuisance problems can be addressed through special ordinances or other means.

While all communities have identified desirable areas for growth and development in their comprehensive plans, these areas are not based on a specific local natural resources inventory, with the exceptions of the City of Jesup as it relates to the ongoing development of the McMillan Creek Greenway, and Dublin/Laurens County’s Oconee River Greenway. The

Regional Resource (RIR) Plan includes an inventory of all regionally significant resources, but does not include some resources that are deemed locally important.

Appropriate Businesses Objective

“The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.”

Each county has a Chamber of Commerce and a Development Authority, most of which work jointly to recruit business and industry which is compatible with existing businesses in the community. Nearly half of the Region’s counties, in particular the smaller counties, still lack a formalized strategy for business development. The rural nature of the Region means that many communities are largely dependent on one or two major employers. The loss of any one of those employers would be a significant blow to the community. The more diverse economies are confined to the regional growth centers of Laurens, Toombs, and Wayne counties, where those communities have experienced success in transitioning away from a singular reliance on manufacturing. Although many communities recognize the need to cultivate additional industry, it is realized that current education levels/job skills somewhat limit economic development. It is also desired that the existing quality of life and natural and cultural resources be protected and utilized in tourism and economic development attraction. Both the Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study and the Regional Resource Plan promote this idea.

Employment Options Objective

“A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.”

Nearly two-thirds of the Region’s counties have received state designation as “Entrepreneur Friendly” communities. These include: Bleckley, Candler, Emanuel, Evans,

Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, Treutlen, and Wayne. There are limited jobs for skilled labor, typically found at hospitals and prisons within the Region as well as the local school systems. There is a fairly good supply of jobs for unskilled labor, particularly in the agriculture industry and businesses such as Claxton Poultry. Professional and managerial jobs are limited primarily to hospitals, prisons, diversion/probation centers, and the education field. The Regional Commission and the Workforce Investment Board continue to utilize Workforce Investment Act programs to enhance job skills and readiness in the Region.

Housing Choices Objective

“A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.”

Housing of various types is available throughout the Region at relatively affordable cost, thus allowing people who work in the Region’s communities to also live there, although some price ranges may be limited. In many parts of the region, there has been a heavy reliance on manufactured housing to meet the needs of the workforce. Several communities have identified the need for additional low/moderate income housing, including the cities of Bellville, Lyons, and Jesup, as well as Jeff Davis and Wilcox counties. Wheeler County has identified a need for “high end” housing. Available land at reasonable prices, quality schools, access to health care, good recreation facilities/programs, and the relatively low cost of living make the Region attractive for residential development. There currently are provisions for loft living in several municipalities, including Cochran, Eastman, Claxton, Lyons, Vidalia, and Jesup, although currently only limited supplies exist. Actual traditional residential development adjacent to downtown areas exists in all municipalities. Small houses can be built on lots smaller than 5,000 SF in size in several smaller communities, such as Alamo, Glenwood, Daisy, Lumber City, Scotland, and Jacksonville. A significant number of counties, but not all, have a manufactured housing ordinance to address mobile home issues, such as relocation of older mobile homes in the unincorporated areas. Most municipalities have at least some guidelines through their zoning

ordinances. Multi-family housing and that developed for lower-income households are allowed and supported throughout the Region. The various housing authorities in the region are active in addressing special needs housing, along with local Habitat for Humanity chapters in Dodge, Laurens, Toombs, and Wayne counties.

Educational Opportunities Objective

“Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.”

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha WIA Program provides workforce training opportunities for the entire 17-county Region, with local One-Stop Centers located in each county. When appropriate, local governments also utilize other statewide workforce training programs such as Quick Start and Georgia Work Ready. There are ample post-secondary education opportunities available, as the Region is home to three technical colleges (Altamaha, Oconee Fall Line, and Southeastern) and two others having a satellite facility (Ogeechee, Wiregrass). There is one two-year state college, East Georgia State College and Middle Georgia College, which is in the process of transitioning to four-year degree program offerings. The University System of Georgia Board of Regents has merged Middle Georgia College with Macon State College to form a regional university named Middle Georgia State College, a four-year state college unit. MGSC’s Aviation Campus in Eastman, the only one of its kind in the state, is quickly becoming a leader in aviation education and instruction in Georgia and the Southeast. Brewton-Parker College in Mount Vernon is the lone private four-year institution of higher learning in the Region presently. The Dublin Center, a unit of the University System of Georgia, offers programs and courses for both Middle Georgia State College as well as Georgia Southern University, and serves as a satellite facility.

Although the Region is proud of its availability of post-secondary opportunities, there is a continuing desire to improve both programs and facilities. While there are jobs in the Region for

college graduates, they are relatively limited in number and are primarily found in the education, health care, and correctional fields, although the variety is expanding.

Governmental Relations

Regional Solutions Objective

“Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.”

Every community in the Region participates in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC and its efforts to find regional solutions to common issues. Most communities are members of a regional joint development authority for regional economic development, while a significant number of communities participate in regional organizations such as the Greater Savannah Alliance and the I-16 Corridor Alliance. Communities in Emanuel and Johnson counties participate in the Classic South Tourism Region through the Georgia Department of Economic Development, while other communities in the region are members of the Magnolia Midlands Tourism Region. All communities participate in the Region 9 Economic Development Academy. All communities are active in regional environmental initiatives by participation in their respective Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council through the state Soil and Water Conservation Commission. Laurens County participates in the Upper Oconee Regional Water Planning Council, while the rest of the Region’s communities are members of the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council. Eight Region counties (Appling, Wayne, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Telfair, Wheeler, Toombs, and Montgomery) are among the 11 counties which participate in the Altamaha River Partnership, while four (Appling, Candler, Emanuel, and Tattnall) support the Woodpecker Trail Association. Many communities have a strong working relationship with at least one neighboring county, with cooperation and collaboration commonly found in the areas of economic development, E-911, and emergency response.

Regional Cooperation Objective

“Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.”

Within each community of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, each county and its municipalities work closely together in a number of areas, including economic development, education, service provision, and comprehensive planning. All local governments are presently generally satisfied with their Service Delivery Strategy. The counties and cities work well with neighboring jurisdictions, often partnering together to seek solutions on such regional issues as economic development, education, tourism, and workforce training. They also participate as active members of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, whose Regional Council represents all 17 Region counties and their cities at regular monthly meetings; the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority, the I-16 Corridor Alliance, and the Southeast Georgia Joint Development Authority for economic development; the Altamaha Regional Water Planning Council; and with the Fort Stewart Joint Land Use Study Regional Coordinating Committee, among others. The Regional Resource Plan has identified significant opportunities for regional cooperation in protection of the Region’s Green Infrastructure Network and its utilization for recreational, tourism, and other economic development. The current Altamaha River Partnership is a model and platform for expansion of cooperation and activities.

SUPPORTING DATA AND ANALYSIS

POPULATION

Total Population

Over the last two decades, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has continued to grow at a steady, consistent pace. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, total population within the 17-county region increased by 31,316 between 1990 and 2000, a 13 percent increase. Since the turn of the century, the region added an additional 30,305 persons from 2000 to 2010, an 11 percent increase.

With a current estimated total population of 304,231, the population of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is fairly evenly distributed. The one exception is the principal growth center of Laurens County, which alone accounts for 16 percent of the Region's total population. No other Region county has yet to reach 10 percent, although the secondary growth centers of Wayne (9.9 percent) and Toombs (9.0 percent) counties are close. The rest of the Region remains predominantly rural, and thus has somewhat smaller shares of the total population from county to county. All counties experienced steady growth over the last two decades. What is interesting to note, however, is that during the last decade the counties experiencing the largest percentage population growth were those which are host to state or private correctional facilities. For example, Telfair County (roughly 40 percent growth since 2000) is home to both a state and federal prison facility, while Wheeler County (20 percent) has a private correctional facility located in Alamo. Both counties historically have been among the smallest in the Region in terms of total population, leading one to conclude that such a high percentage growth is likely the result of prison expansion rather than natural growth. Elsewhere, those counties with higher growth rates tend to be those located along the periphery of the Region adjacent to nearby growth areas, such as Candler County (adjacent to Statesboro/Bulloch County) and Bleckley County (adjacent to Houston County/Robins Air Force Base).

The Region's population has been growing at a higher rate than most of its surrounding regions, with the exception of the Coastal and Southern Georgia regions. Population growth in the Region has been at or slightly above that of the U.S. since 1990, while only about one-half or so that of Georgia as a whole. Meanwhile, Georgia has positioned itself as one of the fastest growing states in the country, with a growth rate double that of the rest of the nation.

The Region is projected to add roughly 85,000 persons by 2035, a projected rate of growth of some one-third from 2010. Its proximity to the coast, warm climate, low cost-of-living, affordable housing, abundant natural resources, and high quality of life are expected to be contributing factors to an expected continuation of moderate and steady growth.

Age Distribution

The Region's population has been somewhat older than that of the state for some time, and this is likely to continue. The percentage of the population in the younger age groups (under 18 and 18-24) has declined since 1990, while all other categories increased as a percentage. The largest change has occurred among the 55-64 age group, the "Baby Boom" generation, which is rapidly approaching retirement age. As of 2010, one-fourth of the Region's population is age 55 or older, a higher percentage than those under 18. This growing retiree and elderly population will continue to present significant challenges to local governments in terms of health care services, transportation, recreation, housing, and the labor force.

Race and Ethnicity

There is much similarity between the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and the state in terms of racial and ethnic makeup. The Region does have a slightly higher percentage of whites than the rest of Georgia, but that percentage is on the decline, albeit at a slower rate.

The most dynamic shift in the Region's ethnic makeup, as with the state, is the rapid rise in the Hispanic population. Since 2000, Hispanic residents in the Region have nearly doubled, from 10,786 to 19,811, an increase of 84 percent. There is seven (7) times the number of

Hispanic residents in the Region in 2010 than was the case in 1990. Hispanics in Georgia increased by 96 percent since 2000. In five (5) Region counties (Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Telfair, and Toombs), Hispanics now comprise more than 10 percent of the total population. Given the large presence of agriculture in the Region's economic base, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region will likely remain fertile ground for attracting greater numbers of Hispanics, many of whom look to take advantage of seasonal or service-related opportunities.

Income

The Region's per capita income in 2010 (\$17,107) is only about two-thirds that of Georgia and the U.S. Per capita incomes have historically lagged behind the rest of the state and nation, and have failed to keep pace with the growth seen elsewhere. This is a trend that appears likely to continue.

There is also a greater percentage of lower income households in the Region, compared to the rest of the state. Over 50 percent (52.7) of the Region's households have incomes between \$10,000-\$50,000, indicating a substantial presence of low to moderate income households. This is due predominantly to a larger number of lower wage and lower skilled jobs in the Region than compared to other parts of the state, particularly more urbanized areas. On a positive note, the percentage of households with incomes less than \$10,000 declined by one-half since 1990, while households with incomes between \$50,000-\$74,999 nearly doubled. While a very small percentage of households two decades ago, one in 11 Region households today has an income of \$100,000 or greater. However, that is still only one-half that of the state.

Average household incomes in the Region are about two-thirds of the state and national average. Although incomes have increased over the last two decades, the pace of growth locally has failed to keep pace with the rest of the state and nation. Two counties (Telfair and Wilcox) actually experienced a decrease in average household income since 2000, and Wheeler County's average household income only increased by some \$250 in the last 10 years. The highest average household incomes are currently found in Bleckley (\$51,833), Laurens (\$50,556), and Wayne (\$50,088) counties, while the lowest average household incomes are found in Telfair

(\$34,131), Wheeler (\$38,625), and Wilcox (\$38,949) counties. It is likely that incomes will continue to rise in the Region, although not at the same pace as elsewhere.

Poverty rates in the Region have consistently been significantly higher than the state and the U.S. Constantly between one in four and one in five residents live in poverty. Eight (8) counties are considered to be areas of persistent poverty, meaning that more than 20 percent of a county's population has lived below the poverty threshold for the past three decades. Even more striking than the overall poverty rate is the fact that one-third of the population below 18 years of age lives in poverty. Like the rest of Georgia and the U.S., however, steady progress was being made in reducing the presence of poverty locally until the economic downturn of the last half-decade. Barring a rebound in the state and national economy that funnels down to the Region, that progress is likely to remain blunted for the foreseeable future.

Table P-1
Current and Historic Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1980-2011

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2011
Appling	15,565	15,744	17,419	18,236	18,420
Bleckley	10,767	10,430	11,666	13,063	13,290
Candler	7,518	7,744	9,577	10,998	11,276
Dodge	16,955	17,607	19,171	21,796	21,894
Emanuel	20,795	20,546	21,837	22,598	22,567
Evans	8,428	8,724	10,495	11,000	11,065
Jeff Davis	11,473	12,032	12,684	15,068	15,162
Johnson	8,660	8,329	8,560	9,980	9,975
Laurens	36,990	39,988	44,874	48,434	47,949
Montgomery	7,011	7,379	8,270	9,123	9,065
Tattnall	18,134	17,722	22,305	25,520	25,688
Telfair	11,445	11,000	11,794	16,500	16,057
Toombs	22,592	24,072	26,067	27,223	27,434
Treutlen	6,087	5,994	6,854	6,885	6,825
Wayne	20,750	22,356	26,565	30,099	30,327
Wheeler	5,155	4,903	6,179	7,421	7,939
Wilcox	7,682	7,008	8,577	9,255	9,298
REGION	236,007	241,578	272,894	303,199	304,231
GEORGIA	5,463,105	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,687,653	9,815,210

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

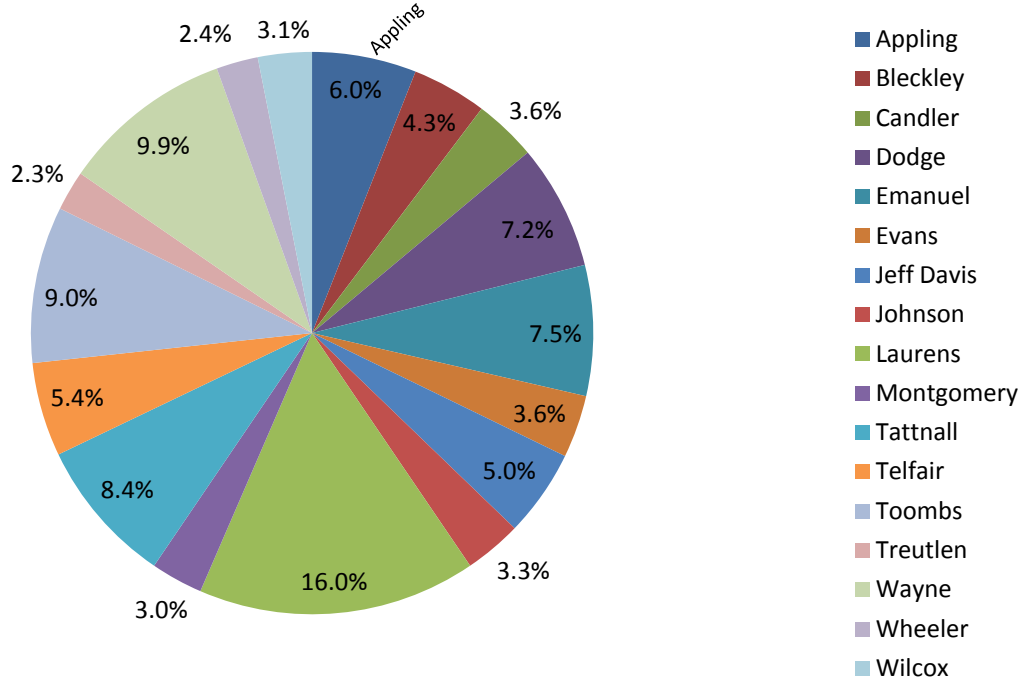
Note: 1980-2010 are official decennial census counts, 2011 is Census Bureau estimate.

Table P-2
Population of Region Counties by Decennial Census
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1900-2010

	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
Appling	12,336	12,318	10,594	13,314	14,497	14,003	13,246	12,726	15,565	15,744	17,419	18,236
Bleckley	NA	NA	10,532	9,133	9,655	9,218	9,642	10,291	10,767	10,430	11,666	13,063
Candler	NA	NA	9,228	8,991	9,103	8,063	6,672	6,412	7,518	7,744	9,577	10,998
Dodge	13,975	20,127	22,540	21,599	21,022	17,865	16,483	15,658	16,955	17,607	19,171	21,796
Emanuel	21,279	25,140	25,862	24,101	23,517	19,789	17,815	18,189	20,795	20,546	21,837	22,598
Evans	NA	NA	6,594	7,102	7,401	6,653	6,952	7,290	8,428	8,724	10,495	11,000
Jeff Davis	NA	6,050	7,322	8,118	8,841	9,299	8,914	9,425	11,473	12,032	12,684	15,068
Johnson	11,409	12,897	13,546	12,681	12,953	9,893	8,048	7,727	8,660	8,329	8,560	9,980
Laurens	25,908	35,501	39,605	32,693	33,606	33,123	32,313	32,738	36,990	39,988	44,874	48,434
Montgomery	16,359	19,638	9,167	10,020	9,668	7,901	6,284	6,099	7,011	7,379	8,270	9,123
Tattnall	20,419	18,659	14,502	15,411	16,243	15,939	15,837	16,557	18,134	17,722	22,305	25,520
Telfair	10,083	13,288	15,291	14,997	15,145	13,221	11,715	11,381	11,445	11,000	11,794	16,500
Toombs	NA	11,206	13,897	17,165	16,952	17,382	16,837	19,151	22,592	24,072	26,067	27,223
Treutlen	NA	NA	7,664	7,488	7,632	6,522	5,874	5,647	6,087	5,994	6,854	6,885
Wayne	9,449	13,069	14,381	12,647	13,122	14,248	17,921	17,858	20,750	22,356	26,565	30,099
Wheeler	NA	NA	9,817	9,149	8,535	6,712	5,342	4,596	5,155	4,903	6,179	7,421
Wilcox	11,097	13,486	15,511	13,439	12,755	10,167	7,905	6,998	7,682	7,008	8,577	9,255
REGION	152,314	201,379	246,053	238,048	240,647	219,998	207,800	208,743	236,007	241,578	272,894	303,199
Georgia	2,216,331	2,609,121	2,895,832	2,908,506	3,123,723	3,444,578	3,943,116	4,589,575	5,463,105	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,687,653

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-9
Heart of Georgia Altamaha
Percent of 2010 Region Population by County



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data, 2013.

Table P-3
Region Population by County as a Percentage
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1980-2010

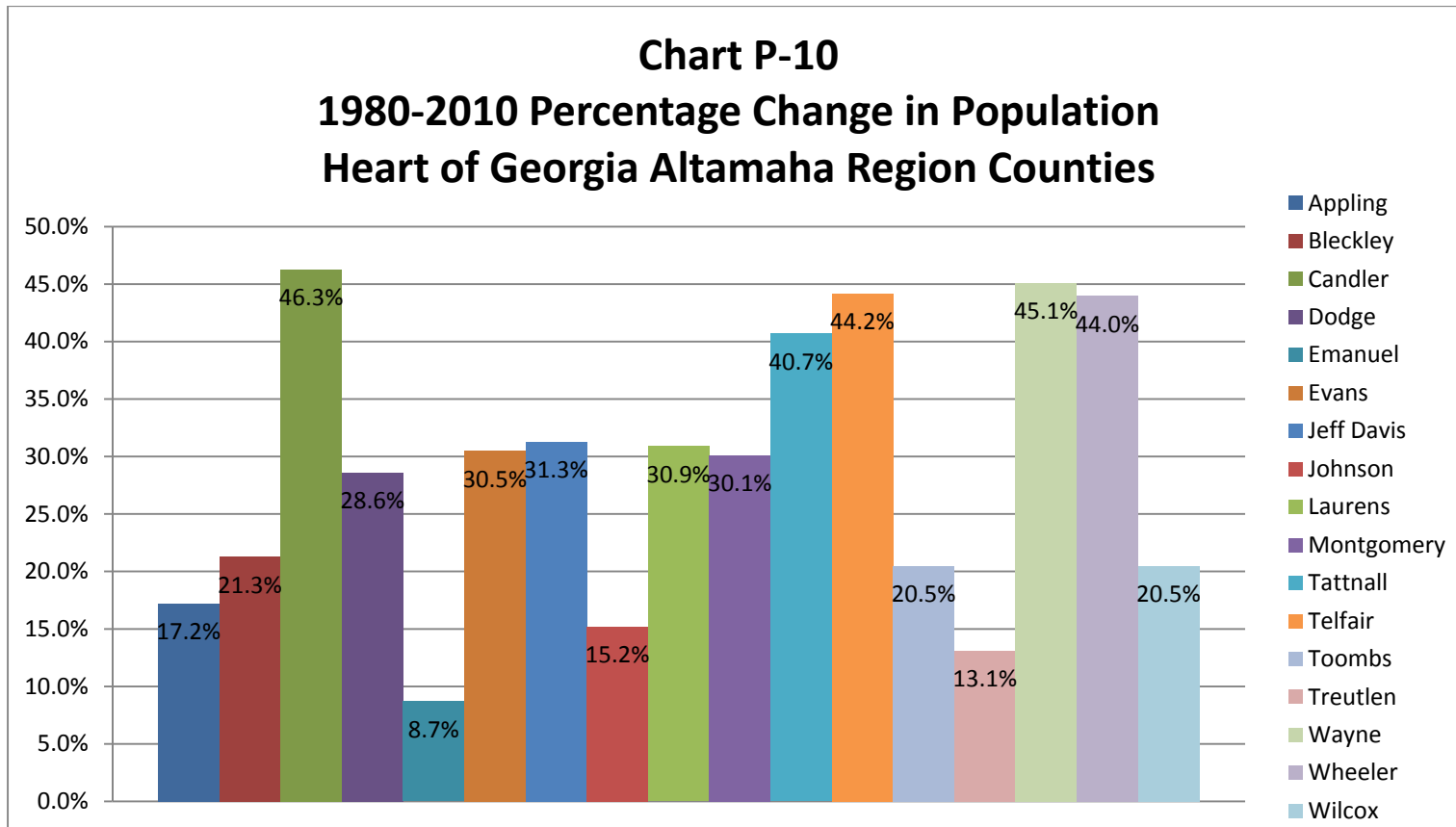
	1980	1990	2000	2010
Appling	6.6%	6.5%	6.4%	6.0%
Bleckley	4.6%	4.3%	4.3%	4.3%
Candler	3.2%	3.2%	3.5%	3.6%
Dodge	7.2%	7.3%	7.0%	7.2%
Emanuel	8.8%	8.5%	8.0%	7.5%
Evans	3.5%	3.6%	3.9%	3.6%
Jeff Davis	5.1%	5.0%	4.7%	5.0%
Johnson	3.6%	3.4%	3.1%	3.3%
Laurens	15.7%	16.6%	16.4%	16.0%
Montgomery	2.8%	3.0%	3.0%	3.0%
Tattnall	7.7%	7.3%	8.2%	8.4%
Telfair	4.8%	4.6%	4.3%	5.4%
Toombs	9.6%	10.0%	9.6%	9.0%
Treutlen	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.3%
Wayne	8.8%	9.3%	9.7%	9.9%
Wheeler	2.2%	2.0%	2.3%	2.4%
Wilcox	3.3%	2.9%	3.1%	3.1%
Region as % of Georgia	4.3%	3.7%	3.3%	3.1%
Georgia as % of U.S.	2.4%	2.6%	2.9%	3.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-4
Population and Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and the U.S.
1980-2010

	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Appling	15,565	15,744	1.1	17,419	10.6	18,236	4.7
Bleckley	10,767	10,430	-3.1	11,666	11.8	13,063	12.0
Candler	7,518	7,744	3.0	9,577	23.6	10,998	14.8
Dodge	16,955	17,607	3.8	19,171	8.8	21,796	13.7
Emanuel	20,795	20,546	-1.1	21,837	6.2	22,598	3.5
Evans	8,428	8,724	3.5	10,495	20.3	11,000	4.8
Jeff Davis	11,473	12,032	4.8	12,684	5.4	15,068	18.8
Johnson	8,660	8,329	-3.8	8,560	2.7	9,980	16.6
Laurens	36,990	39,988	8.1	44,874	12.2	48,434	7.9
Montgomery	7,011	7,379	5.2	8,270	12.0	9,123	10.3
Tattnall	18,134	17,722	-2.2	22,305	25.8	25,520	14.4
Telfair	11,445	11,000	-3.8	11,794	7.2	16,500	39.9
Toombs	22,592	24,072	6.5	26,067	8.2	27,223	4.4
Treutlen	6,087	5,994	-1.5	6,854	14.3	6,885	0.5
Wayne	20,750	22,356	7.7	26,565	18.8	30,099	13.3
Wheeler	5,155	4,903	-4.8	6,179	26.0	7,421	20.1
Wilcox	7,682	7,008	-8.7	8,577	22.3	9,255	7.9
REGION	236,007	241,578	2.3	272,894	12.9	303,199	11.1
GEORGIA	5,463,105	6,478,149	18.6	8,186,453	26.3	9,687,653	18.3
U.S.	227,225,622	248,709,873	9.4	281,421,906	13.1	308,745,538	9.7

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census data, 2013.

