

HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA

Regional Commission



May 13, 2024

Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Office of Planning and Environmental Management
60 Executive Park South, NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

RE: Regional Plan Update Submittal

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission has completed an update of its regional plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held the required two public hearings and, at a minimum, have involved regional stakeholders in development of the plan in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (Chapter 110-12-6), and in a manner appropriate to our region's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal in accordance with Chapter 110-12-6(5)(d).

I certify that appropriate regional staff and decision-makers have, at a minimum, reviewed the following planning documents and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan:

- Georgia's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Altamaha and Upper Oconee Regional Water Plans
- HOGARC Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 (CEDS)
- CSRA, CRC, MGRC, RVRC, and SGRC regional plans

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Anna Weaver, Planning Director at 912-292-9028 or aweaver@hogarc.org.

Sincerely,

Brett Manning
Executive Director

Enclosures



HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL PLAN



2024 UPDATE

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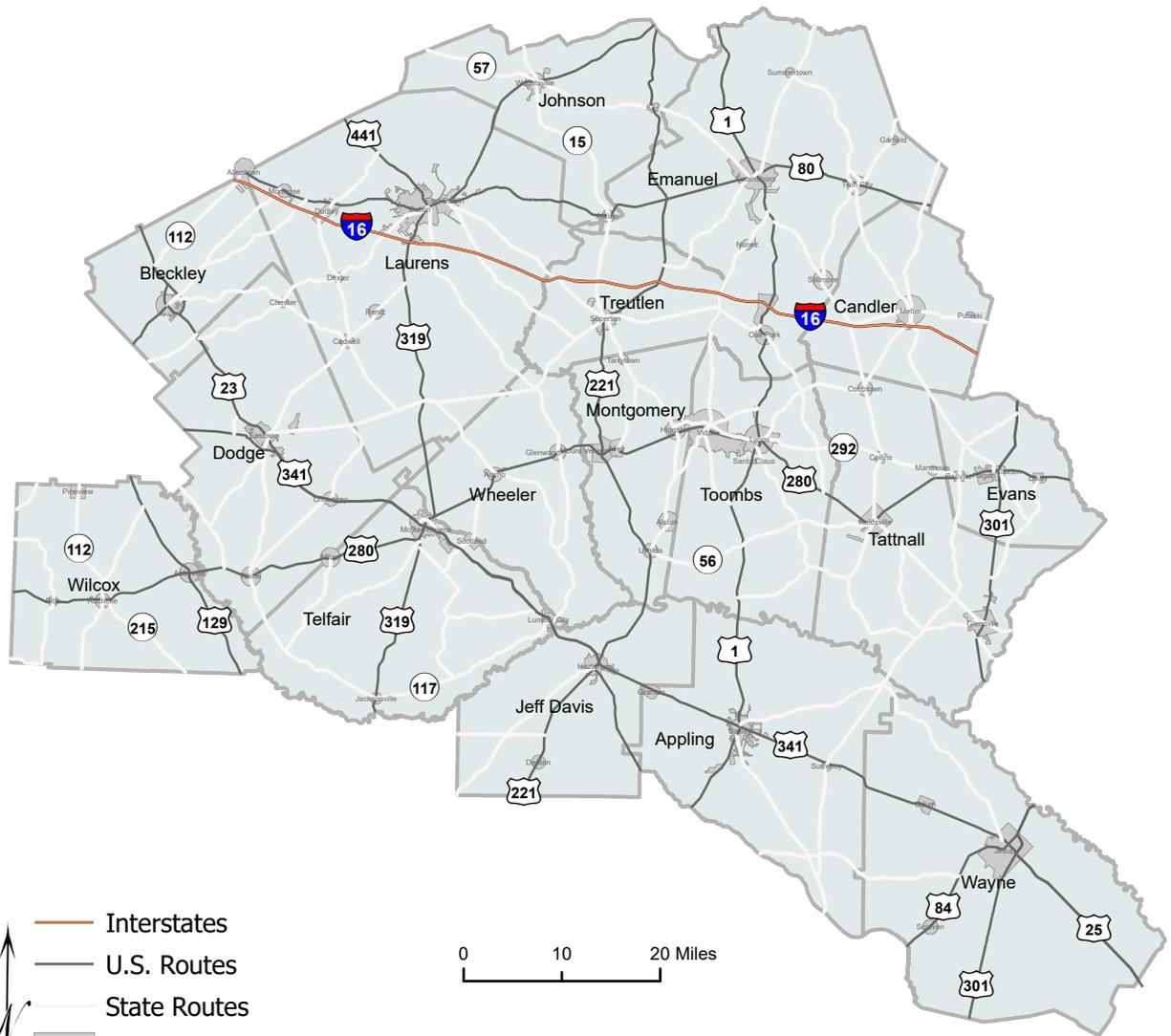
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Planning Process
- Regional Goal Summary
- Priority Needs and Opportunities
- Key Strategies and Actions

Primarily included in the Altamaha River Basin of Georgia, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is a large rural region spanning the upper and lower coastal plains of south central and southeast Georgia which is steeped in much natural beauty, biological importance, and long history. In the absence of metropolitan statistical areas, the Region does contain the three micropolitan statistical areas of Dublin (Laurens and Johnson counties), Jesup (Wayne County), and Vidalia (Toombs and Montgomery counties).



Prepared by: HOGARC, 2024

"The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS datasets, the guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user."

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Plan attempts to establish a framework to enhance regional coordination and cooperation and serve as a roadmap for the Region's future development. It does so by answering three essential planning questions about the Region: "Where are we now?", "Where do we want to be?" and "How do we get there?" The Plan is structured into three main sections to tackle these questions: Regional Needs and Opportunities, Regional Goals, and Implementation Program.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region encompasses 17 counties and 62 municipalities. It includes the city and county governments of Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox Counties. The 2024 Regional Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, effective October 1, 2017.

1 PLANNING PROCESS

Stakeholder Involvement Summary

Input for the Plan was gathered To effectively develop our Region in the manner desired and to ensure the information presented by our planning efforts is accurate and true, we employed several strategies and techniques to obtain a wide variety of input from citizens and stakeholders.

TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES

- **Regional Survey**

A Regional Survey was made available to the general public and all plan participants/stakeholders via hard copy and digital/online.

- **Social Media Platforms**

All public hearings and listening sessions were advertised on HOGARC maintained social media platforms.

- **Regional Plan Specific Website**

A Regional Plan website was developed at the beginning of the process to include links to various regional plan documents, a meeting timetable for the process, links to Steering Committee meeting documents, and the regional plan survey.

- **Local Legal Organ**

Public notice is sent to all legal organs in the region.

- **Regional Plan Flyer**

Regional Plan Flyer was utilized to drive traffic to the Regional Plan website and Regional Plan Survey to garner awareness of the planning process and to seek input through the survey.

- **The Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee consisted of the Regional Council members as well as other interested stakeholders. Draft documents and comments were reviewed in each Steering Committee meeting.

- **Email Notifications/Reminder System**

Email Notifications/Reminder System were utilized to contact stakeholders with meeting dates, reminders and links to various items.



MEETING SERIES

- **Two (2) Public Hearings**

An initial public hearing was held at the beginning of the planning process on November , 2024. And a final public hearing to conclude gathering public input was held on March 21, 2024.

- **Three (3) Listening Sessions**

Three Listening Sessions were held throughout the Region and were designed to be within a one hour or less drive for Region citizens and stakeholders.

- **Four (4) Steering Committee Meetings**

Four Steering Committee Meetings were held at the City of Vidalia and the City of Mount Vernon which are located in the center of the Region

2 REGIONAL GOAL SUMMARY

Where do we want to be?

The goals of the Region are designed to lay out a map for the Region's future and have been developed throughout the planning process involving regional leaders and stakeholders. Future decisions should be consistent with achieving these goals and advancing the Regional Vision. Our regional goals are as follows:



1. Strengthen Local Economy

Promote economic vitality and employment growth by fostering the development of a highly skilled workforce, enhancing infrastructure, expanding transit and broadband accessibility, investing in leadership development, and implementing strategic land use planning. Our aim is to bolster business retention, attract new enterprises, and facilitate their long-term sustainability.