Table P-5
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Appling	15,565	15,744	1.1%	17,419	10.6%	18,236	4.7%
Baxley	3,586	3,810	1.2%	3,841	0.8%	4,400	14.6%
Graham	NA	293	293.0%	312	6.9%	291	-6.7%
Surrency	368	253	-31.3%	237	-6.3%	201	-15.2%
Incorporated	3,954	4,356	10.2%	4,390	0.8%	4,892	11.4%
Unincorporated	11,611	11,388	-1.9%	13,029	14.4%	13,344	2.4%
Bleckley	10,767	10,430	-3.1%	11,666	11.9%	13,063	12.0%
Cochran	5,121	4,483	-12.5%	4,455	-0.6%	5,150	15.6%
Unincorporated	5,646	5,947	5.3%	7,211	21.2%	7,913	9.7%
Candler	7,518	7,744	3.0%	9,577	23.6%	10,998	14.8%
Metter	3,531	3,707	5.0%	3,879	4.6%	4,130	6.5%
Pulaski	257	264	2.7%	261	-1.1%	266	1.9%
Incorporated	3,788	3,971	4.8%	4,140	4.3%	4,396	6.2%
Unincorporated	3,730	3,773	1.2%	5,437	44.1%	6,602	21.4%
Dodge	16,955	17,607	3.8%	19,171	8.9%	21,796	13.7%
Chauncey	350	312	-10.9%	295	-5.4%	342	15.9%
Chester	409	1,072	162.1%	305	-71.5%	1,596	423.3%
Eastman	5,330	5,241	-1.7%	5,440	3.8%	4,962	-8.8%
Milan (pt.)	637	559	-12.2%	434	-22.4%	364	-16.1%
Rhine	590	466	-21.0%	422	-9.4%	394	-6.6%
Incorporated	7,316	4,650	-36.4%	6,896	48.3%	7,658	11.0%
Unincorporated	9,639	9,957	3.3%	12,275	23.2%	14,138	15.2%

Table P-5 (Cont'd)
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Emanuel	20,795	20,546	-1.1%	21,837	6.2%	22,598	3.5%
Adrian (pt.)	376	293	-22.1%	267	-8.9%	270	1.1%
Garfield	222	255	14.9%	152	-40.4%	201	32.2%
Nunez	168	153	-8.9%	131	-14.4%	147	12.2%
Oak Park	256	281	9.8%	366	30.2%	484	32.2%
Stillmore	527	593	12.5%	730	23.1%	532	-27.1%
Summertown	215	153	-28.8%	140	-8.5%	160	14.3%
Swainsboro	7,602	7,339	-3.5%	6,943	-5.4%	7,277	4.8%
Twin City	1,802	1,484	5.9%	1,752	18.1%	1,742	-0.6%
Incorporated	10,768	10,551	-2.0%	10,481	-0.7%	10,813	3.2%
Unincorporated	10,027	9,995	-0.3%	11,356	13.6%	11,785	3.8%
Evans	8,428	8,724	3.5%	10,495	20.3%	11,000	4.8%
Bellville	173	192	11.0%	130	-32.3%	123	-5.4%
Claxton	2,694	2,464	-8.5%	2,276	-7.6%	2,746	20.7%
Daisy	174	138	-20.7%	126	-8.7%	129	2.4%
Hagan	880	787	-10.6%	898	14.1%	996	10.9%
Incorporated	3,921	3,581	-8.7%	3,430	-4.2%	3,994	16.4%
Unincorporated	4,507	5,143	14.1%	7,065	37.4%	7,006	-0.8%
Jeff Davis	11,473	12,032	4.9%	12,684	5.4%	15,068	18.8%
Denton	286	335	17.1%	269	-19.7%	250	-7.1%
Hazlehurst	4,302	4,202	-2.3%	3,787	-9.9%	4,226	11.6%
Incorporated	4,588	4,537	-1.1%	4,056	-10.6%	4,476	10.4%
Unincorporated	6,885	7,495	8.9%	8,626	15.1%	10,592	22.8%

Table P-5 (Cont'd)
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Johnson	8,660	8,329	-3.8%	8,560	2.7%	9,980	16.6%
Adrian (pt.)	380	322	-15.3%	312	-3.1%	394	26.3%
Kite	328	285	-13.1%	241	-15.4%	241	0.0%
Wrightsville	2,526	2,381	-5.7%	2,223	-6.6%	2,195	-1.3%
Incorporated	3,234	2,988	-7.6%	2,776	-7.1%	2,830	1.9%
Unincorporated	5,426	5,341	-1.6%	5,784	8.3%	7,150	23.6%
Laurens	36,990	39,988	8.1%	44,874	12.2%	48,434	7.9%
Allentown (pt.)	2	2	0.0%	3	50.0%	0	-100.0%
Cadwell	353	458	29.7%	329	-28.1%	528	60.5%
Dexter	527	475	-9.9%	509	7.2%	575	13.0%
Dublin	16,083	16,312	1.4%	15,857	-2.8%	16,201	2.2%
Dudley	425	430	1.2%	447	4.0%	571	27.7%
East Dublin	2,916	2,524	-13.4%	2,484	-1.6%	2,441	-1.7%
Montrose	170	117	-31.2%	154	31.6%	215	39.6%
Rentz	337	364	8.0%	304	-16.5%	295	-3.0%
Incorporated	20,813	20,682	-0.6%	20,087	-2.9%	20,826	3.7%
Unincorporated	16,177	19,306	19.3%	24,787	28.4%	27,608	11.4%
Montgomery	7,011	7,379	5.2%	8,270	12.0%	9,123	10.3%
Ailey	579	579	0.0%	394	-32.0%	432	9.6%
Alston	111	160	44.1%	159	-0.6%	159	0.0%
Higgston	152	274	80.3%	316	15.3%	323	2.2%
Mount Vernon	1,737	1,914	10.2%	2,082	8.8%	2,451	17.7%
Tarrytown	145	130	-10.3%	100	-23.1%	87	-13.0%
Uvalda	646	561	-13.2%	530	-5.5%	598	12.8%

Table P-5 (Cont'd)
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Vidalia (pt.)	2	111	5,450.0%	160	44.1%	136	-15.0%
Incorporated	3,372	3,729	10.6%	3,741	0.3%	4,186	11.9%
Unincorporated	3,639	3,650	0.3%	4,529	24.1%	4,937	9.0%
Tattnall	18,134	17,722	-2.2%	22,305	25.8%	25,520	14.4%
Cobbtown	494	338	-31.6%	311	-8.0%	351	12.9%
Collins	639	528	-17.4%	528	0.0%	584	10.6%
Glennville	4,144	3,676	-11.3%	3,641	-1.0%	3,569	-2.0%
Manassas	116	123	6.0%	100	-18.7%	94	-6.0%
Reidsville	2,296	2,469	7.5%	2,235	-9.5%	4,944	121.2%
Incorporated	7,689	7,134	-7.2%	6,815	-4.5%	9,542	40.0%
Unincorporated	10,445	10,588	1.4%	15,490	46.3%	15,978	3.2%
Telfair	11,445	11,000	-3.8%	11,794	7.2%	16,500	39.9%
Helena (pt.)	1,390	1,256	-9.6%	2,307	83.7%	2,881	24.9%
Jacksonville	206	128	-37.9%	118	-7.8%	140	18.6%
Lumber City	1,426	1,429	0.2%	1,247	-12.7%	1,328	6.5%
McRae	3,409	3,007	-11.8%	2,682	-10.8%	5,740	114.0%
Milan (pt.)	478	497	4.0%	578	16.3%	336	-41.9%
Scotland (pt.)	196	227	15.8%	257	13.2%	328	27.6%
Incorporated	7,105	6,544	-7.9%	7,189	9.9%	10,753	49.6%
Unincorporated	4,340	4,456	2.7%	4,605	3.3%	5,747	24.8%

Table P-5 (Cont'd)
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Toombs	22,592	24,072	6.1%	26,067	8.3%	27,223	4.4%
Lyons	4,203	4,478	6.5%	4,169	-6.9%	4,367	4.7%
Santa Claus	167	154	-7.8%	237	53.9%	165	-30.4%
Vidalia (pt.)	10,391	11,007	5.9%	10,331	-6.1%	10,337	0.1%
Incorporated	14,761	15,639	5.9%	14,737	-5.8%	14,869	0.9%
Unincorporated	7,831	8,433	7.7%	11,330	34.4%	12,354	9.0%
Treutlen	6,087	5,994	-1.5%	6,854	14.3%	6,885	0.5%
Soperton	2,981	2,797	-6.2%	2,824	1.0%	3,115	10.3%
Unincorporated	3,106	3,197	2.9%	4,030	26.0%	3,770	-6.5%
Wayne	20,750	22,356	7.7%	26,565	18.8%	30,099	13.3%
Jesup	9,418	8,958	-4.9%	9,279	3.6%	10,214	10.1%
Odum	401	388	-3.2%	414	6.7%	504	21.7%
Screven	872	819	-6.1%	702	-14.3%	766	9.1%
Incorporated	10,691	10,165	-4.9%	10,395	2.3%	11,484	10.5%
Unincorporated	10,059	12,191	21.2%	16,170	32.6%	18,615	15.1%
Wheeler	5,155	4,903	-4.9%	6,179	26.0%	7,421	20.1%
Alamo	993	855	-13.9%	1,943	127.3%	2,797	44.0%
Glenwood	824	881	6.9%	884	0.3%	747	-15.5%
Helena (pt.)						2	
Scotland (pt.)	26	17	-34.6%	43	152.9%	38	-11.6%
Incorporated	1,843	1,753	-4.9%	2,870	63.8%	3,584	24.9%
Unincorporated	3,312	3,150	-4.9%	3,309	5.0%	3,837	16.0%

Table P-5 (Cont'd)
Municipal Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

County and Municipality	1980	1990	1980-1990 Pop. % Chg.	2000	1990-2000 Pop. % Chg.	2010	2000-2010 Pop. % Chg.
Wilcox	7,682	7,008	-8.8%	8,577	22.4%	9,255	7.9%
Abbeville	985	919	-6.7%	2,298	150.1%	2,908	26.5%
Pineview	564	594	5.3%	532	-10.4%	523	-1.7%
Pitts	384	334	-13.0%	308	-7.8%	320	3.9%
Rochelle	1,626	1,510	-7.1%	1,415	-6.3%	1,174	-17.0%
Incorporated	3,559	3,357	-5.7%	4,553	35.6%	4,925	8.2%
Unincorporated	4,123	3,651	-11.4%	4,024	10.2%	4,330	7.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-6
Population of Municipalities
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
1980-2010

	Population less than 1,000	Population of 1,000- 5,000	Population greater than 5,000
1980	39	17	6
1990	39	19	5
2000	38	19	6
2010	38	19	6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-7
Population and Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Adjacent Regions
1980-2010
Total Population

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Heart of Georgia Altamaha	236,007	241,578	272,894	303,199
Central Savannah River Area	343,858	378,512	419,634	454,901
Coastal Georgia	385,018	475,271	558,350	654,810
Middle Georgia	367,091	397,639	440,121	488,399
River Valley	327,896	332,111	353,274	370,887
Southern Georgia	299,748	315,351	364,925	406,583

Population Percent Change

	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010
Heart of Georgia Altamaha	2.4%	13.0%	11.1%
Central Savannah River Area	9.2%	9.8%	8.4%
Coastal Georgia	23.4%	17.5%	17.3%
Middle Georgia	8.3%	10.7%	11.0%
River Valley	1.3%	6.4%	5.0%
Southern Georgia	5.2%	15.7%	11.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-8
Projected Population and Percentage Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2010-2040
Projected Population

	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
Appling	18,236	19,093	19,808	20,549	21,318	22,116	22,943
Bleckley	13,063	13,817	14,616	15,463	16,358	17,305	18,306
Candler	10,998	12,155	13,269	14,486	15,813	17,263	18,845
Dodge	21,796	22,826	24,077	25,396	26,788	28,256	29,805
Emanuel	22,598	23,245	23,805	24,379	24,966	25,567	26,183
Evans	11,000	11,927	12,639	13,393	14,192	15,039	15,936
Jeff Davis	15,068	15,626	16,530	17,486	18,498	19,568	20,701
Johnson	9,980	10,224	10,697	11,192	11,710	12,251	12,818
Laurens	48,434	51,142	53,651	56,284	59,046	61,943	64,983
Montgomery	9,123	9,645	10,171	10,725	11,309	11,925	12,575
Tattnall	25,520	26,233	27,129	28,063	29,035	30,049	33,155
Telfair	16,500	17,154	17,881	18,647	19,454	20,302	23,116
Toombs	27,223	28,243	29,125	30,035	30,973	31,940	32,938
Treutlen	6,885	7,283	7,540	7,806	8,081	8,366	8,561
Wayne	30,099	32,680	35,203	37,920	40,847	43,999	47,395
Wheeler	7,421	8,304	8,475	8,651	8,832	9,019	10,505
Wilcox	9,255	10,132	10,861	11,643	12,482	13,380	14,344
REGION	303,199	319,729	335,477	352,118	369,702	388,288	413,209
Georgia	9,687,653						

Table P-8 (Cont'd)
Projected Population Percentage Change
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
2010-2040
Projected Population Percentage Change

	2010-2020 % Chg.	2020-2030 % Chg.	2030-2040 % Chg.	2010-2040 % Chg.
Appling	8.6%	7.6%	7.6%	25.8%
Bleckley	11.9%	11.9%	11.9%	40.1%
Candler	20.6%	19.2%	19.2%	71.3%
Dodge	10.5%	11.3%	11.3%	36.7%
Emanuel	5.3%	4.9%	4.9%	15.9%
Evans	14.9%	12.3%	12.3%	44.9%
Jeff Davis	9.7%	11.9%	11.9%	37.4%
Johnson	7.2%	9.5%	9.5%	28.4%
Laurens	10.8%	10.1%	10.1%	34.2%
Montgomery	11.5%	11.2%	11.2%	37.8%
Tattnall	6.3%	7.0%	14.2%	29.9%
Telfair	8.4%	8.8%	18.8%	40.1%
Toombs	7.0%	6.3%	6.3%	21.0%
Treutlen	9.5%	7.2%	7.2%	25.8%
Wayne	17.0%	16.0%	16.0%	57.5%
Wheeler	14.2%	4.2%	18.9%	41.6%
Wilcox	17.4%	14.9%	14.9%	55.0%
REGION	10.6%	10.2%	11.8%	36.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; HOGARC staff projections, 2012.

Note: County projections used 1990, 2000, and 2010 Census data in Excel Growth Formula. No state projections were available. Tattnall County total 2010

population was reduced by 4,650 to reflect prison population deduction. From 2015 on, a total of 4,750 was added back to projection to reflect prison population. Telfair County total 2010 population was reduced by 3,000 to reflect prison population deduction. From 2015 on, a total of 3,300 was added back to projection to reflect prison population. Wheeler County total 2010 population was reduced by 1,900 to reflect prison population deduction. From 2015 on a total of 2,625 was added back to projection to reflect prison population.

Table P-9
Population by Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	0-4	5-18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Appling						
1990	1,029	3,607	1,462	6,414	1,320	1,912
2000	1,273	3,456	1,569	7,348	1,711	2,062
2010	1,306	3,388	1,500	7,253	2,333	2,456
Bleckley						
1990	709	2,030	1,301	4,036	978	1,376
2000	747	2,354	1,318	4,535	1,128	1,584
2010	754	2,195	2,158	4,577	1,408	1,971
Candler						
1990	574	1,473	816	2,999	610	1,272
2000	685	1,883	903	3,744	909	1,453
2010	788	2,031	1,044	4,103	1,448	1,584
Dodge						
1990	1,223	3,397	1,827	7,131	1,531	2,498
2000	1,194	3,785	1,664	8,157	1,832	2,539
2010	1,355	3,722	2,232	8,851	2,621	3,015
Emanuel						
1990	1,538	4,725	1,864	7,816	1,644	2,959
2000	1,476	4,599	2,272	8,535	2,046	2,909
2010	1,656	4,092	2,089	8,820	2,779	3,162

Table P-9 (Cont'd)**Population by Age****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	0-4	5-18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Evans						
1990	683	1,887	778	3,365	760	1,251
2000	720	2,164	1,068	4,330	892	1,321
2010	847	1,990	1,053	4,398	1,207	1,505
Jeff Davis						
1990	899	2,479	1,345	4,911	1,099	1,299
2000	975	2,479	1,174	5,326	1,216	1,514
2010	1,183	2,983	1,307	5,894	1,827	1,874
Johnson						
1990	625	1,826	694	3,185	720	1,279
2000	586	1,993	759	3,068	817	1,337
2010	550	1,540	779	4,449	1,273	1,389
Laurens						
1990	2,959	8,364	3,701	15,894	3,514	5,556
2000	3,110	8,935	4,071	18,620	4,172	5,966
2010	3,462	9,013	4,098	18,995	5,982	6,884
Montgomery						
1990	473	1,357	1,029	2,860	566	878
2000	563	1,508	1,057	3,512	753	877
2010	552	1,532	1,143	3,575	1,148	1,173

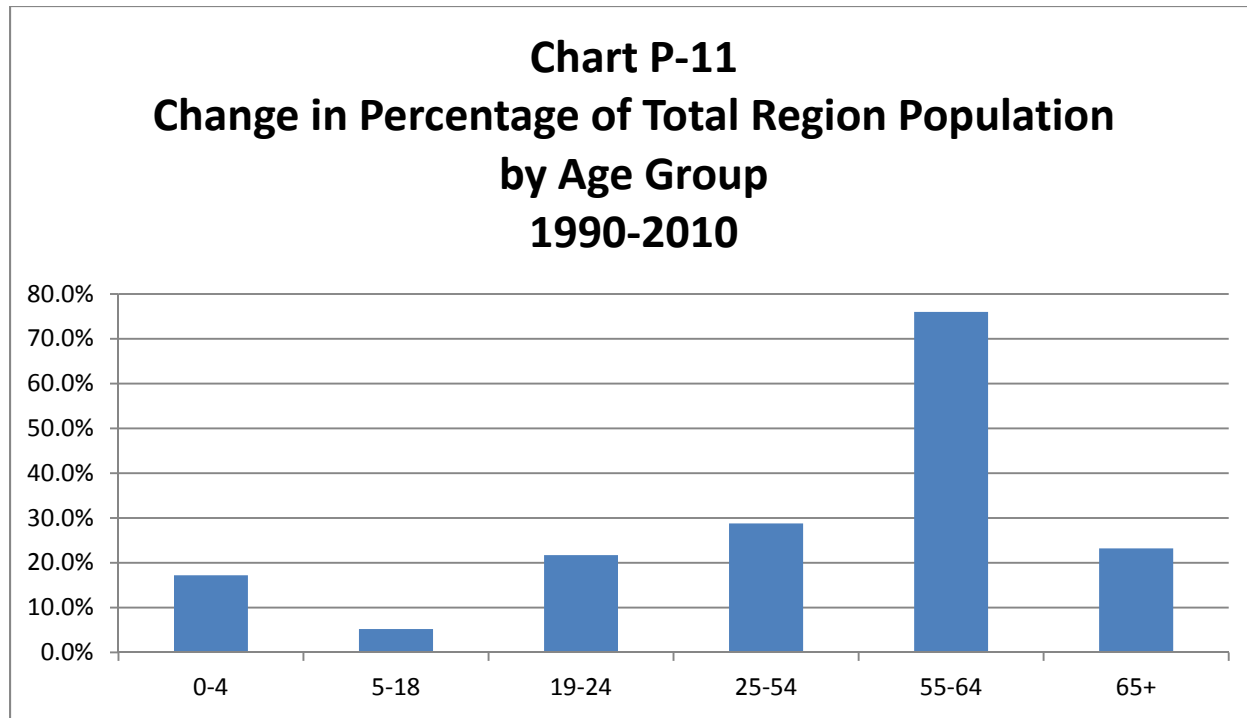
Table P-9 (Cont'd)**Population by Age****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	0-4	5-18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Tattnall						
1990	1,173	3,147	1,748	7,821	1,452	2,381
2000	1,354	3,754	2,508	10,343	1,840	2,506
2010	1,496	3,910	2,567	11,856	2,720	2,971
Telfair						
1990	760	2,291	906	4,129	993	1,921
2000	705	1,948	1,213	5,176	997	1,755
2010	946	2,370	1,350	7,583	2,000	2,251
Toombs						
1990	1,971	5,144	2,245	9,691	1,884	3,137
2000	2,010	5,433	2,406	10,558	2,482	3,178
2010	2,219	5,396	2,334	10,378	3,154	3,742
Treutlen						
1990	422	1,254	644	2,163	589	922
2000	506	1,275	817	2,726	622	908
2010	496	1,217	639	2,748	845	940
Wayne						
1990	1,728	4,804	1,954	9,252	2,011	2,607
2000	1,757	5,134	2,279	11,930	2,448	3,017
2010	2,182	5,279	2,534	12,636	3,606	3,862

Table P-9 (Cont'd)**Population by Age****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	0-4	5-18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Wheeler						
1990	366	1,050	447	1,840	407	793
2000	367	1,016	632	2,856	526	782
2010	409	990	763	3,480	897	882
Wilcox						
1990	510	1,491	600	2,572	619	1,216
2000	536	1,417	824	3,880	758	1,162
2010	481	1,306	839	4,144	1,164	1,321
Region						
1990	17,642	50,326	23,361	96,079	20,697	33,257
2000	18,564	53,133	26,534	114,644	25,149	34,870
2010	20,682	52,954	28,429	123,740	36,412	40,982
Georgia						
1990	494,028	1,236,622	724,146	2,875,659	495,214	652,547
2000	595,150	1,574,084	837,732	3,732,756	661,456	785,275
2010	686,785	1,804,767	970,157	4,124,352	1,069,557	1,032,035

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census data, 2013.

Table P-10
Percentage of Population by Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	Under 18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Appling					
1990	29.4%	9.3%	40.7%	8.4%	12.1%
2000	27.1%	9.0%	42.2%	9.8%	11.8%
2010	25.7%	8.2%	39.8%	12.8%	13.5%
Bleckley					
1990	26.4%	12.6%	38.6%	9.1%	13.4%
2000	26.6%	11.3%	38.9%	9.7%	13.6%
2010	22.6%	16.5%	35.0%	10.8%	15.1%
Candler					
1990	27.2%	10.0%	37.5%	8.9%	16.4%
2000	26.8%	9.4%	39.1%	9.5%	15.2%
2010	25.6%	9.5%	37.3%	13.2%	14.4%
Dodge					
1990	25.9%	10.6%	40.2%	9.1%	14.2%
2000	26.0%	8.7%	42.5%	9.6%	13.2%
2010	23.3%	10.2%	40.6%	12.0%	13.8%
Emanuel					
1990	30.4%	9.2%	37.7%	8.3%	14.4%
2000	27.8%	10.4%	39.1%	9.4%	13.3%
2010	25.4%	9.2%	39.0%	12.3%	14.0%

Table P-10 (Cont'd)
Percentage of Population by Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	Under 18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Evans					
1990	29.3%	9.6%	38.2%	8.6%	14.3%
2000	27.5%	10.2%	41.3%	8.5%	12.6%
2010	25.8%	9.6%	40.0%	11.0%	13.7%
Jeff Davis					
1990	28.1%	11.2%	40.8%	8.9%	11.1%
2000	27.2%	9.3%	42.0%	9.6%	11.9%
2010	27.6%	8.7%	39.1%	12.1%	12.4%
Johnson					
1990	29.3%	9.4%	36.6%	9.3%	15.4%
2000	30.1%	8.9%	35.8%	9.5%	15.6%
2010	20.9%	7.8%	44.6%	12.8%	13.9%
Laurens					
1990	28.2%	9.7%	39.4%	8.9%	13.9%
2000	26.8%	9.1%	41.5%	9.3%	13.3%
2010	25.8%	8.5%	39.2%	12.4%	14.2%
Montgomery					
1990	25.5%	14.4%	39.9%	7.9%	12.3%
2000	25.0%	12.8%	42.5%	9.1%	10.6%
2010	22.8%	12.5%	39.2%	12.6%	12.9%

Table P-10 (Cont'd)
Percentage of Population by Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	Under 18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Tattnall					
1990	24.2%	10.3%	43.7%	8.4%	13.4%
2000	22.9%	11.2%	46.4%	8.2%	11.2%
2010	21.2%	10.1%	46.5%	10.7%	11.6%
Telfair					
1990	27.7%	9.4%	36.4%	9.1%	17.5%
2000	22.5%	10.3%	43.9%	8.5%	14.9%
2010	20.1%	8.2%	46.0%	12.1%	13.6%
Toombs					
1990	29.5%	9.4%	40.7%	8.0%	12.5%
2000	28.6%	9.2%	40.5%	9.5%	12.2%
2010	28.0%	8.6%	38.1%	11.6%	13.7%
Treutlen					
1990	28.4%	10.2%	37.1%	8.9%	15.4%
2000	26.0%	11.9%	39.8%	9.1%	13.2%
2010	24.9%	9.3%	39.9%	12.3%	13.7%
Wayne					
1990	29.1%	9.3%	40.9%	9.1%	11.6%
2000	25.9%	8.6%	44.9%	9.2%	11.4%
2010	24.8%	8.4%	42.0%	12.0%	12.8%

Table P-10 (Cont'd)
Percentage of Population by Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	Under 18	18-24	25-54	55-64	65+
Wheeler					
1990	28.7%	9.7%	37.0%	8.4%	16.2%
2000	22.4%	10.2%	46.2%	8.5%	12.7%
2010	18.9%	10.3%	46.9%	12.1%	11.9%
Wilcox					
1990	28.3%	9.1%	36.2%	9.0%	17.4%
2000	22.8%	9.6%	45.2%	8.8%	13.5%
2010	19.3%	9.1%	44.8%	12.8%	14.3%
Region					
1990	28.0%	10.1%	39.4%	8.7%	13.7%
2000	26.3%	9.7%	42.0%	9.2%	12.8%
2010	24.2%	9.4%	40.8%	12.0%	13.5%
Georgia					
1990	26.7%	11.2%	44.4%	7.6%	10.1%
2000	26.5%	10.2%	45.6%	8.1%	9.6%
2010	25.7%	10.0%	42.6%	11.0%	10.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-11
Median Age
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

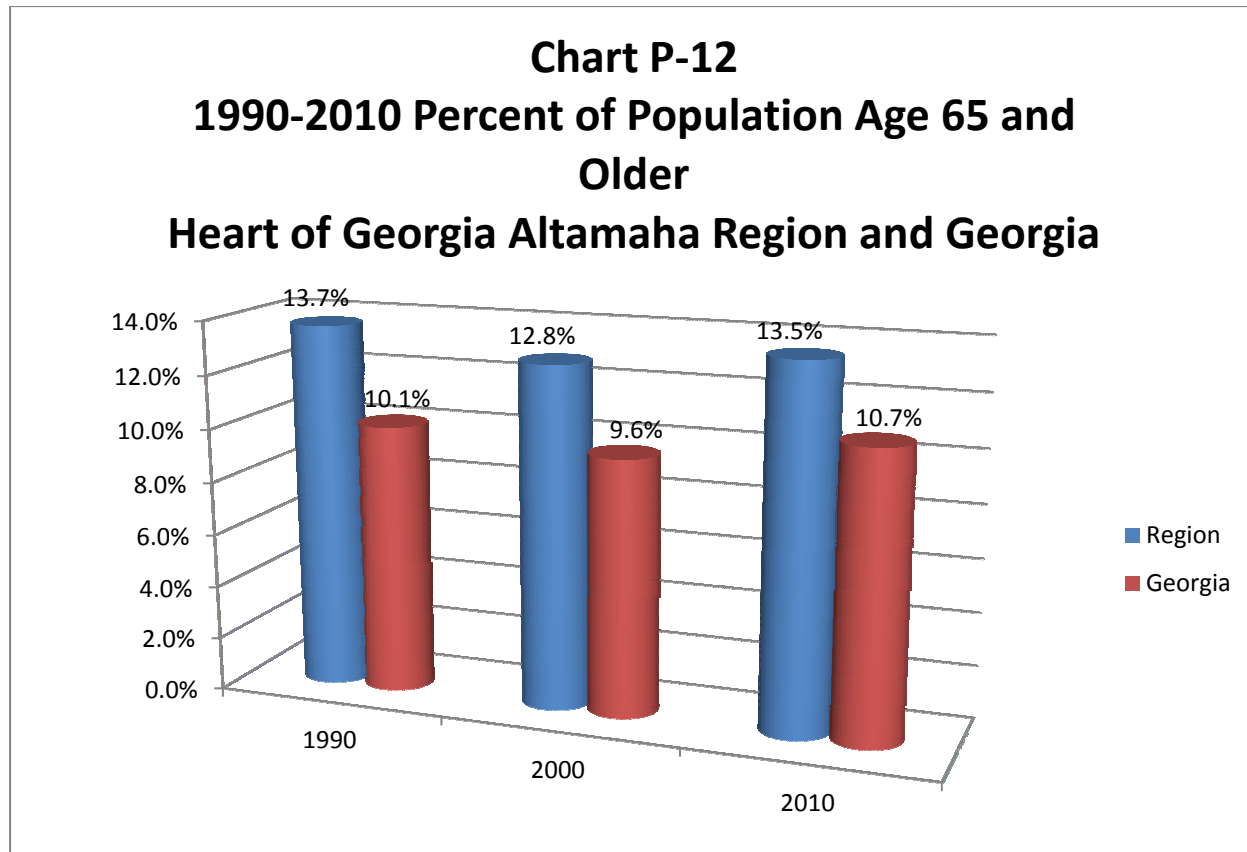
	1990	2000	2010
Appling	32.6	35.4	38.1
Bleckley	32.6	35.1	35.9
Candler	34.6	35.6	37.6
Dodge	33.6	35.8	38.5
Emanuel	32.4	34.9	36.8
Evans	31.9	34.0	35.9
Jeff Davis	32.2	35.0	36.0
Johnson	32.8	34.9	40.4
Laurens	33.1	35.8	38.0
Montgomery	30.9	33.6	37.0
Tattnall	33.2	33.9	36.6
Telfair	34.2	36.8	39.2
Toombs	32.2	34.2	36.0
Treutlen	33.1	33.9	36.8
Wayne	32.8	35.5	37.6
Wheeler	34.2	36.1	37.9
Wilcox	34.7	36.7	39.7
REGION	32.9	35.2	37.5
Georgia	31.6	33.4	35.3

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-12
Percentage of Population Age 65 and Older
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Appling	12.1%	11.8%	13.5%
Bleckley	13.4%	13.6%	15.1%
Candler	16.4%	15.2%	14.4%
Dodge	14.2%	13.2%	13.8%
Emanuel	14.4%	13.3%	14.0%
Evans	14.3%	12.6%	13.7%
Jeff Davis	11.1%	11.9%	12.4%
Johnson	15.4%	15.6%	13.9%
Laurens	13.9%	13.3%	14.2%
Montgomery	12.3%	10.6%	12.9%
Tattnall	13.4%	11.2%	11.6%
Telfair	17.5%	14.9%	13.6%
Toombs	12.5%	12.2%	13.7%
Treutlen	15.4%	13.2%	13.7%
Wayne	11.6%	11.4%	12.8%
Wheeler	16.2%	12.7%	11.9%
Wilcox	17.4%	13.5%	14.3%
REGION	13.7%	12.8%	13.5%
Georgia	10.1%	9.6%	10.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-13
Percentage of Total Population Male/Female
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	Total Population	1990		Total Population	2000		Total Population	2010	
		Male	Female		Male	Female		Male	Female
Appling	15,744	48.44	51.56	17,419	49.26	50.74	18,236	50.22	49.78
Bleckley	10,430	47.81	52.19	11,666	48.17	51.83	13,063	47.59	52.41
Candler	7,744	48.00	52.00	9,577	50.16	49.84	10,998	49.44	50.56
Dodge	17,607	48.94	51.06	19,171	51.23	48.77	21,796	52.53	47.47
Emanuel	20,546	47.41	52.59	21,837	48.12	51.88	22,598	48.85	51.15
Evans	8,724	48.66	51.34	10,495	48.61	51.39	11,000	48.97	51.03
Jeff Davis	12,032	48.70	51.30	12,684	49.10	50.90	15,068	49.54	50.46
Johnson	8,329	46.84	53.16	8,560	49.28	50.72	9,980	56.03	43.97
Laurens	39,988	47.57	52.43	44,874	48.07	51.93	48,434	47.62	52.38
Montgomery	7,163	49.03	50.97	8,270	51.23	48.77	9,123	51.46	48.54
Tattnall	17,722	53.20	46.80	22,305	57.65	42.35	25,520	58.23	41.77
Telfair	11,000	46.39	53.61	11,794	52.59	47.41	16,500	57.28	42.72
Toombs	24,072	46.52	53.48	26,067	47.73	52.27	27,223	47.49	52.51
Treutlen	5,994	46.25	53.75	6,854	49.66	50.34	6,885	50.09	49.91
Wayne	22,356	48.29	51.71	26,565	52.01	47.99	30,099	52.22	47.78
Wheeler	4,903	48.62	51.38	6,179	56.16	43.84	7,421	61.72	38.28
Wilcox	7,008	47.06	52.94	8,577	55.29	44.71	9,255	58.74	41.26
REGION	241,578	48.19	51.81	272,894	50.43	49.57	303,199	51.43	48.57
Georgia	6,478,216	48.50	51.50	8,186,453	49.19	50.81	9,687,653	48.82	51.18

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-14
Racial Composition
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Appling						
1990	12,356	3,268	41	17	62	
2000	13,376	3,412	54	36	434	107
2010	13,385	3,392	149	68	1,047	195
Bleckley						
1990	8,000	2,332	79	6	13	
2000	8,544	2,869	112	11	56	74
2010	9,151	3,564	113	13	94	128
Candler						
1990	5,238	2,405	9	7	85	
2000	6,268	2,593	30	18	590	78
2010	7,253	2,683	62	9	877	114
Dodge						
1990	12,620	4,864	35	16	72	
2000	13,219	5,637	46	35	146	88
2010	14,549	6,504	115	55	358	215
Emanuel						
1990	13,772	6,681	44	20	29	
2000	13,909	7,267	54	30	465	112
2010	13,928	7,562	157	58	681	212

Table P-14 (Cont'd)**Racial Composition****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Evans						
1990	5,654	2,963	19	2	86	
2000	6,474	3,461	36	19	444	61
2010	6,471	3,205	91	19	1,097	117
Jeff Davis						
1990	10,084	1,834	24	10	80	
2000	10,300	1,920	61	30	303	70
2010	11,463	2,224	70	34	1,097	180
Johnson						
1990	5,474	2,839	8	3	5	
2000	5,345	3,164	11	11	6	23
2010	6,301	3,489	25	19	65	81
Laurens						
1990	26,485	13,304	137	37	25	
2000	28,469	15,494	374	89	178	270
2010	29,355	17,324	487	100	591	577
Montgomery						
1990	4,998	2,026	14	5	120	
2000	5,766	2,253	18	6	176	51
2010	6,291	2,397	27	6	303	99

Table P-14 (Cont'd)**Racial Composition****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Tattnall						
1990	12,087	5,177	51	23	384	
2000	13,496	7,010	82	31	1,481	205
2010	15,991	7,466	116	87	1,527	334
Telfair						
1990	7,202	3,773	6	9	10	
2000	7,042	4,534	23	3	137	55
2010	9,398	6,017	100	26	674	285
Toombs						
1990	17,596	5,637	148	37	654	
2000	18,029	6,296	124	54	1,392	172
2010	17,728	6,767	214	74	2,019	421
Treutlen						
1990	4,001	1,984	0	2	7	
2000	4,501	2,269	18	4	22	40
2010	4,488	2,247	13	14	55	68
Wayne						
1990	17,884	4,358	44	41	29	
2000	20,382	5,398	123	60	349	253
2010	22,558	5,996	167	127	649	602

Table P-14 (Cont'd)**Racial Composition****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Wheeler						
1990	3,352	1,474	5	4	68	
2000	3,989	2,050	6	8	77	49
2010	4,552	2,614	18	6	174	57
Wilcox						
1990	4,757	2,225	2	9	15	
2000	5,370	3,106	15	8	41	37
2010	5,706	3,252	43	16	149	89
Region						
1990	171,560	67,144	666	248	1,744	
2000	184,479	78,733	1,187	453	6,297	1,745
2010	198,568	86,703	1,967	731	11,457	3,774
Georgia						
1990	4,600,000	1,747,000	76,000	13,000	42,149	
2000	5,327,281	2,349,542	177,416	21,737	196,289	114,188
2010	5,787,440	2,950,435	321,266	32,151	388,872	207,489

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-15
Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Appling						
1990	78.5%	20.8%	0.3%	0.1%	0.4%	
2000	76.8%	19.6%	0.3%	0.2%	2.5%	0.6%
2010	73.4%	18.6%	0.8%	0.4%	5.7%	1.1%
Bleckley						
1990	76.7%	22.4%	0.8%	0.1%	0.1%	
2000	73.2%	24.6%	1.0%	0.1%	0.5%	0.6%
2010	70.1%	27.3%	0.9%	0.1%	0.7%	1.0%
Candler						
1990	67.6%	31.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1.1%	
2000	65.4%	27.1%	0.3%	0.2%	6.2%	0.8%
2010	65.9%	24.4%	0.6%	0.1%	8.0%	1.0%
Dodge						
1990	71.7%	27.6%	0.2%	0.1%	0.4%	
2000	69.0%	29.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.8%	0.5%
2010	66.8%	29.8%	0.5%	0.3%	1.6%	1.0%
Emanuel						
1990	67.0%	32.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	
2000	63.7%	33.3%	0.2%	0.1%	2.1%	0.5%
2010	61.6%	33.5%	0.7%	0.3%	3.0%	0.9%

Table P-15 (Cont'd)

Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia

1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Evans						
1990	64.8%	34.0%	0.2%	0.02%	1.0%	
2000	61.7%	33.0%	0.3%	0.2%	4.2%	0.6%
2010	58.8%	29.1%	0.8%	0.2%	10.0%	1.1%
Jeff Davis						
1990	83.8%	15.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%	
2000	81.2%	15.1%	0.5%	0.2%	2.4%	0.6%
2010	76.1%	14.8%	0.5%	0.2%	7.3%	1.2%
Johnson						
1990	65.7%	34.1%	0.1%	0.04%	0.1%	
2000	62.4%	37.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
2010	63.1%	35.0%	0.3%	0.2%	0.7%	0.8%
Laurens						
1990	66.2%	33.3%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	
2000	63.4%	34.5%	0.8%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%
2010	60.6%	35.8%	1.0%	0.2%	1.2%	1.2%
Montgomery						
1990	69.8%	28.3%	0.2%	0.1%	1.7%	
2000	69.7%	27.2%	0.2%	0.1%	2.1%	0.6%
2010	69.0%	26.3%	0.3%	0.1%	3.3%	1.1%

Table P-15 (Cont'd)

Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia

1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Tattnall						
1990	68.2%	29.2%	0.3%	0.1%	2.2%	
2000	60.5%	31.4%	0.4%	0.1%	6.6%	0.9%
2010	62.7%	29.3%	0.5%	0.3%	6.0%	1.3%
Telfair						
1990	65.5%	34.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	
2000	59.7%	38.4%	0.2%	0.02%	1.2%	0.5%
2010	57.0%	36.5%	0.6%	0.2%	4.1%	1.7%
Toombs						
1990	73.1%	23.4%	0.6%	0.2%	2.7%	
2000	69.2%	24.2%	0.5%	0.2%	5.3%	0.7%
2010	65.1%	24.9%	0.8%	0.3%	7.4%	1.5%
Treutlen						
1990	66.8%	33.1%	0.0%	0.05%	0.2%	
2000	65.7%	33.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%	0.6%
2010	65.2%	32.6%	0.2%	0.2%	0.8%	1.0%
Wayne						
1990	80.0%	19.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	
2000	76.7%	20.3%	0.5%	0.5%	1.3%	1.0%
2010	74.9%	19.9%	0.6%	0.4%	2.2%	2.0%

Table P-15 (Cont'd)
Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Wheeler						
1990	68.4%	30.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1.4%	
2000	64.6%	33.2%	0.1%	0.1%	1.2%	0.8%
2010	61.3%	35.2%	0.2%	0.1%	2.3%	0.8%
Wilcox						
1990	67.9%	31.7%	0.03%	0.1%	0.2%	
2000	62.6%	36.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.5%	0.4%
2010	61.7%	35.1%	0.5%	0.2%	1.7%	1.0%
Region						
1990	71.1%	27.8%	0.3%	0.1%	0.7%	
2000	67.6%	28.9%	0.4%	0.2%	2.3%	0.6%
2010	65.5%	28.6%	0.6%	0.2%	3.8%	1.2%
Georgia						
1990	71.0%	27.0%	1.2%	0.2%	0.7%	
2000	65.1%	28.7%	2.2%	0.3%	2.4%	1.4%
2010	59.7%	30.5%	3.3%	0.3%	4.0%	2.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-16

Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Adjacent Regions, and Georgia
1990-2010