2. Preserve and Promote Natural and Cultural Resources

Preserve and protect the Region's historically significant resources and environmentally sensitive areas while encouraging growth complementary with the existing sense of place. Our Region is blessed with a wealth of natural and cultural resources, presenting us with both a responsibility and an opportunity to cultivate industries that prioritize environmental sustainability, such as tourism.

3. Improve Community Facilities and Services

Updating infrastructure within our region to be adequately prepared for future growth. Utilize existing infrastructure to encourage infill development and further make investment in facilities and services.

4. Affordable Housing for All

Provide safe, affordable housing opportunities in rural and urban areas for all income levels.

5. Strategic Land Use Planning

Encourage growth through planned actions and services by steering development near sites adjacent to or served by existing infrastructure.

6. Enhance Regional Coordination

Work to create a regional approach to leadership, developing growth strategies, and solving common issues through regional partnerships, consolidate efforts.

3 PRIORITY NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

Where are we now?

To determine our optimal path forward, we need to gain a thorough understanding of our existing conditions. Throughout the planning process, the assessed data documented for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region shows that population density remains low in the Region as its most dense county, Toombs, is lower than the U.S. average, and only about 40% of Georgia's average. The Region is heavily forested with an important forest industry which leads the state in several categories. Agriculture also remains an integral component of the Region's economy, and the Region is home to Georgia's official state vegetable, the Vidalia Sweet Onion. Forestry and agriculture offer more future potential as well. The Region is well positioned to take advantage of emerging trends in agrobiosciences, biofuels, and other advanced use of nanocellulose and wood lignins. The Region's climate also holds much potential for alternative technologies, including solar. In addition to its natural resources, other important assets for regional growth and development include current economic diversity; highway, rail, and other transportation infrastructure and access; and location just inland from Georgia's Coast and its expanding ports. Our regional priorities include:

Priorities tied to Goal 1. Strengthen Local Economy

- Increase regional tourism cooperation/marketing
- Ensure the population has the skills and training necessary to attract and retain businesses and industries

Priorities tied to Goal 2. Preserve and Promote Natural and Cultural Resources

- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas
- Increase downtown revitalization efforts

Priorities tied to Goal 3. Improve Community Facilities and Services

- Modernize Region's Transportation Network
- Increase connectivity and adequate access to alternative forms of transportation
- Expand Public transit throughout the Region
- Maintain/ upgrade/expand public infrastructure
- Broadband internet technology infrastructure/access Regionwide
- Provide resources to residents for aging in place

Priorities tied to Goal 4. Affordable Housing for All

- Create safe, affordable, and diverse housing options for all income levels

Priorities tied to Goal 5. Strategic Land Use Planning

- Improved regional land use planning and management system to effectively accommodate anticipated growth

Priorities tied to Goal 6. Enhance Regional Coordination

- Establish a regional economic development organization(s)

4 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTIONS

How do we get there?

We aspire to create a concise, practical regional plan that garners support from our region’s stakeholders and empowers them to champion the future development of our region. The key strategies and actions are precise measures extracted from the regional work program element, aligned with our goals and priorities. This element may serve as a practical toolbox for the region to enhance our communities.

STRATEGY AND ACTION HIGHLIGHT

Strategy	Action
Ensure each member of the Region’s workforce is provided an opportunity to achieve advanced training and skills to be a successful employee	Implement WIOA Program(s) and maintain one-stops in each county
	Facilitate at minimum 12 job fairs each year
	Update the comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to advance regional economic development
Provide technical and planning assistance to local governments	Develop Urban Redevelopment Plan/Downtown Master Plan for local governments
	Create design guidelines to preserve downtown characters
Revitalize declining neighborhoods	Provide technical and planning assistance to local governments to encourage infill development
	Provide technical assistance to local governments for reducing vacancy rate, and tackling other blighted issues
Facilitate community housing discussions and training opportunities to increase housing options	Provide technical assistance to local governments applying for housing grants
	Organize regional housing conferences to provide training and resources for affordable housing development