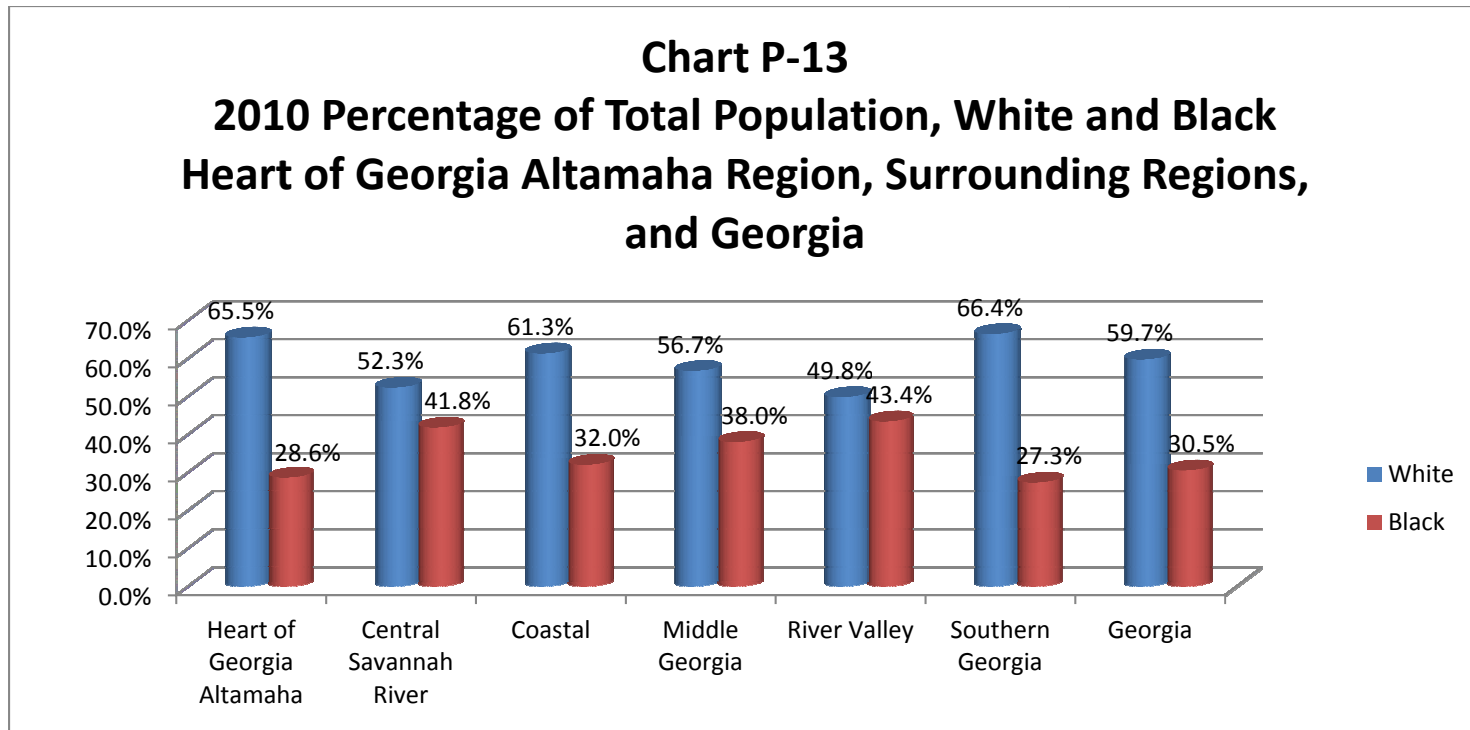
	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
Heart of Georgia Altamaha						
1990	71.1%	27.8%	0.3%	0.1%	0.7%	
2000	67.6%	28.9%	0.4%	0.2%	2.3%	0.6%
2010	65.5%	28.6%	0.6%	0.2%	3.8%	1.2%
Central Savannah River Area						
1990	58.9%	39.1%	1.3%	0.2%	0.5%	
2000	54.6%	41.4%	1.6%	0.3%	0.8%	1.4%
2010	52.3%	41.8%	2.0%	0.3%	1.3%	2.2%
Coastal Georgia						
1990	65.7%	32.3%	1.0%	0.2%	0.7%	
2000	62.5%	33.1%	1.3%	0.3%	1.3%	1.5%
2010	61.3%	32.0%	1.9%	0.3%	2.1%	2.3%
Middle Georgia						
1990	63.3%	35.6%	0.6%	0.2%	0.3%	
2000	60.0%	36.9%	1.0%	0.2%	0.7%	1.0%
2010	56.7%	38.0%	1.6%	0.3%	1.7%	1.7%

Table P-16 (Cont'd)

Racial Composition as a Percentage of Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Adjacent Regions, and Georgia
1990-2010

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native alone	Other	Two or More
River Valley						
1990	56.7%	41.0%	1.0%	0.3%	1.1%	
2000	51.7%	43.8%	1.2%	0.3%	1.7%	1.5%
2010	49.8%	43.4%	1.7%	0.3%	2.5%	2.2%
Southern Georgia						
1990	72.0%	26.9%	0.4%	0.2%	0.5%	
2000	68.7%	27.2%	0.6%	0.3%	2.2%	1.0%
2010	66.4%	27.3%	0.9%	0.3%	3.5%	1.6%
Georgia						
1990	71.0%	27.0%	1.2%	0.2%	0.7%	
2000	65.1%	28.7%	2.2%	0.3%	2.4%	1.4%
2010	59.7%	30.5%	3.3%	0.3%	4.0%	2.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of 2010 U.S. Census data, 2013.

Table P-17
Hispanic Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Appling	138	792	1,704
Bleckley	43	107	301
Candler	138	882	1,227
Dodge	148	248	732
Emanuel	82	745	921
Evans	109	625	1,441
Jeff Davis	144	651	1,577
Johnson	35	78	186
Laurens	180	529	1,143
Montgomery	142	271	480
Tattnall	547	1,883	2,502
Telfair	41	215	2,026
Toombs	824	2,310	3,055
Treutlen	16	79	103
Wayne	177	1,013	1,719
Wheeler	101	219	356
Wilcox	30	139	338
REGION	2,895	10,786	19,811
GEORGIA	108,922	435,227	853,689

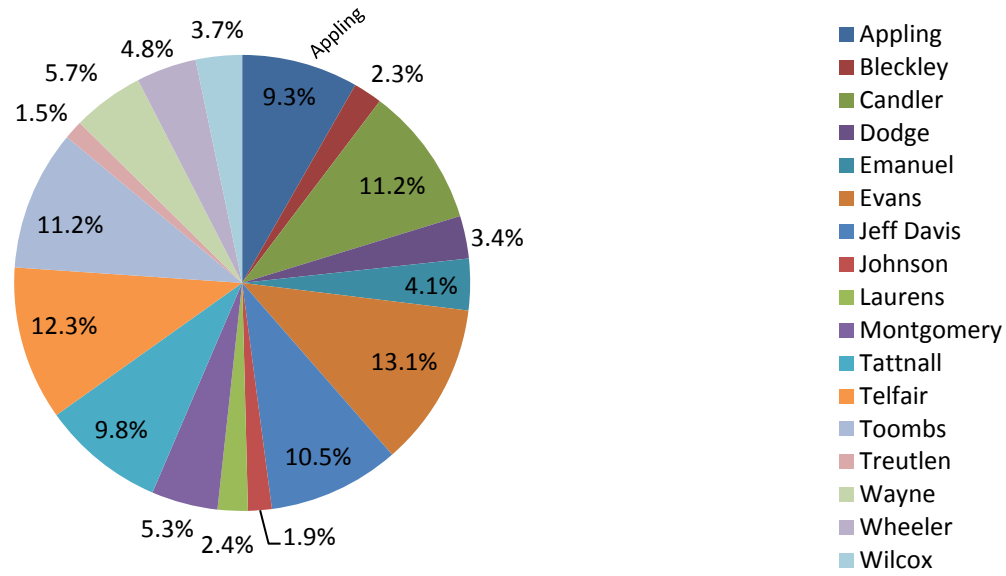
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-18**Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****1990-2010**

	1990	2000	2010
Appling	0.9%	4.5%	9.3%
Bleckley	0.4%	0.9%	2.3%
Candler	1.8%	9.2%	11.2%
Dodge	0.8%	1.3%	3.4%
Emanuel	0.4%	3.4%	4.1%
Evans	1.2%	6.0%	13.1%
Jeff Davis	1.2%	5.1%	10.5%
Johnson	0.4%	0.9%	1.9%
Laurens	0.5%	1.2%	2.4%
Montgomery	2.0%	3.3%	5.3%
Tattnall	3.1%	8.4%	9.8%
Telfair	0.4%	1.8%	12.3%
Toombs	3.4%	8.9%	11.2%
Treutlen	0.3%	1.2%	1.5%
Wayne	0.8%	3.8%	5.7%
Wheeler	2.1%	3.5%	4.8%
Wilcox	0.4%	1.6%	3.7%
REGION	1.2%	4.0%	6.5%
GEORGIA	1.7%	5.3%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-14
Hispanic Population as Percentage of 2010
Total Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Population



Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census data, 2013.

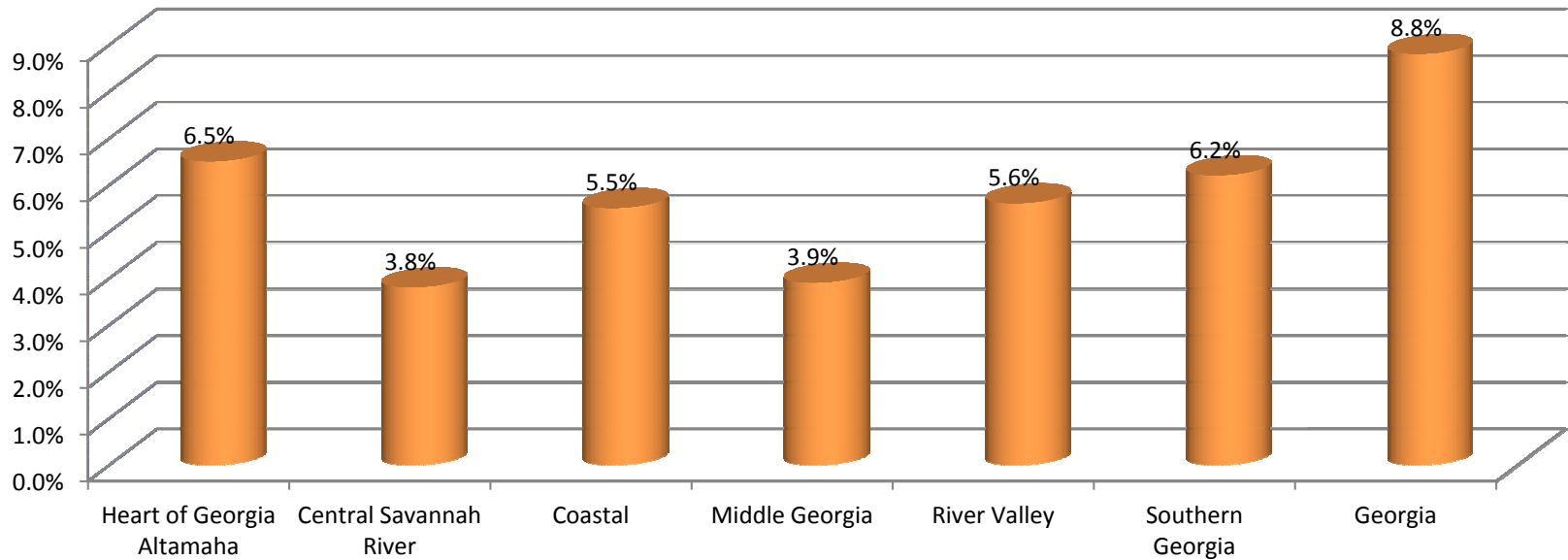
Table P-19

Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Adjacent Regions, and Georgia
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Heart of Georgia Altamaha	1.2%	4.0%	6.5%
Central Savannah River Area	1.4%	2.3%	3.8%
Coastal Georgia	1.7%	3.1%	5.5%
Middle Georgia	0.9%	2.0%	3.9%
River Valley	2.4%	3.8%	5.6%
Southern Georgia	1.4%	3.9%	6.2%
GEORGIA	1.7%	5.3%	8.8%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-15
Hispanic Population as Percentage of 2010 Total Population
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Surrounding Regions, and Georgia



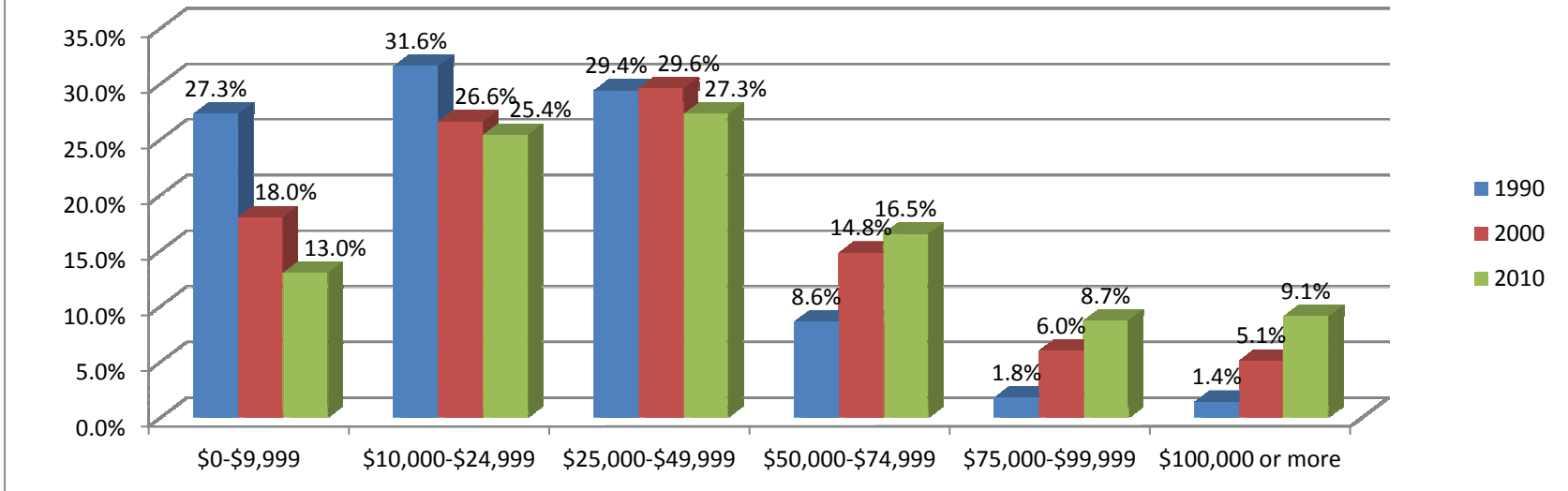
Source: Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission staff analysis of U.S. Census data, 2013.

Table P-20
Income Distribution by Households (by Percentage)
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
1990-2010

	\$0-\$9,999	\$10,000-\$24,999	\$25,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000 or more
Region						
1990	27.3%	31.6%	29.4%	8.6%	1.8%	1.4%
2000	18.0%	26.6%	29.6%	14.8%	6.0%	5.1%
2010	13.0%	25.4%	27.3%	16.5%	8.7%	9.1%
Georgia						
1990	16.8%	26.3%	34.0%	14.4%	4.6%	3.8%
2000	10.1%	18.1%	29.3%	19.7%	10.4%	12.3%
2010	8.3%	16.8%	25.4%	18.6%	11.9%	18.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-16
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Household Income Distribution
by Percentage
1990-2010



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-21
Median Household Income
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.
1980-2010

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Appling	\$10,675	\$22,271	\$30,266	\$36,155
Bleckley	\$13,655	\$22,690	\$33,448	\$35,661
Candler	\$9,892	\$19,375	\$25,022	\$35,828
Dodge	\$10,483	\$18,244	\$27,607	\$33,580
Emanuel	\$10,600	\$17,891	\$24,383	\$30,205
Evans	\$10,863	\$19,972	\$25,447	\$40,796
Jeff Davis	\$13,137	\$21,470	\$27,310	\$32,928
Johnson	\$10,574	\$18,064	\$23,846	\$27,607
Laurens	\$12,378	\$21,788	\$32,010	\$38,280
Montgomery	\$10,156	\$20,054	\$30,240	\$35,182
Tattnall	\$9,482	\$20,293	\$28,664	\$38,522
Telfair	\$10,003	\$16,573	\$26,097	\$23,876
Toombs	\$10,812	\$19,473	\$26,811	\$31,635
Treutlen	\$10,274	\$17,391	\$24,644	\$36,467
Wayne	\$12,120	\$23,311	\$32,766	\$37,340
Wheeler	\$8,511	\$16,585	\$24,053	\$35,422
Wilcox	\$10,680	\$16,333	\$27,483	\$30,784
Region	\$10,840	\$19,516	\$27,652	\$32,116
Georgia	\$16,533	\$29,021	\$42,433	\$49,347
U.S.	\$19,661	\$35,353	\$41,994	\$51,914

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-22
Mean Household Income
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Appling	\$26,673	\$39,616	\$46,699
Bleckley	\$29,371	\$42,274	\$51,833
Candler	\$25,306	\$35,568	\$44,843
Dodge	\$28,213	\$36,439	\$43,005
Emanuel	\$23,663	\$36,040	\$42,368
Evans	\$26,840	\$33,697	\$49,171
Jeff Davis	\$26,262	\$35,917	\$41,099
Johnson	\$23,332	\$33,318	\$45,958
Laurens	\$28,200	\$43,020	\$50,556
Montgomery	\$25,860	\$39,070	\$45,909
Tattnall	\$25,498	\$37,785	\$47,745
Telfair	\$22,678	\$36,782	\$34,131
Toombs	\$26,935	\$37,171	\$46,930
Treutlen	\$21,416	\$34,666	\$44,029
Wayne	\$27,558	\$42,855	\$50,088
Wheeler	\$25,332	\$38,377	\$38,625
Wilcox	\$24,277	\$39,399	\$38,949
Region	\$26,319	\$38,699	\$46,037
Georgia	\$36,810	\$56,612	\$66,620
U.S.	\$36,520	\$56,644	\$70,883

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table P-23
Per Capita Income
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.
1990-2010

	1990	2000	2010
Appling	\$9,901	\$15,044	\$18,977
Bleckley	\$10,775	\$15,934	\$18,960
Candler	\$9,293	\$12,958	\$16,068
Dodge	\$8,643	\$14,468	\$16,288
Emanuel	\$8,535	\$13,627	\$16,076
Evans	\$9,792	\$12,758	\$19,072
Jeff Davis	\$9,632	\$13,780	\$15,730
Johnson	\$8,550	\$12,384	\$15,659
Laurens	\$10,423	\$16,763	\$19,387
Montgomery	\$9,283	\$14,182	\$17,168
Tattnall	\$9,286	\$13,439	\$16,742
Telfair	\$8,452	\$14,197	\$13,420
Toombs	\$9,775	\$14,252	\$17,974
Treutlen	\$7,865	\$13,122	\$16,710
Wayne	\$9,856	\$15,628	\$18,393
Wheeler	\$9,522	\$13,005	\$10,043
Wilcox	\$8,733	\$14,014	\$12,692
Region	\$9,496	\$14,566	\$17,107
Georgia	\$13,631	\$21,154	\$25,134
U.S.	\$14,420	\$21,587	\$27,334

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

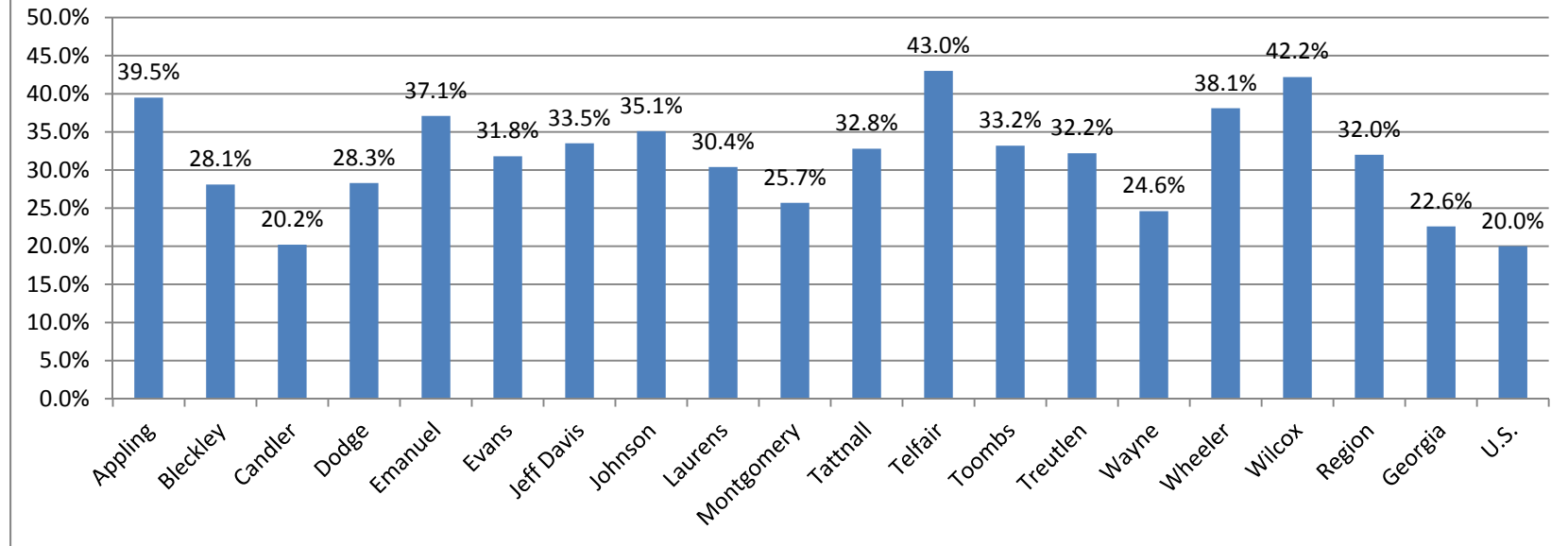
Table P-24

Percent of Population Below the Poverty Level
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.
1990-2010

	1990			2000			2010		
	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65
Appling	19.6%	26.4%	29.0%	18.6%	23.9%	24.4%	23.2%	39.5%	13.5%
Bleckley	17.5%	23.8%	29.5%	15.9%	24.1%	17.8%	20.2%	28.1%	16.2%
Candler	23.1%	34.7%	30.6%	26.1%	36.9%	22.0%	19.0%	20.2%	14.8%
Dodge	20.6%	28.0%	36.3%	17.4%	19.4%	21.3%	21.9%	28.3%	17.4%
Emanuel	25.2%	34.4%	31.8%	27.4%	36.7%	27.5%	24.5%	37.1%	14.7%
Evans	24.3%	30.2%	37.1%	27.0%	36.2%	23.6%	22.0%	31.8%	12.5%
Jeff Davis	18.6%	23.4%	29.4%	19.4%	21.7%	22.1%	23.7%	33.5%	18.7%
Johnson	21.7%	30.8%	33.6%	22.6%	29.6%	30.9%	25.5%	35.1%	26.2%
Laurens	19.9%	28.5%	26.5%	18.4%	26.3%	18.9%	21.4%	30.4%	17.0%
Montgomery	22.3%	33.6%	37.7%	19.9%	24.7%	23.9%	21.6%	25.7%	23.8%
Tattnall	19.2%	27.9%	29.1%	23.9%	32.9%	20.2%	25.1%	32.8%	14.0%
Telfair	26.5%	35.8%	34.2%	21.2%	26.4%	23.7%	32.9%	43.0%	21.6%
Toombs	23.5%	31.9%	34.2%	23.9%	33.8%	18.3%	24.7%	33.2%	16.0%
Treutlen	26.9%	33.9%	34.1%	26.3%	31.8%	33.0%	23.3%	32.2%	11.4%
Wayne	20.6%	28.0%	26.9%	22.7%	22.7%	14.4%	18.6%	24.6%	14.3%
Wheeler	29.8%	38.8%	41.3%	30.2%	30.2%	26.7%	27.7%	38.1%	28.8%
Wilcox	27.7%	38.8%	30.0%	29.8%	29.8%	21.3%	27.4%	42.2%	18.4%
REGION	22.7%	30.1%	31.3%	19.7%	27.3%	19.9%	23.3%	32.0%	16.8%
GEORGIA	14.7%	19.8%	20.4%	13.0%	16.7%	13.5%	16.5%	22.6%	11.5%
U.S.	12.8%	19.0%	11.4%	12.4%	16.1%	9.9%	14.3%	20.0%	9.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Chart P-17
2010 Percent of Population Under Age 18 Below the Poverty Level
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Region Counties,
Georgia, and U.S.



Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Base

The economy of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region remains more reliant on the traditional mainstays of agriculture and manufacturing than the rest of the state and the U.S. In fact, the Region had the highest employment percentage of forest related jobs compared to total employment (5.2 percent) of any region in Georgia, according to a 2011 Georgia Tech study. The Region also had the greatest dependency on forest based compensation compared to total compensation among any other region of the state. Although down substantially over the last 20 years, manufacturing employment still remains somewhat higher in the Region, as a percentage of total employment, than the state and nation. The drastic decline in particular of the garment and apparel industry has led to large job cuts both in the Region and elsewhere. The previous trend of communities being home to one or two large industries that employed up to hundreds at a time has been supplanted by a current move towards light manufacturing entities, often employing 50 people or less. This trend towards greater diversity of a community's industrial base, as opposed to relying on a single large employer, will likely be key to keeping manufacturing employment in the Region at a slightly higher level than elsewhere. New uses for the Region's abundant forest resources, such as wood pellets, will also likely boost manufacturing in the Region.

State/Local Government is another sector where regional employment numbers are significantly higher than the rest of Georgia and the U.S. This sector is the Region's leading employer among all non-service oriented jobs, at levels about one-third higher than the state and nation. Much of this employment is due to the widespread presence of state, federal, and private correctional facilities throughout the Region. As a result, this sector has become a much needed stable and reliable source for jobs locally. As the national and state economies have now become heavily service-oriented, those jobs are now also the leading source of employment in the Region compared to total employment. However, the percentage of service-oriented jobs in the Region is only about one-half that of Georgia and the U.S. Transportation and warehousing

may become more prominent in the Region because of logistics and distribution which are increasing.

One in five dollars of earnings in the Region is in State/Local Government jobs, due to the large number of correctional and law enforcement jobs locally. That is double the rest of the state. Much like employment, service earnings regionally are only one-half those of Georgia and the U.S. as a percentage of total earnings, as service oriented jobs tend to be relatively lower paying. Earnings in both farming and manufacturing are significantly higher regionally than elsewhere, as was the case with employment.

Labor Force

As of 2011, the labor force in the Region totaled 126,838. Of that total 111,653 were employed and 15,185 were unemployed, for an unemployment rate of 12 percent. Since 2007 the Region's unemployment has more than doubled, as is the case with the state as a whole. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has consistently maintained a higher unemployment rate than both Georgia and the U.S.

The Region's economy is primarily driven by service producing jobs, which make up two-thirds of all current jobs locally. Another one-quarter are goods producing jobs, such as manufacturing and construction. The remaining jobs include agriculture and public administration. The fastest growing occupations in the Region are in service occupations, such as health care, and in specialized technology-oriented and computer-related jobs.

Economic Resources

There are numerous multi-county and multi-jurisdictional organizations and development authorities that serve the Region well. Among these are the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority; the I-16 Corridor Alliance; the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau; the Southeast Georgia Joint Development Authority; the Ocmulgee Regional Joint Development Authority; the Emanuel-Johnson County Development Authority; the Laurens-

Treutlen Joint Development Authority; the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce; and the Golden Isles Parkway Association. These organizations will be discussed further in the Intergovernmental Coordination section of this Regional Assessment.

Given the increased importance of higher education and technical training to economic development and industrial recruitment, the Region is well-positioned for enhanced workforce development through the presence of eight (8) post-secondary institutions. These include East Georgia State College, Middle Georgia State College (MGSC), Brewton-Parker College, Altamaha Technical College, Southeastern Technical College, Oconee Fall Line Technical College, Wiregrass Technical College, and Mercer University (offers courses in Eastman). MGSC's Aviation Campus in Eastman is the only public one of its kind in the state.

There are a plethora of state and federal programs and resources available to assist the Region with community development projects and activities. The Georgia Quick Start Program through the Technical College System of Georgia provides start-up or expanding businesses and industries with customized training services at no cost. Needed infrastructure projects are offered support through assistance programs provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program. Many Region communities have received designation from various state programs, such as Entrepreneur Friendly Communities (DCA) and Camera Ready (Georgia Office of Film, Music, and Digital Entertainment).

Table ED-1**Place of Work Employment by Type (Percentage)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.****1990-2010**

	Region			Georgia			U.S.		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
FARM	7.9%	7.0%	5.0%	2.0%	1.4%	1.0%	2.3%	1.9%	1.5%
PRIVATE									
Ag./Forestry/ Fishing	1.2%	2.2%	1.6%	0.9%	1.1%	0.4%	1.0%	1.3%	0.5%
Mining	0.03%	0.04%	0.1%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.7%	0.5%	0.7%
Construction	5.4%	5.8%	6.0%	5.8%	6.1%	5.3%	5.2%	5.7%	5.1%
Manufacturing	25.1%	19.0%	9.1%	15.5%	12.6%	6.9%	14.1%	11.6%	7.0%
Trans./Comm./Pub. Util.	4.9%	4.9%	3.3%	5.9%	6.1%	6.5%	4.7%	4.9%	5.3%
Wholesale Trade	3.5%	3.4%	1.9%	6.2%	5.7%	4.1%	4.8%	4.6%	3.5%
Retail Trade	15.6%	15.9%	10.3%	16.4%	16.8%	10.1%	16.4%	16.4%	10.2%
Fin./Ins./Real Estate	3.2%	3.9%	4.9%	6.6%	7.1%	9.1%	7.7%	7.9%	9.8%
Services	15.8%	19.1%	21.5%	23.8%	28.6%	41.5%	27.8%	31.7%	42.0%
GOVERNMENT									
Federal Civilian	1.7%	1.4%	1.8%	2.8%	1.9%	2.0%	2.3%	1.7%	1.7%
Federal Military	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	2.5%	1.9%	2.0%	1.9%	1.2%	1.2%
State/Local	14.8%	16.6%	17.1%	11.5%	10.4%	11.0%	10.9%	10.6%	11.2%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012.

Table ED-2**Place of Work Earnings by Type (Percentage)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.****1990-2010**

	Region			Georgia			U.S.		
	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010	1990	2000	2010
FARM	6.5%	6.3%	6.0%	1.4%	1.0%	0.7%	1.3%	0.8%	0.9%
PRIVATE									
Ag./Forestry/ Fishing	0.7%	0.9%	2.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.3%	0.6%	0.5%	0.3%
Mining	0.02%	0.01%	0.0%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	1.1%	0.9%	0.9%
Construction	5.9%	6.1%	5.0%	5.7%	6.2%	5.0%	5.9%	6.4%	5.3%
Manufacturing	27.1%	20.1%	12.6%	17.6%	14.2%	9.0%	19.1%	15.6%	9.9%
Trans./Comm./Pub. Util.	5.2%	8.9%	4.5%	11.4%	13.6%	9.8%	8.1%	8.4%	7.4%
Wholesale Trade	3.8%	3.6%	2.2%	8.9%	8.4%	6.6%	6.4%	6.1%	5.1%
Retail Trade	10.3%	10.1%	7.5%	9.2%	9.1%	6.2%	9.2%	8.9%	6.2%
Fin./Ins./Real Estate	2.4%	2.7%	3.3%	6.2%	7.5%	7.8%	6.9%	9.6%	8.9%
Services	12.5%	15.5%	17.9%	21.9%	28.0%	34.9%	25.1%	29.4%	37.0%
GOVERNMENT									
Federal Civilian	3.9%	3.7%	4.7%	4.6%	3.4%	4.3%	3.9%	3.0%	3.6%
Federal Military	0.5%	0.4%	1.1%	2.7%	2.0%	3.7%	2.0%	1.2%	2.0%
State/Local	18.3%	20.1%	20.8%	12.1%	9.9%	11.6%	12.2%	11.0%	12.7%

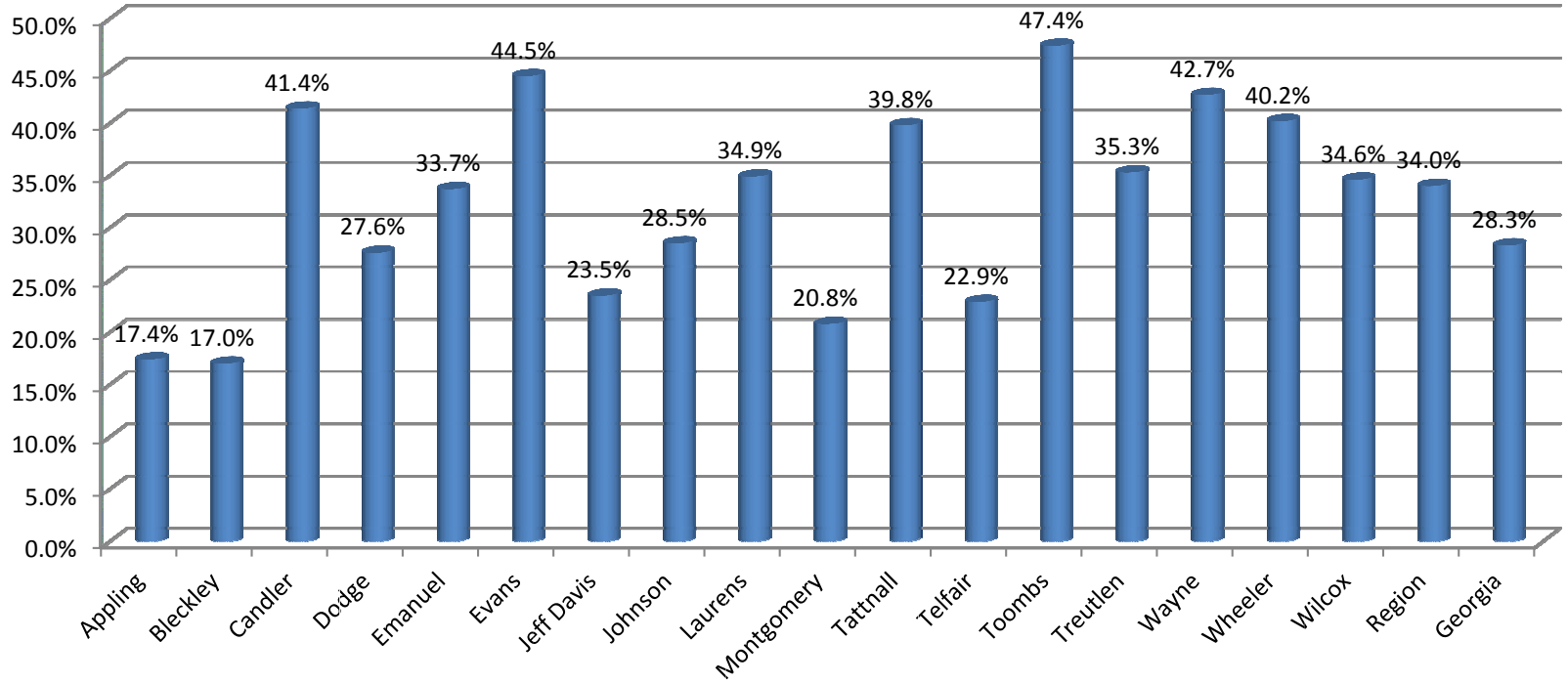
Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012.

Table ED-3
Regional Employment and Wages by County
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2000-2010

	2000		2010		2000-2010 Percent Change	
	Employment	Average Weekly Wages (all industries)	Employment	Average Weekly Wages (all industries)	Employment	Weekly Wages
Appling	6,076	\$591	6,415	\$694	5.6	17.4
Bleckley	4,168	\$424	3,409	\$496	-18.2	17.0
Candler	2,834	\$370	2,721	\$523	-4.0	41.4
Dodge	5,985	\$402	5,538	\$513	-7.5	27.6
Emanuel	7,343	\$395	6,625	\$528	-9.8	33.7
Evans	4,812	\$384	4,204	\$555	-12.6	44.5
Jeff Davis	5,230	\$443	4,029	\$547	-23.0	23.5
Johnson	2,234	\$403	1,658	\$518	-25.8	28.5
Laurens	20,036	\$479	17,907	\$646	-10.6	34.9
Montgomery	1,752	\$448	1,626	\$541	-7.2	20.8
Tattnall	6,063	\$389	5,618	\$544	-7.3	39.8
Telfair	4,257	\$385	3,431	\$473	-19.4	22.9
Toombs	10,876	\$401	11,107	\$591	2.1	47.4
Treutlen	1,143	\$348	1,150	\$471	0.6	35.3
Wayne	9,237	\$487	8,039	\$695	-13.0	42.7
Wheeler	927	\$408	1,355	\$572	46.2	40.2
Wilcox	1,357	\$387	1,176	\$521	-13.3	34.6
Region	94,330	\$438	86,008	\$587	-8.8	34.0
Georgia	3,884,388	\$658	3,752,981	\$844	-3.4	28.3

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2012.

Chart ED-4
2000-2010 Percentage Change in Average Weekly Wages
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Region Counties, and Georgia



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2012.

Table ED-4**Regional Employment by Occupation (Percent of Persons Employed 16 Years and Older)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****2000-2010**

Occupation	Appling		Bleckley		Candler		Dodge		Emanuel	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	7.94	12.45	8.80	4.01	9.39	9.49	8.22	4.56	8.34	11.83
Professional and Technical Specialty	13.11	12.11	14.65	17.89	12.07	11.37	16.22	20.84	12.30	14.08
Technicians and Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	8.63	5.60	7.03	14.84	8.29	7.69	7.84	7.48	9.97	9.69
Clerical and Administrative Support	14.12	13.72	11.67	8.54	13.22	13.37	13.93	15.27	12.26	11.82
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	NA	1.61	NA	3.53	NA	1.51	NA	5.12	NA	2.28
Service Occupations (not protective or household)	7.90	11.10	12.01	18.27	8.87	18.45	11.07	15.00	12.50	15.67
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3.94	9.10	1.93	4.43	4.88	3.20	1.28	1.79	2.53	3.53
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	16.01	12.78	18.22	10.17	15.12	15.29	15.59	10.59	17.10	10.50
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	16.59	9.21	12.79	5.76	15.18	7.15	11.72	7.89	13.12	7.75
Transportation and Material Moving	8.73	7.52	8.23	7.98	8.10	10.31	8.74	7.14	7.63	9.24
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers	NA	4.81	NA	4.59	NA	2.17	NA	4.32	NA	3.60
Total Persons Employed 16 Years and Older	7,732	7,864	4,763	5,014	3,830	4,434	7,644	7,552	8,897	8,494

Table ED-4 (Cont'd)**Regional Employment by Occupation (Percent of Persons Employed 16 Years and Older)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****2000-2010**

Occupation	Evans		Jeff Davis		Johnson		Laurens		Montgomery	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	8.54	13.25	7.41	6.66	7.49	9.16	8.91	9.31	10.72	8.23
Professional and Technical Specialty	11.08	14.25	13.12	15.40	12.73	12.49	17.55	17.85	15.98	20.32
Technicians and Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	7.12	12.61	9.97	9.64	7.62	4.51	9.83	11.44	8.30	5.62
Clerical and Administrative Support	12.78	12.32	10.96	9.95	14.65	15.87	11.80	13.12	14.32	11.65
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	NA	2.50	NA	6.25	NA	2.81	NA	3.67	NA	5.92
Service Occupations (not protective or household)	9.01	9.25	10.90	7.39	7.86	15.24	11.03	13.59	11.34	11.16
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	4.01	4.65	3.32	5.01	2.35	1.84	0.76	0.67	1.86	7.02
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	14.01	9.18	17.68	16.27	16.80	13.43	14.87	12.05	10.83	7.76
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	13.68	5.75	14.57	6.00	14.92	8.70	11.81	6.76	13.51	11.00
Transportation and Material Moving	11.06	11.28	11.55	9.88	10.08	9.79	8.55	7.31	7.29	8.06
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers	NA	4.96	NA	7.56	NA	6.17	NA	4.23	NA	3.26
Total Persons Employed 16 Years and Older	4,240	4,520	5,266	5,871	3,017	3,484	19,250	19,608	3,554	3,647

Table ED-4 (Cont'd)**Regional Employment by Occupation (Percent of Persons Employed 16 Years and Older)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****2000-2010**

Occupation	Tattnall		Telfair		Toombs		Treutlen		Wayne	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	8.62	11.45	8.65	5.25	10.38	10.91	8.63	11.55	8.24	8.99
Professional and Technical Specialty	14.64	14.68	13.57	19.00	16.64	17.39	16.91	19.95	16.11	16.53
Technicians and Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	6.94	9.39	7.11	8.53	9.11	8.99	8.67	9.64	10.64	9.51
Clerical and Administrative Support	13.33	9.12	10.56	5.57	12.55	14.96	11.66	14.70	13.17	10.39
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	NA	7.16	NA	12.91	NA	4.80	NA	1.71	NA	2.85
Service Occupations (not protective or household)	11.32	10.66	9.67	10.94	11.72	12.31	11.62	12.07	13.67	13.79
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	9.50	5.13	4.00	5.23	5.74	5.25	1.78	0.00	1.08	1.45
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	8.32	8.11	18.51	11.95	11.31	5.47	10.92	11.07	10.77	8.64
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	13.96	12.29	10.03	5.92	11.76	6.10	18.34	8.16	16.02	11.67
Transportation and Material Moving	8.35	8.28	12.99	10.39	6.28	7.78	5.81	7.53	9.38	9.26
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers	NA	3.70	NA	4.32	NA	6.04	NA	3.62	NA	6.92
Total Persons Employed 16 Years and Older	7,996	9,080	4,148	5,121	10,987	10,962	2,307	2,511	10,188	11,410

Table ED-4 (Cont'd)**Regional Employment by Occupation (Percent of Persons Employed 16 Years and Older)****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia****2000-2010**

Occupation	Wheeler		Wilcox	
	2000	2010	2000	2010
Executive, Administrative, and Managerial	7.16	10.48	8.64	12.99
Professional and Technical Specialty	16.24	15.58	16.23	16.28
Technicians and Related Support	NA	NA	NA	NA
Sales	5.05	8.13	5.57	5.35
Clerical and Administrative Support	8.55	8.82	12.92	7.75
Private Household Services	NA	NA	NA	NA
Protective Services	NA	2.86	NA	9.99
Service Occupations (not protective or household)	10.62	11.34	9.95	14.75
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	5.09	3.15	3.48	5.13
Precision Production, Craft, and Repair	13.89	8.36	13.50	6.32
Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors	13.12	14.03	11.91	8.23
Transportation and Material Moving	12.88	8.36	9.04	7.86
Handlers, Equipment Cleaners, Helpers, and Laborers	NA	8.88	NA	5.35
Total Persons Employed 16 Years and Older	2,081	1,746	2,964	2,672

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table ED-5**Unemployment Rates by County****Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.****2000-2011**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Appling	5.3	6.7	7.5	6.6	6.3	5.8	5.5	5.4	7.0	10.0	10.8	11.0
Bleckley	4.1	5.1	5.5	4.9	5.9	7.3	5.9	5.3	7.3	9.8	12.9	13.7
Candler	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.5	6.3	9.2	9.9	10.4
Dodge	4.7	5.3	5.5	5.2	5.0	5.7	4.9	5.1	6.8	10.6	12.4	11.7
Emanuel	5.6	5.9	5.3	4.9	5.2	5.4	5.1	5.3	7.4	10.6	11.3	11.6
Evans	4.3	4.0	4.4	4.1	4.0	5.0	4.5	4.4	6.3	8.7	8.8	8.9
Jeff Davis	4.5	7.3	8.0	7.5	7.0	6.9	7.1	6.9	9.8	13.6	14.8	14.3
Johnson	6.0	6.0	6.3	6.9	5.5	6.0	5.4	6.0	8.0	12.4	12.0	12.7
Laurens	4.5	4.4	5.1	5.9	5.5	5.4	5.2	5.1	7.1	11.1	12.6	12.8
Montgomery	5.7	6.5	6.6	5.7	5.4	5.7	5.2	4.7	7.4	8.9	10.4	11.0
Tattnall	5.7	5.0	5.2	4.9	5.3	6.2	5.3	4.9	6.7	8.9	10.1	9.9
Telfair	7.6	11.4	10.0	8.4	7.5	7.4	7.6	7.9	10.8	13.8	18.1	16.6
Toombs	6.5	6.3	7.1	6.0	5.9	6.2	5.2	4.8	7.2	9.8	10.6	11.4
Treutlen	7.7	6.6	7.3	6.8	6.2	7.3	6.2	5.9	8.6	11.3	12.3	13.3
Wayne	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.2	5.6	6.1	5.7	5.5	7.7	11.6	12.5	12.5
Wheeler	6.1	7.2	6.4	6.1	5.9	6.3	5.5	5.3	7.1	9.5	10.9	10.3
Wilcox	4.7	5.3	5.9	6.4	5.5	6.6	6.0	6.0	8.3	11.9	12.6	13.1
Region	5.3	5.7	6.0	5.7	5.6	5.9	5.4	5.3	7.4	10.5	11.7	12.0
Georgia	3.5	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.7	5.2	4.7	4.6	6.3	9.8	10.2	9.8
U.S.	4.0	4.7	5.8	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.6	4.6	5.8	9.3	9.6	8.9

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2012.

Table ED-6

Percent of Derivation of Personal Income of Residents (Thousands of Dollars)

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia, and U.S.

2000 and 2010

	2000				2010			
	Total	Net Earnings	Dividends	Transfer	Total	Net Earnings	Dividends	Transfer
Appling	339,111	64.44	15.11	20.45	474,023	57.41	12.71	29.88
Bleckley	256,610	61.94	18.94	19.13	376,191	55.47	16.70	27.84
Candler	183,668	58.24	16.19	25.57	271,872	53.25	13.09	33.65
Dodge	351,997	58.58	18.71	22.71	488,445	51.92	15.15	32.93
Emanuel	416,242	56.13	16.71	27.16	594,184	50.53	13.51	35.96
Evans	208,120	60.93	17.81	21.27	304,511	56.04	16.45	27.52
Jeff Davis	256,442	62.38	16.04	21.58	355,352	53.69	13.94	32.37
Johnson	155,814	58.56	14.75	26.69	197,861	46.81	12.34	40.86
Laurens	989,096	64.39	16.62	18.99	1,410,323	57.32	14.26	28.43
Montgomery	150,101	62.10	15.81	22.10	227,308	56.99	13.86	29.14
Tattnall	419,769	65.99	14.28	19.73	601,538	60.74	12.15	27.11
Telfair	204,032	51.39	17.63	30.98	273,565	43.51	13.99	42.49
Toombs	536,201	60.98	16.64	22.38	827,942	57.71	13.54	28.74
Treutlen	108,282	56.24	16.71	27.05	166,822	53.26	12.87	33.86
Wayne	547,093	65.68	14.22	20.11	838,116	58.57	12.31	29.12
Wheeler	91,540	58.48	13.13	28.40	133,950	54.78	11.81	33.41
Wilcox	162,582	61.69	14.92	23.39	212,342	52.70	13.08	34.21
Region								
Georgia	234,813,754	72.51	16.50	10.98	337,467,540	66.73	15.43	17.83
U.S.	8,554,866,000	68.93	18.41	12.66	12,353,577,000	64.77	16.76	18.47

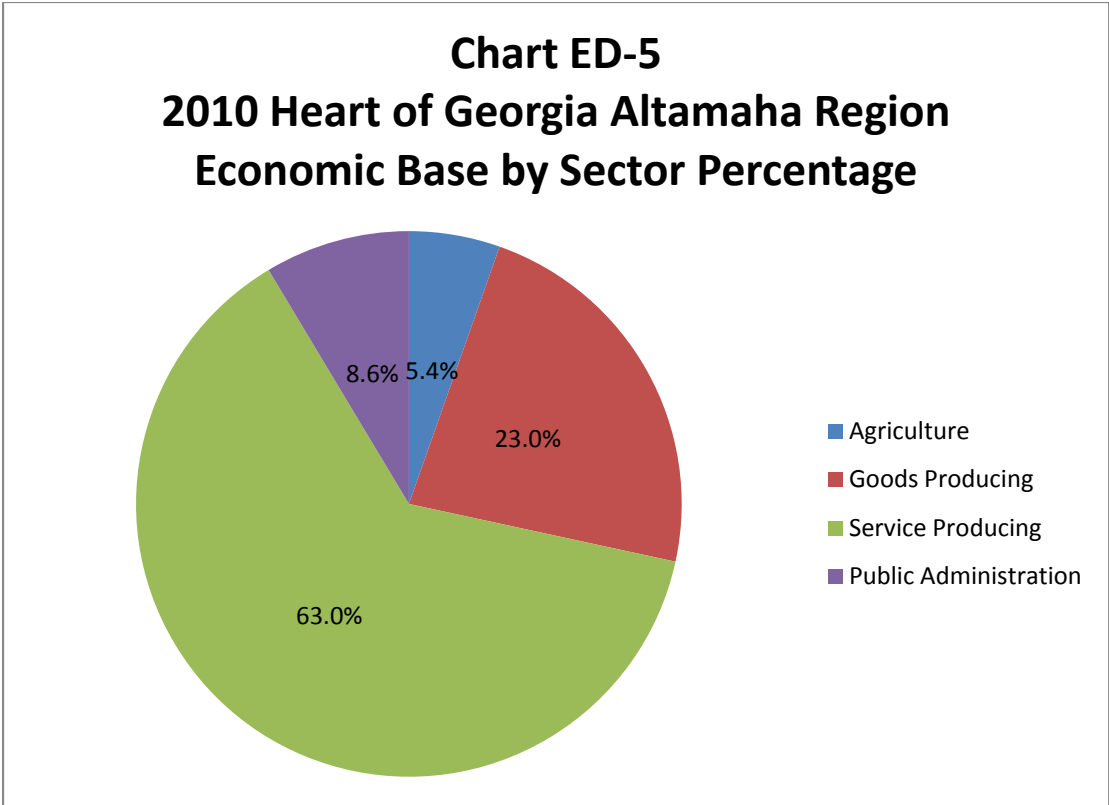
Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, www.bea.gov, 2012.

Table ED-7
Percent of Economic Base by County
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region

2010

	Agriculture	Goods Producing	Service Producing	Public Administration
Appling	9.2%	26.2%	59.2%	5.3%
Bleckley	5.1%	18.0%	67.4%	9.6%
Candler	8.0%	25.6%	61.9%	4.4%
Dodge	3.2%	21.8%	59.1%	16.1%
Emanuel	6.9%	26.9%	62.0%	4.0%
Evans	8.0%	26.6%	59.6%	5.8%
Jeff Davis	3.5%	25.1%	63.1%	8.4%
Johnson	9.6%	22.1%	62.2%	6.1%
Laurens	1.7%	22.3%	68.8%	7.3%
Montgomery	11.8%	19.3%	61.2%	7.7%
Tattnall	8.1%	23.8%	55.6%	12.5%
Telfair	4.7%	19.6%	59.1%	16.6%
Toombs	5.2%	18.1%	69.9%	6.7%
Treutlen	2.4%	29.4%	61.1%	7.2%
Wayne	2.7%	25.6%	63.1%	8.6%
Wheeler	12.7%	18.9%	55.7%	12.8%
Wilcox	8.7%	19.5%	59.1%	12.7%
REGION	5.4%	23.0%	63.0%	8.6%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2012.



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, www.bea.gov, 2012.

HOUSING

Housing Types and Mix

Since 1990 the most significant change in the Region's housing stock has been the sharp rise in the number of manufactured homes as the preferred choice of housing for many residents. Over the last two decades, 14,710 new manufactured housing units have located in the Region, for a growth rate of 64.1 percent. By comparison, the Region added a total of 30,213 new housing units overall during this same time period, a 30.7 percent rate of growth that was less than one-half that for manufactured housing. Almost one-half of the total housing units added to the Region's housing stock in the last 20 years were manufactured homes. Growing at a slightly higher rate than housing units as a whole, albeit at a much smaller total number of units, was multi-family housing. These units have grown at a rate of 34.1 percent since the 1990s. The vast majority of housing units remains single-family housing, which grew only at a 19.8 percent rate. Overall, more than 1,600 new manufactured housing units than single-family units were added to the Region's total housing stock since 1990.

For low-and moderate-income households, manufactured homes provide an affordable and expedient source of housing. Given that many manufactured homes constructed in recent years now are comparable, and even similar to, stick-built homes, they are likely to continue to remain an increasingly popular choice for consumers. As a result, the Region's housing stock is likely to remain not very diverse. In 2010, only three counties (Bleckley, Laurens, and Toombs) had more than 10 percent of their housing stock classified as multi-family. Bleckley County is home to Middle Georgia State College, which offers student housing, while Laurens and Toombs counties are major growth centers. Also, manufactured homes present significant challenges to the Region's local governments in terms of tax revenue and maintenance/upkeep. While manufactured homes are more affordable in the short-term, they tend to lower a community's tax base due to their typical classification as personal property instead of real property. This produces reduced revenue for local governments. Manufactured housing tends to become unoccupied much sooner than stick-built homes, leading to increased costs for local governments

that are often left responsible for demolishing them in order to prevent the presence of a community eyesore, among other potential problems. Without the availability of codes to ensure the structural integrity of manufactured homes, as there are for stick-built homes, it becomes difficult for a community to prevent them from in time becoming substandard. Without adequate planning and subdivision regulations, it is commonplace for manufactured homes to develop in clusters or areas that eventually can become unsightly.

Condition and Occupancy

Based on 2010 Census data, nearly four in 10 homes (39 percent) were constructed during the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. Approximately another one-third (28.4 percent) were built during the 1960s and 1970s. Combined some two-thirds (67.4 percent) of homes in the Region are between 30-50 years of age. There is much potential, as well as likely a growing need in the future, for housing rehabilitation and revitalization throughout the Region. Although these percentages fall in line similarly to the state as a whole, twice as many homes in Georgia were built in just the last decade than in the Region. Much higher percentages of homes locally are greater than 50 years or older than the rest of the state. The slower rate of population growth and higher levels of poverty and lower incomes in the Region, compared to the state as a whole, tend to generally lead to an older housing stock.

The overall rate of vacant housing in the Region is noticeably higher than is the case statewide, which correlates with the greater presence locally of lower incomes and higher rates of poverty. Many communities are taxed with getting a handle on the issues of substandard and dilapidated housing. Increased code enforcement is needed in many areas to adequately address the issue. Several communities have utilized Urban Redevelopment Plans in an attempt to revitalize areas of blight. These plans help identify areas of substandard units and develop solutions to provide for needed housing rehabilitation and removal of dilapidated housing where necessary.

Cost of Housing

The median value of homes in the Region (\$80,200) is only one-half that of the state (\$160,200), as of 2010. The highest median home values in the Region are located primarily in the Region's main growth centers (Laurens, Toombs, and Wayne counties), due to their larger availability of jobs compared to the rest of the Region. In the more rural counties, a larger percentage of the housing stock is comprised of manufactured homes, which carry a significantly lower value than site-built homes.

Median rent in the Region (\$523) is only about two-thirds that of Georgia (\$835). However, between 2000 and 2010 median rent increased more as a percentage regionally (52 percent) than the rest of the state (36 percent), indicating a relatively high demand for the significant number of rental units that are available. As is the case with median home values, median rent is higher in the Region's growth centers, although the highest median rent can be found in Bleckley County (\$642). That is some \$60 higher than the second highest county, Laurens (\$580), and is due to a significant number of students who attend Middle Georgia State College choosing to live near campus. Montgomery County, home to Brewton-Parker College, also has one of the higher median rental values in the Region.

Cost-Burdened Households

The percentage of owner-occupied households (both housing units with a mortgage and those without) that is either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened is on par with the state average. In the Region, some 34 percent of housing units with a mortgage spend at least 30 percent or more of their income in housing costs, compared to 36 percent statewide. In five (5) Region counties (Appling, Candler, Emanuel, Montgomery, and Wilcox), however, more than 40 percent of housing units with a mortgage spend at least one-third of their household income on housing costs. For those housing units without a mortgage, some 14 percent both regionally and statewide are considered to be either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. Households that are cost-burdened must grapple daily with issues going beyond simply affordability, but also

with how much income should remain to devote to other critical needs such as food, clothing, and health care, in addition to regular maintenance of the home and periodic upgrades or improvements that may arise. Cost-burdened households also may not necessarily reflect the number of households where overcrowding may be present, while affordability may not be an issue. Other socioeconomic factors that may be present concern such things as income, public assistance, household type, household size, age of householder, employment, and race.

Some 43.5 percent of renter-occupied households in the Region are considered either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened. While that is substantially high and somewhat higher than that of owner-occupied households, it is still much lower than that of the rest of the state, which is 52.5 percent. However, in four (4) Region counties (Bleckley, Telfair, Toombs, and Wilcox) it exceeds 50 percent, and in Wilcox County, it is almost an alarming 60 percent. The primary concern is that many of these households typically have incomes below the median. Housing options for renters can also be more restricted for those households, particularly those in smaller communities where housing choices are limited. The struggling economy of the last several years and the decrease in jobs availability exacerbates the problem.

Special Housing Needs

With some 14-15 percent of the total population in many Region counties consisting of persons age 65 and older, there is an increasing need for further development of senior citizen housing and the increased availability of affordable, quality housing options. The Region's population is increasingly getting older, with nearly one-half of the counties seeing an increase in the percentage of those residents age 65 and older since 1990, and all but four (4) counties experiencing a percentage increase in the last decade. Many local governments are recognizing the need for a wider range of options for senior living, including independent living, congregate assisted living, and acute-care facilities.

In some counties, such as Tattnall and Toombs, for example, there is a continuing need for additional seasonal/migrant farm worker housing. Migrant labor is essential in these areas,

where a substantial portion of agricultural acreage is utilized for such labor intensive crops as Vidalia sweet onions, tobacco, sweet corn, and greens. While there are a few limited areas where housing is provided, many laborers must find a place to live wherever they can. Often they live in manufactured homes or site-built homes that are overcrowded and likely substandard.

Victims of domestic violence are offered shelter through non-profit facilities in Dublin, Jesup, and Vidalia.

Jobs-Housing Balance

Across the Region there is a greater supply of housing for the workforce than there are jobs available. With not enough jobs for the available workforce, some residents must commute to other areas outside of their county of residence to find work. Typically they commute to larger growth areas adjacent to their place of residence or relatively nearby. More than a few communities serve as “bedroom communities” for nearby larger growth centers. For those smaller communities, the challenge is to find ways to greater diversify their economic base so as to make it easier for residents to better find gainful employment at home.

Table H-1
Housing Stock by Type
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2010

	Single Family		Multi-Family		Mobile Homes		Other		Total
	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	
Appling	57.7%	4,888	5.3%	450	37.0%	3,137	0%	0	8,475
Bleckley	65.7%	3,474	10.5%	551	23.9%	1,265	0%	0	5,290
Candler	60.3%	2,833	7.6%	355	32.0%	1,501	0.2%	8	4,697
Dodge	64.5%	6,295	8.7%	863	26.6%	2,596	0%	0	9,754
Emanuel	62.7%	6,235	8.1%	806	29.0%	2,882	0.1%	9	9,932
Evans	62.1%	2,890	4.6%	221	33.2%	1,554	0%	0	4,655
Jeff Davis	63.9%	4,110	6.5%	415	29.6%	1,907	0%	0	6,432
Johnson	69.3%	2,832	8.4%	346	22.2%	909	0%	0	4,087
Laurens	63.2%	13,463	11.6%	2,462	25.1%	5,345	0.1%	14	21,284
Montgomery	54.5%	2,134	6.4%	250	39.1%	1,532	0%	0	3,916
Tattnall	58.9%	5,824	6.5%	644	34.5%	3,413	0%	0	9,881
Telfair	67.1%	4,782	9.9%	713	22.9%	1,632	0%	0	7,127
Toombs	61.9%	7,518	13.9%	1,687	24.2%	2,933	0%	0	12,138
Treutlen	57.3%	1,709	6.9%	207	35.5%	1,058	0.3%	9	2,983
Wayne	58.3%	7,053	7.5%	899	34.2%	4,147	0.1%	10	12,109
Wheeler	61.8%	1,411	6.6%	149	31.7%	725	0%	0	2,285
Wilcox	63.7%	2,239	4.3%	149	32.0%	1,126	0%	0	3,514
REGION	62.0%	79,690	8.7%	11,167	29.3%	37,662	0%	50	128,559
Georgia	69.8%	2,838,856	20.4%	831,474	9.6%	390,838	0%	1,856	4,063,024

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table H-2
Proportion of Existing Housing Units Constructed by Decade
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia

	2000 or later	1980-1999	1960-1979	1940-1959	1920-1939
Appling	10.2%	47.0%	24.1%	9.8%	8.8%
Bleckley	7.7%	40.8%	30.4%	11.4%	9.8%
Candler	15.6%	39.8%	23.1%	7.2%	14.3%
Dodge	5.6%	33.1%	35.3%	18.1%	8.1%
Emanuel	9.7%	39.6%	28.2%	12.6%	10.1%
Evans	11.5%	43.3%	22.0%	14.1%	9.1%
Jeff Davis	7.9%	41.7%	29.5%	13.8%	7.2%
Johnson	6.4%	35.2%	40.0%	8.5%	9.9%
Laurens	15.3%	37.5%	28.9%	12.3%	6.0%
Montgomery	8.2%	46.4%	26.1%	11.2%	8.1%
Tattnall	13.3%	41.4%	24.9%	13.6%	6.8%
Telfair	3.9%	29.3%	30.0%	24.9%	11.8%
Toombs	8.4%	39.3%	33.4%	11.6%	7.4%
Treutlen	6.3%	37.8%	27.8%	17.5%	10.7%
Wayne	17.4%	39.3%	21.5%	14.2%	7.8%
Wheeler	3.8%	34.2%	37.2%	13.3%	11.4%
Wilcox	8.3%	40.5%	25.0%	12.2%	13.8%
REGION	10.6%	39.0%	28.4%	13.4%	8.6%
Georgia	21.5%	39.2%	24.4%	9.9%	4.9%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table H-3
Vacancy Rates

2010

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia

	Overall Rate	For Sale	For Rent	Occasional	Others	Total Vacant Units	Total Units	Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate
Appling	18.1%	0.7%	3.4%	4.0%	9.4%	1,543	8,512	1.1%	13.4%
Bleckley	12.1%	1.2%	2.4%	1.1%	7.2%	644	5,304	1.8%	8.3%
Candler	15.1%	1.6%	3.6%	3.5%	5.6%	720	4,761	2.7%	11.3%
Dodge	17.0%	1.1%	4.3%	3.0%	8.0%	1,680	9,857	1.9%	14.5%
Emanuel	15.4%	0.6%	3.3%	3.0%	7.7%	1,538	9,968	1.1%	10.0%
Evans	13.5%	1.4%	4.6%	2.2%	4.7%	631	4,664	2.3%	13.1%
Jeff Davis	12.3%	0.8%	3.5%	1.1%	6.4%	799	6,488	1.3%	11.6%
Johnson	18.8%	1.1%	3.2%	4.1%	9.9%	773	4,120	1.8%	13.0%
Laurens	12.8%	1.1%	4.0%	1.8%	5.4%	2,727	21,368	1.8%	12.0%
Montgomery	16.2%	0.8%	3.7%	3.5%	6.5%	634	3,921	1.3%	13.6%
Tattnall	17.6%	1.5%	5.7%	3.5%	4.7%	1,756	9,966	2.6%	17.7%
Telfair	24.0%	1.5%	3.5%	4.5%	13.6%	1,754	7,297	2.7%	13.7%
Toombs	14.6%	1.1%	5.3%	2.7%	3.3%	1,769	12,144	2.0%	14.1%
Treutlen	15.0%	0.5%	1.8%	2.1%	10.2%	449	2,992	0.9%	6.9%
Wayne	13.4%	1.4%	3.5%	2.2%	5.6%	1,637	12,199	2.2%	11.7%
Wheeler	18.0%	0.3%	2.8%	5.1%	9.1%	473	2,625	0.6%	11.4%
Wilcox	17.6%	0.6%	3.2%	4.5%	8.6%	619	3,510	0.9%	13.7%
REGION	15.5%	7.0%	25.1%	18.2%	42.9%	20,146	129,696	1.8%	12.7%
Georgia	12.3%	2.1%	0.3%	2.0%	3.5%	503,217	4,088,801	3.4%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table H-4
Cost of Housing
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2000 and 2010

Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units				Median Rent for Renter-Occupied Units		
	2000	2010	Percent Increase 2000-2010	2000	2010	Percent Increase 2000-2010
Appling	\$63,700	\$82,300	29.2%	\$351	\$470	33.9%
Bleckley	\$66,500	\$81,200	22.1%	\$373	\$642	72.1%
Candler	\$62,700	\$79,400	26.6%	\$353	\$523	48.2%
Dodge	\$54,200	\$70,400	29.9%	\$321	\$525	63.6%
Emanuel	\$50,800	\$80,200	57.9%	\$296	\$523	76.7%
Evans	\$69,000	\$89,800	30.1%	\$371	\$536	44.5%
Jeff Davis	\$61,000	\$83,800	37.4%	\$368	\$428	16.3%
Johnson	\$48,000	\$66,000	37.5%	\$259	\$481	85.7%
Laurens	\$73,900	\$89,600	21.2%	\$392	\$580	48.0%
Montgomery	\$68,300	\$76,600	12.2%	\$323	\$547	69.3%
Tattnall	\$67,300	\$78,900	17.2%	\$338	\$482	42.6%
Telfair	\$47,600	\$56,700	19.1%	\$311	\$481	54.7%
Toombs	\$66,400	\$92,200	38.9%	\$393	\$566	44.0%
Treutlen	\$56,600	\$66,000	16.6%	\$309	\$479	55.0%
Wayne	\$71,200	\$86,400	21.3%	\$371	\$553	49.1%
Wheeler	\$49,800	\$62,300	25.1%	\$249	\$488	96.0%
Wilcox	\$51,400	\$65,800	28.0%	\$298	\$469	57.4%
REGION	\$63,204	\$80,202	26.9%	\$347	\$527	51.9%
Georgia	\$111,200	\$160,200	44.1%	\$613	\$835	36.2%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table H-5
Percentage of Cost Burdened Households
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2010