REGIONAL GOALS

- Goals and Policies
- Regional Development Maps
- Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)
Map & Defining Narrative

REGIONAL VISION

The region endeavors towards a resilient, thriving, and sustainable future through fostering economic prosperity, preserving and promoting natural and cultural assets, ensuring adequate community facilities and services, providing affordable housing for all, implementing strategic land use planning and management, and facilitating seamless intergovernmental coordination.

1 GOALS & POLICIES

Goal 1: Strengthen Local Economy

Promote economic vitality and employment growth by fostering the development of a highly skilled workforce, enhancing infrastructure, expanding transit and broadband accessibility, investing in leadership development, and implementing strategic land use planning. Aim to bolster business retention, attract new enterprises, and facilitate their long-term sustainability.

- Utilize existing programs and support efforts to enhance workforce development and job skills improvements and to further educational attainment within the Region.
- Facilitate and support strong, active local chambers of commerce and economic development entities.
- Promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between economic development entities within the Region.
- Establish and support regional economic development organization(s) focused on the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, with special emphasis on rural needs.
- Develop, promote, and support efforts and strategies to improve regional identity, regional collaboration, and regional marketing.
- Create Regional leadership development program, and support existing local leadership programs and their development Regionwide.
- Support all efforts to maintain and expand the agriculture, forestry, and related agribusiness sectors within the Region and keep them vital and viable.
- Encourage economic development initiatives and strategies which support and complement the Region's existing economic development activities and which capitalize on the Region's natural resources, location, and other assets.
- Support, enhance, and promote local and regional tourism efforts and opportunities, especially those capitalizing on the Region's heritage, agriculture, and natural and cultural resources.
- Facilitate and support the continuing expansion and improvement of infrastructure, including that of water/sewer, the transportation network, and broadband availability and capability, to accommodate and allow desired economic development and growth.
- Provide continued support for Region's Transportation SPLOST.

- Support Broadband Ready designation Region wide to enhance efforts to expand and improve broadband service.
- Encourage and support downtown and small-town revitalization efforts, including GDCA Rural Zone designation, as appropriate.
- Encourage and support efforts to further small business development and assist entrepreneurs.

Goal 2: Preserve and Promote Natural and Cultural Resources

Preserve and protect the Region's historically significant resources and environmentally sensitive areas while encouraging growth complementary with the existing sense of place. Our Region is blessed with a wealth of natural and cultural resources, presenting us with both a responsibility and an opportunity to cultivate industries that prioritize environmental sustainability, such as tourism.

- Expand awareness, understanding, and education of importance of Region's heritage, its outstanding natural/cultural resources, and their need for documentation/conservation/protection.
- Seek continued utilization of conservation land uses in the identified Green Infrastructure Network of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Resource Plan.
- Support The Nature Conservancy goal of a continuous, permanently protected Altamaha River Bioreserve corridor in conservation use.
- Support public and private efforts to protect and connect existing conservation lands of all the Region's river corridors with protected conservation uses.
- Support and seek to develop multi-use trails, other outdoor recreation facilities, and usage along the Region's river corridors, especially those with multi-county linkages.
- Encourage and support the development of local advocacy groups in each county concerned with protection, utilization, and management of river corridors, wildlife recreation and conservation, other local conservation efforts, and historic and cultural resources, as well as environmental awareness, stewardship, and clean-up efforts.
- Encourage and support the utilization of the Region's heritage, river corridors, and other natural and cultural resources through compatible economic utilization and tourism efforts.
- Promote and support regional cooperation, marketing, and partnership in river corridor protection, development, economic utilization, and enhanced recreational and tourist attraction of the Region's river corridors and other natural and cultural resources.
- Promote, support, and advocate use of best management practices by the public, developers, and agricultural, forest, and other interests.
- Encourage enforcement of the model Environmental Conservation, On-Site Sewage Management and Permit Ordinance prepared by HOGARC.
- Encourage and support the adoption of floodplain management ordinances and other land development ordinances which preserve and protect sensitive natural and cultural features of the landscape, support proper natural functioning, respect existing rural and natural character, and minimize intrusions, run-off, or other pollution.
- Advocate for the continued protection of water flows in the Region's rivers and for protection of water quality and availability from the Floridan and other Region aquifers, as well as the Region's rivers and wetlands.