Selected Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income										
	Housing Units with a Mortgage					Housing Units without a Mortgage				
	Less Than 20 Percent	20.0-24.9 Percent	25.0-29.9 Percent	30.0-34.9 Percent	35.0 Percent or More	Less Than 20 Percent	20.0-24.9 Percent	25.0-29.9 Percent	30.0-34.9 Percent	35.0 Percent or More
Appling	30.1%	15.0%	10.5%	16.4%	28.1%	78.5%	7.5%	3.8%	1.0%	9.4%
Bleckley	49.9%	21.4%	10.0%	3.5%	15.2%	69.3%	6.7%	1.8%	6.3%	15.8%
Candler	28.9%	18.2%	9.1%	9.4%	34.4%	72.2%	8.5%	4.3%	3.8%	11.1%
Dodge	47.3%	18.0%	11.8%	2.6%	20.3%	66.8%	9.4%	9.2%	3.4%	11.2%
Emanuel	33.8%	11.1%	9.1%	18.9%	27.1%	67.9%	7.4%	6.2%	4.3%	12.2%
Evans	44.4%	15.1%	9.7%	7.6%	23.2%	70.1%	4.8%	9.0%	1.7%	14.3%
Jeff Davis	47.8%	12.7%	5.0%	11.0%	23.5%	80.6%	2.9%	5.0%	1.4%	10.2%
Johnson	50.8%	15.0%	10.9%	6.1%	17.1%	64.2%	6.2%	4.5%	4.8%	20.3%
Laurens	41.3%	17.3%	11.3%	5.7%	24.5%	73.4%	8.4%	5.1%	4.6%	8.6%
Montgomery	39.4%	11.5%	6.8%	8.1%	34.3%	73.4%	6.1%	5.0%	4.1%	11.3%
Tattnall	41.2%	17.9%	8.7%	6.2%	26.0%	68.8%	11.1%	8.5%	4.7%	7.0%
Telfair	45.1%	10.2%	10.9%	7.9%	26.0%	69.9%	9.4%	4.3%	3.8%	12.6%
Toombs	48.4%	12.7%	9.4%	9.0%	20.5%	76.3%	8.2%	7.2%	2.0%	6.3%
Treutlen	57.8%	8.2%	1.8%	10.1%	22.2%	79.4%	3.5%	5.0%	3.2%	8.9%
Wayne	49.2%	13.5%	8.3%	8.6%	20.5%	78.6%	5.1%	4.5%	0.9%	11.1%
Wheeler	51.3%	8.4%	10.1%	12.5%	17.6%	74.5%	8.2%	6.8%	2.2%	6.3%
Wilcox	41.0%	11.3%	6.9%	8.9%	32.0%	69.0%	4.1%	4.0%	7.3%	15.5%
REGION	43.0%	14.8%	9.4%	10.1%	24.1%	72.9%	7.3%	5.6%	3.4%	10.8%
Georgia	35.5%	16.3%	12.1%	8.8%	27.3%	74.3%	6.9%	4.8%	3.1%	11.0%

Table H-5 (Cont'd)
Percentage of Cost Burdened Households
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia
2010

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income						
	Less Than 15 Percent	15.0-19.9 Percent	20.0-24.9 Percent	25.0-29.9 Percent	30.0-34.9 Percent	35.0 Percent or More
Appling	31.6%	19.7%	8.3%	3.1%	12.6%	24.6%
Bleckley	16.9%	9.5%	16.7%	3.6%	2.3%	51.0%
Candler	31.2%	17.4%	6.9%	10.8%	4.6%	29.1%
Dodge	12.3%	15.5%	23.3%	6.3%	12.3%	30.4%
Emanuel	24.5%	10.4%	9.3%	16.0%	6.0%	33.8%
Evans	20.8%	25.5%	8.7%	19.9%	5.4%	19.7%
Jeff Davis	20.2%	15.3%	12.5%	8.1%	9.8%	34.0%
Johnson	27.0%	7.6%	11.4%	8.9%	2.4%	42.7%
Laurens	23.3%	11.5%	12.7%	8.0%	8.4%	36.2%
Montgomery	24.8%	19.2%	1.4%	9.4%	11.5%	33.7%
Tattnall	25.3%	9.6%	9.7%	14.1%	5.2%	36.0%
Telfair	9.9%	11.2%	15.9%	9.5%	9.3%	44.2%
Toombs	13.3%	7.6%	15.7%	12.7%	9.1%	41.6%
Treutlen	13.9%	13.7%	14.4%	26.6%	4.8%	26.6%
Wayne	16.5%	18.2%	12.1%	6.9%	7.9%	38.4%
Wheeler	16.7%	21.4%	17.2%	11.1%	3.7%	29.8%
Wilcox	16.8%	9.5%	2.7%	11.1%	11.9%	48.0%
REGION	19.9%	13.3%	12.6%	10.4%	7.9%	35.6%
Georgia	11.4%	12.1%	12.4%	11.6%	9.4%	43.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012.

Table H-6
Jobs-Housing Balance, 2010

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia

	Employment (Jobs)	Total Housing Units	Labor Force	Employment/ Housing Units Ratio	Employment/ Labor Force Ratio
Appling	7,727	8,475	8,343	.91 to 1	.93 to 1
Bleckley	4,729	5,290	5,087	.89 to 1	.93 to 1
Candler	4,564	4,697	5,063	.97 to 1	.90 to 1
Dodge	7,632	9,754	8,463	.78 to 1	.90 to 1
Emanuel	8,432	9,932	9,597	.85 to 1	.88 to 1
Evans	4,321	4,655	4,662	.93 to 1	.93 to 1
Jeff Davis	5,893	6,432	6,477	.92 to 1	.91 to 1
Johnson	3,519	4,087	3,813	.86 to 1	.92 to 1
Laurens	18,880	21,284	20,063	.89 to 1	.94 to 1
Montgomery	3,621	3,916	3,818	.92 to 1	.95 to 1
Tattnall	8,363	9,881	9,515	.85 to 1	.88 to 1
Telfair	4,961	7,127	5,102	.70 to 1	.97 to 1
Toombs	10,943	12,138	11,660	.90 to 1	.94 to 1
Treutlen	2,305	2,983	2,394	.77 to 1	.96 to 1
Wayne	11,660	12,109	12,883	.96 to 1	.91 to 1
Wheeler	1,641	2,285	1,714	.72 to 1	.96 to 1
Wilcox	2,485	3,514	2,821	.71 to 1	.88 to 1
REGION	111,676	128,559	121,475	.87 to 1	.92 to 1
Georgia	4,288,924	4,063,024	4,813,601	1.06 to 1	.89 to 1

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, www.census.gov, 2012, Georgia Department of Labor, 2012.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Water Supply and Treatment

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has an abundant supply of groundwater, which serves as the source of water supply for most municipalities in the Region. The Floridan Aquifer, one of the world's largest groundwater systems, provides the Region with an excellent source of quality groundwater that requires only minimal treatment. According to Georgia Environmental Protection Division data, there is an adequate supply of groundwater from the Floridan Aquifer to serve the Region for at least the next 50 years without any issue of potential saltwater intrusion. With the exception of the City of Higgston, all of the Region's municipalities provide public water. The City of Tarrytown purchases water from the City of Soperton and resells it to residents. In addition to utilizing groundwater, the City of Dublin has one intake from the Oconee River. Some municipalities provide water service to adjacent residential and commercial areas and industrial parks outside of the municipal boundaries. Otherwise, no public service is provided in the unincorporated areas of the Region, leaving those residents to rely on the use of private wells.

Existing public water facilities and levels of service appear to be adequate to meet the current water supply needs of the Region, barring the development of extraordinary growth that is not anticipated at this time. Local governments continue to maintain, upgrade, and expand their treatment facilities and service lines on an ongoing basis as needed. These needs continue to be addressed by all of the Region's local governments in both their Five-Year Short Term Work Programs and Long Term Work Programs, as part of their comprehensive plans.

There are no known inconsistencies or competing priorities concerning water supply within the Region. Opportunities for coordination do exist, especially between nearby water systems, and these have the potential to support growth corridors as well as advocate protection of the Floridan Aquifer. The ongoing issues of future development, protecting against stormwater run-off from urban areas and non-point source pollution from agricultural operations,

as well as periodic episodes of drought, continue to enhance the importance of water resource protection throughout the Region.

Sewerage System and Wastewater Treatment

Approximately two-thirds of the Region's municipalities are served by public sewer systems. All of the cities in Bleckley, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, and Wheeler counties provide municipal sewer service, while at least one city in each of the 17 counties has a public sewer system. There are approximately 20 cities that offer public water service, but sewer service is unavailable. No county-wide public sewer systems exist in the Region. Individual septic tanks are utilized in the unincorporated areas and cities where sewer service is not available.

Most municipalities have adequate sewer service to meet both current and expected future demand, although public sewer systems have much more limited service areas than do public water systems. Most local governments have addressed the need to improve and upgrade their sewer systems in both their Short Term and Long Term Work Programs of their comprehensive plans. Several communities currently not offering public sewer service have expressed an interest in doing so. However, many often find it simply not feasible, largely due to very limited financial resources and a small customer base.

The Region has a number of soils with limitations for development. Given this and a heavy reliance on individual septic tanks in the unincorporated areas, the possibility of more failing septic tanks in the future likely could become an issue. This would present an even greater need for upgrades and extensions to existing systems in the future. By doing so, it would encourage development to locate near existing service areas, help protect the environment, and further economic development. No known conflicts, inconsistencies, or competing priorities exist in the Region at this time. Possible multi-jurisdictional or regional benefits could come from improved coordination between nearby systems, particularly ones located in growth corridors.

Other Facilities and Services

Public safety service, both fire protection and law enforcement, is provided in all areas of the Region. However, the additional establishment of volunteer fire departments to serve all unincorporated areas of the Region and police departments for those smaller municipalities still lacking them would enhance fire and police protection. Some existing police and sheriff's departments in the Region are understaffed for the area they serve. In regards to fire protection, improved response times and assistance with needed equipment and facilities upgrades to improve service levels and lower ISO ratings is a primary concern. Continuing to upgrade and enhance E-911 and other forms of communication in times of emergency is another major focal point throughout the Region. Local governments continue to address the need for further improvements and upgrades to public safety facilities, services, and infrastructure in the Short Term and Long Term Work Programs of their comprehensive plans. Many communities actively pursue financial assistance for needed improvements through such avenues as Local Law Enforcement Block Grants through the U.S. Department of Justice and the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Existing regional recreation facilities and services do not meet current and projected future needs, and many local recreation facilities and services are in need of upgrades and improvements. In the entire 17-county Region, there are only three (3) state parks and four (4) public fishing areas. Although the Region does have 10 wildlife management areas, three (3) alone are located in Wayne County. The lack of public ownership of all these areas does make some of them vulnerable to loss. Ball's Ferry Park, a proposed new state park along the Oconee River in Wilkinson County that has been in the planning stages for some time, could potentially have direct impacts on the Region counties of Johnson and Laurens when it comes to fruition. The Region's rivers, particularly the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, and Oconee, provide an abundance of recreation opportunities, but are currently underutilized. The increased promotion of nature-based tourism, along with needed improvements to boat landings and other facilities along the rivers to improve access, should help to increase usage. All counties have addressed current and future recreation needs in their local comprehensive plans.

Existing solid waste facilities and service levels are adequate to meet the needs of the Region, although recycling opportunities vary significantly between different jurisdictions. Access to recycling from one community to another often depends on the amount of resources available, along with the level of community outreach efforts and support. Greater recycling would be encouraged by the increased availability and stability of markets for recyclables. While landfills in the Region are likely to accommodate future growth, periodic improvements will be needed (expansion, increased recycling, new facilities development, etc.) to continue to assure adequate capacity for solid waste disposal in the future. The continued elimination of utilizing green boxes for solid waste collection in many communities, especially in unincorporated areas, remains an issue. As resources allow, some communities are finding it more feasible to move towards a system of either curbside pickup or convenience centers.

Existing telecommunications infrastructure and service levels are not adequate to meet current and projected future needs of the Region. Access to quality broadband and other high-speed telecommunications service varies throughout the Region, often depending on the amount of resources and capacity of service providers in a particular area. The Region is noted by the Georgia Technology Authority as having the most underserved and unserved households by broadband service in the state. While access to high-speed internet is available in most of the larger communities in the Region, access in the unincorporated areas and smaller communities is spotty at best, and in many cases is still nonexistent. Future upgrades and improvements to services and infrastructure capacity will be needed to accommodate future growth and ensure adequate communications capability across all parts of the Region. Greater access to, and availability of, high-speed internet and other forms of telecommunication would help to further economic development and recruitment efforts.

TRANSPORTATION

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region's history and development is closely tied to transportation, primarily through its rivers and railroads. Transportation, through logistics and multi-modal access which will enable the Region to take advantage of location and proximity to ports and metropolitan markets, continues to be a key to future economic development within the Region.

The Region's rivers were central to Native America villages, travel, hunting, and commerce as well as European exploration and settlement. Later the rivers allowed for commercial use of the Region's pine forests and the establishment of commercial farming. Railroads allowed for more interior development of both fields and forests. Most of the Region's current municipalities trace their origin to railroad establishment. Highways and automobiles have led to more global commerce, more urban centralization, and the decline of many small towns. They have also expanded markets for Region resources, and opened new opportunities and avenues for commerce and growth.

Road Network

The Region is well-served by a road network of over 12,500 miles, including nearly 2,100 in state routes, both being about 11 percent of Georgia's total. The Region, which remains rural without a metropolitan area, is serviced by I-16, a rural Interstate prime arterial originally constructed to improve access to the Port of Savannah. Other "rural principal arterials" serving the Region include U.S. Highways US 1, US 280, US 341, and US 441. Other state or federal highways within the Region (including US 23, US 80, US 129, US 129A, US 221, US 301, US 319 and Ga. Highways SR 15, SR 26, SR 29, SR 56, SR 57, SR 117, SR 121, SR 130, SR 135, SR 144, SR 152, SR 169, SR 215, SR 257, and SR 292) are classified as "rural minor arterials," with the remaining others simply as "rural collectors." These classifications result from general

low traffic volumes (many less than 2,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic) outside of municipalities within the Region. Most of these arterials were designed by the Georgia Department of Transportation for Level of Service B (Reasonable Free-Flow Operations), and maintain at least this level of service. The only traffic congestion within the Region is usually limited to peak times around school/workday hours in the municipalities of Baxley, Claxton, Cochran, Dublin, Eastman, Hazlehurst, Jesup, Lyons/Vidalia, McRae, and Swainsboro.

The Region has six (6) of the currently designated 19 economic development highways in Georgia's Governors Road Improvement Program planned for multi-laning upgrades traversing through the Region. These include the Golden Isles Parkway (US 341), US 84 (Wiregrass Parkway), US 1/SR 17, US 441 (Heritage Highway), US 280 (Power Alley), and SR 15. Completion of upgrading of these routes is important as a number of studies have shown that such multi-laning fosters economic growth, more effective and efficient transportation, and safer travel. Within the Region, GRIP Corridors US 341 and 84 have had construction completed, while US 1 has plans nearing completion, followed by US 441. Little activity has occurred on US 280 outside of Claxton and Vidalia, and on Ga. SR 15 to date.

Before the advent of Interstate highways, particularly I-95, US Highways 1 and 301 were major tourist routes within the Region. Ga. Highway SR 121 within the Region was one of the earliest designated tourist routes in the U.S. with its Woodpecker Trail designation. Ga. SR 121 has once again been officially designated as the Woodpecker Trail. Other highway designations within the Region include the Golden Isles Parkway (US 341), the Heritage Highway (US 441), and the Wiregrass Trail (Ga SR 57). These routes may again hold potential as Interstate alternatives with appeal for more leisurely, scenic countryside travel, both for interstate and intrastate travel and tourism. US 280 has great potential for east-west Georgia travel, both leisure and commercial, particularly with port expansion at Savannah and inland port development at Cordele.

While multi-lane completion and coordinated promotion of the Region's principal arterials remain tremendously important for future transportation infrastructure and economic development within the Region, there are other issues with the road network of the Region, including many unpaved roads and the lack of maintenance of existing paved local roads. Of the Region's roads, about 47 percent, or nearly half, are unpaved, where as in Georgia as a whole less than one quarter (24 percent) are unpaved. In fact, only Bleckley County has more than half of its county (unincorporated) roads paved, while 10 of 17 Region counties have 60 or more percent of county roads unpaved.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region was one of only three (3) regions statewide to approve the penny sales and use tax (T-SPLOST) under the Georgia 2010 Transportation Improvement Act for regionwide transportation improvements. This new funding does hold promise for improved transportation infrastructure and future economic growth within the Region. Major regional projects include funds for near completion of multi-laning US 1, new Altamaha River bridges at US 1 and US 221, a new Oconee River bridge in Laurens County, as well as congestion relief in Dublin and Jesup. Another important result will be the availability of funds for resurfacing of many local roads which would not have been possible given current GDOT programs and low tax bases in the Region. The change to TIA Project Investment Criteria made by the Regional Roundtable to allow for such use of regional monies for local projects was likely the key to T-SPLOST passage in the Region.

Table T-1
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
Mileage of Public Roads By County and Paving Status

	Total Mileage	Unpaved Mileage	Paved Mileage	Percent Unpaved
Appling				
State Routes	117.46	0.00	117.46	0.00
County Roads	893.37	606.41	286.96	67.88
City Streets	41.87	6.43	35.44	15.36
Total Roads	1,052.70	612.84	439.86	58.22
Bleckley				
State Routes	72.69	0.00	72.69	0.00
County Roads	325.17	124.91	200.26	38.41
City Streets	32.10	0.91	31.19	2.83
Total Roads	429.96	125.82	304.14	29.26
Candler				
State Routes	81.64	0.00	81.64	0.00
County Roads	379.29	241.73	137.56	63.73
City Streets	33.70	2.99	30.71	8.87
Total Roads	494.63	244.72	249.91	49.48
Dodge				
State Routes	149.88	0.00	149.88	0.00
County Roads	703.66	429.05	274.61	60.97
City Streets	65.86	3.71	62.15	5.63
Total Roads	919.40	432.76	486.64	47.07
Emanuel				
State Routes	224.18	0.00	224.18	0.00
County Roads	907.16	598.94	308.22	66.02
City Streets	102.00	6.49	95.51	6.36
Total Roads	1,233.34	605.43	627.91	49.09
Evans				
State Routes	61.19	0.00	61.19	0.00
County Roads	273.11	140.51	132.60	51.45
City Streets	30.68	0.89	29.79	2.90
Total Roads	364.98	141.40	223.58	38.74

Table T-1 (continued)
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
Mileage of Public Roads By County and Paving Status

	Total Mileage	Unpaved Mileage	Paved Mileage	Percent Unpaved
Jeff Davis				
State Routes	64.70	0.00	64.70	0.00
County Roads	545.24	330.86	214.38	60.68
City Streets	38.31	3.05	35.26	7.96
Total Roads	648.25	333.91	314.34	51.51
Johnson				
State Routes	91.27	0.00	91.27	0.00
County Roads	420.03	237.54	182.51	56.55
City Streets	25.67	1.40	24.27	5.45
Total Roads	536.97	238.94	298.05	44.50
Laurens				
State Routes	284.48	0.00	284.48	0.00
County Roads	1,162.17	637.89	524.28	54.89
City Streets	153.72	9.22	144.50	6.00
Total Roads	1,600.37	647.11	953.26	40.44
Montgomery				
State Routes	74.77	0.00	74.77	0.00
County Roads	344.64	177.00	167.52	51.36
City Streets	44.95	9.58	35.37	21.31
Total Roads	464.36	186.58	277.66	40.18
Tattnall				
State Routes	144.47	0.00	144.47	0.00
County Roads	734.15	472.32	261.83	64.34
City Streets	69.65	9.70	59.95	13.93
Total Roads	948.27	482.02	466.25	50.83
Telfair				
State Routes	138.00	0.00	138.00	0.00
County Roads	406.91	252.67	154.24	62.09
City Streets	75.28	10.86	64.42	14.43
Total Roads	620.19	263.53	356.66	42.49

Table T-1 (continued)
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
Mileage of Public Roads By County and Paving Status

	Total Mileage	Unpaved Mileage	Paved Mileage	Percent Unpaved
Toombs				
State Routes	150.63	0.00	150.63	0.00
County Roads	523.88	360.57	163.31	68.83
City Streets	148.52	6.59	141.93	4.44
Total Roads	823.03	367.16	455.87	44.61
Treutlen				
State Routes	117.01	0.00	117.01	0.00
County Roads	279.07	159.53	119.54	57.16
City Streets	22.06	2.38	19.68	10.79
Total Roads	418.14	161.91	256.23	38.72
Wayne				
State Routes	108.58	0.00	108.58	0.00
County Roads	764.87	483.59	281.28	63.23
City Streets	99.82	16.54	83.28	16.57
Total Roads	973.27	500.13	473.14	51.39
Wheeler				
State Routes	79.52	0.00	79.52	0.00
County Roads	316.08	181.68	134.40	57.48
City Streets	18.43	4.05	14.38	21.98
Total Roads	414.03	185.73	228.30	44.86
Wilcox				
State Routes	113.38	0.00	113.38	0.00
County Roads	478.65	332.51	146.14	69.47
City Streets	27.72	4.40	23.32	15.87
Total Roads	619.75	336.91	282.84	54.36
Region Total	12,561.64	5,866.90	6,694.64	46.70
Georgia Total				
State Routes	18,092.72	0.89	18,117.45	0.00
County Roads	84,692.40	27,790.61	56,905.53	32.81
City Streets	14,668.24	487.60	14,181.28	3.32
Total Roads	117,453.36	28,279.10	89,204.26	24.08

Source: Georgia Department of Transportation, www.dot.ga.gov, 441 and 445 Reports, 2013.

Alternative Modes

The rural Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has no fixed-route public transit systems, although on-demand response Section 5311 systems operate in 9 of 17 counties. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission does manage a Section 5310 Coordinated Transportation Program for the Georgia Department of Human Services and its clients in all 17 counties. Low-incomes, a large percentage of elderly and disadvantaged population, the low density of population, limited tax bases within the Region, and overall limitations on funding make transportation access for all, particularly the disadvantaged, a continuing issue within the Region.

Alternative transportation avenues in general remain scarce within the Region. Sidewalks are primarily limited to central business and residential areas in or near the historic downtown core of municipalities with little connection to newer commercial or residential developments. Only one state bicycle route, State Bicycle Route 40 (The Trans-Georgia Route between Columbus and Savannah) traverses the Region, and then only in Laurens, Treutlen, Emanuel, and Candler counties. The 2005 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region did identify possible regional bike routes and connectivity needs. It has led to ongoing improvements within the Region, principally paved shoulders, for bicycle use along such routes as US 341 and US 1 as they are widened.

The 2011/2012 Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study and the 2012 Regional Resource Plan have identified major opportunities and benefits for multi-use trail connectivity along and connecting to the Region's river corridors within the Region. There is much untapped potential for transportation alternatives, recreation, and resulting economic development. Municipalities and population centers of the Region could be given connection to outstanding natural and cultural resources through such transportation alternatives, opening more avenues for

tourism and economic development. The Region has much potential as a biking destination and a bicycle touring/riding venue. There is also only one formally designated bike trail, the Yamassee Bike Trail in Montgomery County, within the Region. Bike rides are expanding events within the Region at present.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has only one currently formally designated scenic byway in the Region, the Enduring Farmlands Scenic Byway in Wilcox County. The Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study also identified potential additional scenic byway routes within the Region.

Railroads, Trucking, Port Facilities, and Airports

As with highway access, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is well served by rail, and is in great position to take advantage of logistics and location. The Region is currently a net exporter of goods, primarily farm and forest products, but with an outstanding array of other manufactured goods from the Region. While the Region has no ports of its own because of its inland location, the Region is a major user and beneficiary of both of Georgia's ports. The Georgia Ports Authority's 2011 Annual Report noted that the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region exported \$353 million in products, primarily wood/pulp, but with enough variety to be labeled as one of the most economically diverse regions of the state. Rayonier (located in Jesup) is consistently the top or second ranked exporter through Georgia's ports. Dublin has utilized its central location between Atlanta and Savannah and its access to I-16 to become a major distribution center home. Both Fred's and Best Buy have located major distribution centers in Dublin in recent years.

The Region is served by both of Georgia's Class I Railroads (Norfolk Southern and CSX) as well as by the shortline railroads, Georgia Midland, Georgia Central, and Heart of Georgia. All 17 counties have access to rail service from at least one carrier, including eight (8) from at least one of the Class 1 railroads. This service connects to both of Georgia's ports, and Region rail capacity for shipping tonnage and service was more than doubled with construction of the 2.5 mile Perdue Siding rail spur along the Norfolk Southern rail line between Jesup and Odum in 2009. Rail service is continuing to expand in the Region as the Georgia Department of Transportation announced in early 2013 that it will shortly upgrade and open the currently inactive rail line between Vidalia and Kirby (Swainsboro) in Emanuel County.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region also continues to have available passenger rail service, a rarity in Georgia. Jesup is a scheduled stop for Amtrak's Silver Service along the East Coast from Florida to New York. Jesup's historic train depot, where Amtrak stops, has recently been completely rehabilitated, and is owned by Wayne County's local government. Jesup is located at an intersection of Georgia's two Class 1 railroads. The Region also figures prominently in future high speed rail plans as the federally designated Macon-to-Savannah-Jacksonville Southeast High Speed Corridor has two current options, both through the Region, either Macon to Vidalia to Savannah or Macon to Jesup to Savannah. If the Jesup leg is chosen, it could become a multi-modal hub. Jesup already has the most rail freight tonnage within the Region passing through. In any event, rail continues to be a positive factor and key to Region logistics and future economic development.

Another positive factor for Region logistics and economic development is trucking. To handle the Region's abundant forestry and farm products, wide variety of manufactured goods, significant exports, and service of Region retail and distribution centers, the Region has a significant presence and base of trucking firms and terminals. A number of these trucking firms, including several large ones, such as Atlantic Coast Carriers, Williams Brothers Trucking, and McKenzie Tank Lines, among others, are headquartered in the Region. The importance of

trucking to the Region is manifested by all three of the Region's technical colleges (Altamaha, Oconee Fall Line, and Southeastern) having commercial truck driving programs.

Airports. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is also well-positioned with its airport related transportation infrastructure. The Region has 13 of Georgia's 95 general aviation airports with only three Region counties not directly served. Even these three counties, Johnson, Montgomery, and Wilcox, are actually indirectly served through three major airports (Dublin, Vidalia, and Eastman, respectively). A 2011 Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Study on statewide economic impact of airports, "Georgia Airports Mean Business" highlighted the significant impact of the airports to the Region. The Region's airports were estimated to provide almost 600 jobs and a total economic impact of almost \$65 million a year. These significant impacts are in addition to the airports' function as an important catalyst and facilitator of economic development and tourism. There are other qualitative benefits to the Region's health, welfare, safety, and quality-of-life provided by the airports.

GDOT classifies airports by three levels. Level I is a business airport of local significance, Level II is a business airport of regional and local significance, while Level III is an airport of national and regional significance. While the Region has no airports with commercial service, it does have four major Level III airports. These include W.H. "Bud" Barron in Dublin, the Heart of Georgia Regional in Eastman, East Georgia Regional in Swainsboro, and Vidalia Regional. All of these airports have runways of over 6,000 feet in length. W.H. "Bud" Barron and Vidalia Regional airports both have two runways with their second runways 5,000 feet in length. East Georgia Regional Airport is technically currently classified in written materials as only a Level II GDOT airport. Wayne County's William A. Zorn airport is currently classified by GDOT as a Level III airport, but only has one 5,500 foot runway at present. The airports in Baxley and Claxton are also classified as Level II airports of regional significance, and both have runway lengths of 5,000 feet. The remaining six (6) Region airports are classified as Level I, with runways from 3,000 to 4,500 feet in length. Continued maintenance of these Region airports

and protection from navigation obstructions are important to both current and future Region economic development. A point of concern is a recent FAA 2012 general aviation study, “General Aviation Airports: A National Asset,” which classifies several of the Region’s important Level II and Level III airports in its lowest “Basic” classification which could mean reduced availability of future federal funding for improvement. By contrast two of the Region’s Level I airports (Cochran and Hazlehurst) are classified at a higher “Local” classification by the FAA study. Another airport related asset unique to the Region are the aviation programs of Middle Georgia State College’s campus at the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport in Eastman which are unique to Georgia and highly rated nationwide.

Table T-2
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Airports

Airport Name	Acreage	Runway Length/Width (Feet)	GDOT Classification ¹	FAA Classification ²	Economic Impact ³	
					Jobs	Dollars
Baxley Municipal	303	5,003/75	Level II	Basic	17	\$1,498,900
Claxton-Evans County	105	5,002/75	Level II	Basic	6	\$392,900
Cochran	69	3,202/50	Level I	Local	34	\$3,668,100
W.H. "Bud" Barron (Dublin)	905	6,002/150	Level III	Local	28	\$1,918,500
		5,004/150				
Heart of Georgia Regional (Eastman)	89	6,506/100	Level III	Local	376	\$37,168,800
Hazlehurst	125	4,508/75	Level I	Local	20	\$1,816,400
William A. Zorn (Jesup- Wayne County)	139	5,500/75	Level III	Basic	14	\$851,200
Telfair-Wheeler	104	4,011/75	Level I	Basic	10	\$1,057,300
Metter Municipal	62	3,612/75	Level I	Basic	19	\$1,858,700
East Georgia Regional (Emanuel County)	157	6,021/100	Level II	Basic	49	\$6,815,800
Vidalia Regional	1,245	6,003/150	Level III	Local	51	\$6,131,000
		5,000/150				
Swinton Smith Field at Reidsville Municipal	298	3,802/75	Level I	Not Classified	10	\$1,380,700
Treutlen County	32	3,000/50	Level I	Unclassified	1	\$58,800

¹2003 Georgia Aviation System Plan, GDOT.

²General Aviation Airports: A National Asset, USDOT FAA, 2012.

³2011 Georgia Statewide Airport Economic Impact Study, GDOT.

Sources: Georgia Department of Transportation, www.dot.ga.gov; and www.faa.gov, 2013.

In recognition of the importance of these general aviation airports to the Region, local governments continue to invest in navigational and other improvements. Many have had recent navigation and runway improvements. Baxley, Jesup, and Vidalia have also constructed new terminals in recent years. Without question, the airports are an asset to the Region which should be vigilantly maintained and nurtured.












Transportation and Land Use Connection

As noted earlier, transportation has been key to past growth and development of the Region and is important to its future. The Region's logistics and transportation infrastructure are facilitators and key to the Region taking advantage of its vast farm and forest resources, manufacturing and distribution opportunities, potential tourism and other economic development activities, and well-positioned location. There are few major current land use conflicts within the Region as existing infrastructure, including transportation, tends to focus intense development close to larger municipalities along major transportation routes where it is desired and most appropriate. Most traffic congestion issues of the Region are concentrated in a relatively small number of larger municipalities. This lack of land use conflicts allows for continued protection and compatible use of the Region's significant and extremely important natural and cultural resources within its river corridors. There is opportunity to continue to guide growth to desired locations with well-planned transportation improvements, including simple paving of roads in unincorporated areas, of counties. Relatively new bypasses in Dublin, Eastman, and Swainsboro remain largely undeveloped, and offer opportunity for proactive land use and growth management. The recently passed T-SPLOST will bring a new bypass in Eastman to connect US 23 and the existing US 341 bypass. The municipalities of Baxley, Jesup, and McRae may need similar congestion relief. McRae actually has a bypass planned as part of the US 441 Governors Road Improvement Program widening. The Region has opportunity to plan, build, and promote transportation infrastructure improvements, both traditional and alternative, which will enhance and highlight the Region's assets and quality-of-life while providing needed economic development in a variety of ways.




Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Transportation System

Reference Map




Highway Functional Classification

-  Rural Interstate
-  Rural Local
-  Rural Major Collector
-  Rural Minor Arterial
-  Rural Minor Collector
-  Rural Principal Arterial
-  Urban Interstate
-  Urban Local
-  Urban Major Collector
-  Urban Minor Arterial
-  Urban Principal Arterial

Airports

-  Level I General Aviation
-  Level II General Aviation
-  Level III General Aviation

Rail

-  Class I Railroad
-  Shortline Railroad
-  Inactive Railroad

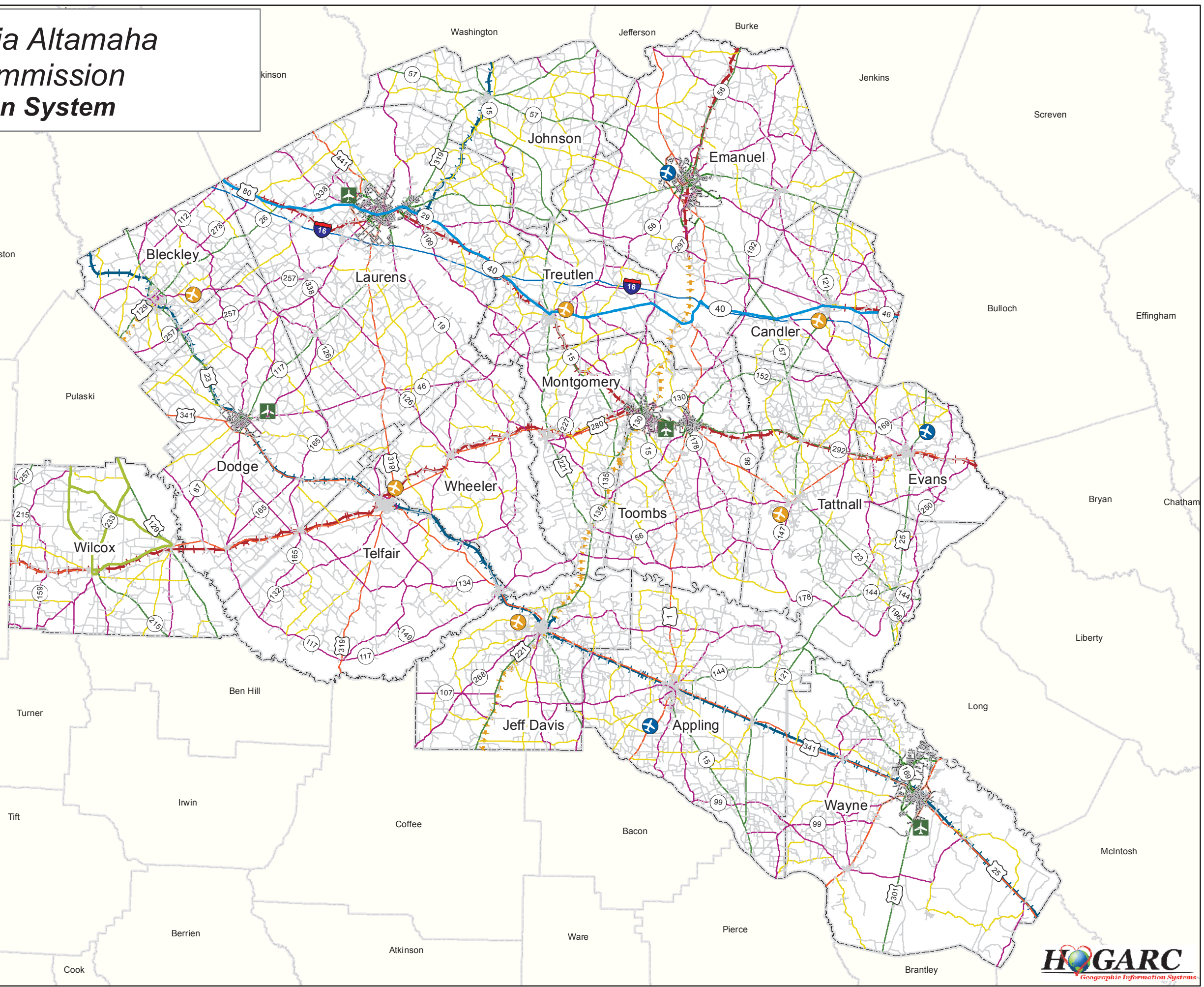
State Bike Route

-  State Bike Route

State Scenic Byway

-  State Scenic Byway

-  HOGA Counties



INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Many issues in the Region are dealt with in a coordinated manner, as opposed to a single local government or authority acting independently. The Region's local governments generally work well together, and often meet on both an intra-county level and among one or more counties to discuss issues as the need arises. There are numerous examples in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region of local governments coordinating with each other and working together, as well as with state and federal agencies, local boards and authorities, and regional or multi-county entities, to find shared solutions to common issues.

Service Delivery Strategies

Every county in Georgia is required by the Service Delivery Strategy Act of 1997 to develop and adopt a Service Delivery Strategy that outlines current and future service delivery arrangements among the county and each of its municipalities. The strategy details how each service is to be provided and by which government or authority, how each service will be funded and by whom, and identifies any intergovernmental agreements or other legal mechanisms that will be utilized to implement the Service Delivery Strategy. Examples of services include water, sewer, E-911, fire protection, economic development, recreation, animal control, etc. The Service Delivery Strategy is where intergovernmental coordination and cooperation is detailed and specified. Currently all 80 local governments in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region have approved and adopted Service Delivery Strategies.

Economic Development

Cooperation and coordination is essential to economic development and recruitment efforts. Multiple communities pooling their resources together can accomplish more than a single community can do on its own. Promotion and marketing become more effective over a region or multi-county area than in a single community acting independently. With resources often limited in a rural area, it makes sound business sense for multiple communities to combine and collaborate efforts.

Some examples of joint economic development efforts in the Region include the Ocmulgee Regional Joint Development Authority (Bleckley, Dodge, Telfair, and Wilcox counties); the Emanuel-Johnson County Development Authority; the Joint Development Authority of Hazlehurst, Lumber City, and Telfair County; the Laurens-Treutlen Joint Development Authority; the Southeast Georgia Joint Development Authority (includes Wayne County from the Region); the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce; the Middle Coastal Unified Development Authority (Candler, Evans, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, and Wheeler counties from the Region are members); the I-16 Corridor Alliance (Bleckley, Candler, Emanuel, Laurens, and Treutlen counties are members from the Region); the Region 9 Workforce Investment Board; and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission.

Regional and/or multi-county tourism efforts are promoted through such entities as the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (Montgomery and Toombs counties); the Altamaha River Partnership (Appling, Jeff Davis, Montgomery, Tattnall, Toombs, Wayne, and Wheeler counties from the Region are members); the Woodpecker Trail Association (Appling, Candler, Emanuel, and Tattnall counties from the region are members); the Ocmulgee River Trail Partnership (nascent organization which includes Bleckley, Dodge, Jeff Davis, and Telfair counties from the Region, among others from the Middle Georgia Region); and the annual “Peaches to the Beaches” weekend (established through the Golden Isles Parkway Association, among member counties from the Region, including Appling, Bleckley, Dodge, Jeff Davis, Telfair, and Wayne counties).

Environmental Protection

Cooperation and coordination are vital when it comes to preserving and protecting the environment. Issues pertaining to air and water quality and the natural landscape are not limited strictly to jurisdictional boundaries. Under the auspices of the State Water Plan, regional water plans were prepared in 2011 for the Upper Oconee River Basin (of which Laurens County is a part) and the Altamaha River Basin (includes all other Region counties). The respective water planning councils for each river basin identified current and future water resource needs and the

desired best management practices to help meet those needs. The plans also estimated that there is a 50-year supply of available fresh groundwater from the Floridan Aquifer, the principle source of groundwater for the Region, to meet the Region's needs for the foreseeable future.

There are also several Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans that have been prepared for numerous stream segments in the Region. Each plan has its own advisory committee, consisting of local governments, major landholders, environmental groups, and agriculture/forestry representatives. These advisory committees helped to identify sources of water pollution for the impacted stream segments and preferred best management practices to assist in mitigating or alleviating those identified sources.

Transportation

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is one of three regions in the state where voters approved the passage of a Regional Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (T-SPLOST) under the Transportation Investment Act (TIA) of 2010. This designates the Region as a special tax district in which to assess an extra penny of sales tax to be dedicated towards funding locally identified transportation projects specifically within the Region. To select specific projects to be funded, a regional roundtable was created that consisted of two (2) members from each of the 17 counties, the county chairman (or sole commissioner) and one mayor elected by the mayors in each county. From the roundtable, five (5) members were appointed to serve as an executive committee, along with three (3) non-voting members from the State Legislature appointed by the chairs of the House and Senate Transportation committees. The roundtable adopted the investment criteria and approved the project lists (both regional and local project lists) upon the recommendation of the executive committee. The roundtable elected to split the 75 percent of the tax revenues that were to be dedicated to regional projects evenly between both regional and local projects, while the remaining 25 percent of revenues would go to each city and county on a pro rata basis for any transportation-related purpose they so desired. This enabled the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region to have an investment criteria that was unique to any other region in the state. In all, a total of 12 regional projects and 752 local

projects were selected and approved by the roundtable, allowing local governments to address both local and regional needs.

Other examples of coordinated transportation planning in the Region include the Regional Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan, prepared by the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission. The regional bike/pedestrian plan was prepared through bringing a regional Planning Advisory Committee of stakeholders from local governments, chambers of commerce, recreation and tourism officials, and local bicycling groups. The plan examined current conditions and needs related to walking and biking, and provided recommendations for future improvements, such as suggestions for new routes and other safety/education efforts. The regional bike/ped plan is slated to be updated by 2015. Promotion groups such as the Golden Isles Parkway Association and Wiregrass Trail Association also are examples of important cooperation.

Regional Resource Plan

Prepared in 2012, the main purpose of the Regional Resource Plan is to serve as a guide to better understand the importance of the Region's abundant and significant natural and cultural resources from a multitude of perspectives. The intent is to provide enhanced focus on the protection and management of the Region's important natural and cultural resources, through careful planning for impacts of new development on those resources and improved local and regional coordination in their protection and management. From the Regional Resource Plan, a list of identified Regionally Important Resources has been created through a formal nomination process involving a variety of stakeholders, both public and private, as well as research conducted by Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission planning staff. The Region has significant Regionally Important Resources important not only to Region natural functioning and history, but also to economic development and quality of life. The Altamaha River Partnership, initiated in the Region, has been effective in improving facilities and tourism while promoting coordination and protection of the vital Altamaha River ecosystem.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

The 17-county Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is rich in both natural and cultural resources, which contribute significantly to the Region's quality of life. Many of these resources are addressed in the *Regional Resource Plan: Regionally Important Resources for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region* completed in 2012. Four major categories of resources were designated as Regionally Important Resources (RIRs): Green Infrastructure Network; State Vital Areas; Potential Conservation Opportunity Areas; and Cultural Resources. The Green Infrastructure Network consists of the Region's major rivers and their tributaries known as "Primary Corridors" and "Secondary Connectors," respectively, and existing conservation lands, including the three (3) state parks, 14 state-owned wildlife management/public fishing/natural areas, and other state-owned, land trust, or privately protected lands. State Vital Areas encompass the Region's seven (7) protected rivers (Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ochopee, Canoochee, Little Satilla, and Ogeechee), jurisdictional wetlands, and significant groundwater recharge areas. Potential Conservation Opportunity Areas are comprised of high priority natural areas the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has identified which are not currently conserved, including existing leased, not owned, State wildlife management areas and lands used for other public outdoor recreation. Portions of the Fort Stewart Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) in Evans and Tattnall counties were also designated RIRs for their important conservation potential. The Cultural Resources designated as RIRs include four (4) National Register Rural Landscape properties, all of which are listed in the National Register of Historic Places at the state or national level of significance, and six (6) Known Significant Archaeological Sites located within the Altamaha River Basin believed to be of national importance. For more detailed information on the Region's RIRs, see the Regional Resource Plan.

There are numerous additional cultural resources of local significance, as well as those not yet identified, such as archaeological sites and resources, within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. A total of more than 65 Region historic properties, including both individual and historic districts, are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with many

more known to be potentially eligible. There are also a large number of Centennial Farms throughout the 17 counties, which reflect the importance of agriculture to the Region in the past and presently.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission undertook a two-phase Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study between 2010 and 2012, which received funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The study identifies and evaluates existing resources along or near the Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, and lower Ochoopee rivers and recommends opportunities for increased connectivity via bicycle paths, multi-use trails, greenways, and other means. The findings of the study confirmed and supported that the Region has tremendous, largely untapped potential for increased nature-based, heritage, and recreation tourism through promotion of existing facilities/venues/events and development of additional ones on the local, regional, and multi-regional levels. Sensitive and compatible use, development, and marketing of the Region's natural and cultural resources has the potential to generate substantial economic benefits for local communities, as well as increased understanding of and protection for the resources themselves.