Goal 3: Improve Community Facilities and Services

Updating infrastructure within our region to be adequately prepared for future growth. Utilize existing infrastructure to encourage infill development and further make investment in facilities and services.

- Cooperatively promote and advocate the use of major regional transportation routes as interstate alternatives and/or tourism/economic development opportunities.
- Support the efficient implementation of local and regional T-SPLOST projects and the supportive utilization of local T-SPLOST funds for further enhancement of the Region's transportation network
- Support the continued expansion and improvement of the Region's rail network, both for freight and passenger service.
- Support the continuing efforts to upgrade/improve the Region's airports.
- Support the continuation and expansion of the DHS Coordinated Transportation System, as well as development of additional rural public transit systems within the Region.
- Advocate and support improved access, within communities and to important recreational, natural, and cultural amenities, through enhanced development of alternative forms of transportation and adoption of Complete Streets policies, including sidewalk improvements, development of local bicycle routes/trails/events, and the establishment of greenways, multi-use or other trails.
- Advocate for, and support expansion of, telecommunications/technology infrastructure and broadband capability and service within the Region, including designation of Broadband Ready communities Region wide.
- Support community efforts to receive GDCA's PlanFirst designation.
- Continue to maintain/upgrade/expand public water and sewer systems and other public infrastructure and services to serve existing residents and to accommodate, provide, and guide future growth and development.
- Protect existing infrastructure investment by encouraging infill development and other intense development location within or close to municipal areas already served by infrastructure.
- Promote and support the use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and other innovative technologies in the provision of local, regional, and state services.
- Support the update of comprehensive hazard mitigation plans and other enhancements to public safety services/facilities within the Region.
- Support the development of solid waste management plans, which support desired development patterns and economic development, while maintaining adequate access to solid waste services/facilities and promoting feasible and sustainable recycling programs.
- Support/advocate for continuing improvements to educational facilities, services, and programs at all education levels, including post-secondary, throughout the Region.
- Support and advocate for provision of access to quality health care, needed improvements/upgrades to facilities, retention of local hospitals and emergency care access, provision of appropriate health care professionals, and improved access to Level I or II trauma centers throughout the Region.
- Support community gardens and other programs/facilities to reduce food deserts.
- Increase provision of bed space and other resources to serve the Region's homeless population.
- Support and seek the development of, and improved access to, local and state parks and recreational facilities which create greater outdoor recreation opportunities and promote an improved quality of life.
- Support the enhancement and expansion of cultural facilities, services, and programs within the Region.
- Provide resources to Region residents which support aging in place, including senior centers and their programs.

Goal 4: Affordable Housing for All

Provide safe, affordable, diverse housing opportunities in rural and urban areas for all income levels.

- Support federal, state, and local programs and funding seeking to rehabilitate substandard housing, eliminate or reduce dilapidated housing or blight, or otherwise upgrade housing quality and aesthetics within the Region.
- Support the provision of quality housing construction and appropriate variety of housing choices, including construction of more single-family dwellings on smaller lots, such as “tiny houses,” through enforcement of Georgia’s Uniform Construction Codes and other appropriate land development/growth management regulations.
- Support appropriate local regulation of manufactured housing to allow affordable housing choices, but also to address quality, appearance, safety, and location issues.
- Encourage and support provision of special needs, workplace, and migrant housing to assist in housing options and facilitate economic development.
- Encourage and support the provision of infill housing in areas already served by municipal infrastructure through regulation and/or special incentives.

Goal 5: Strategic Land Use Planning

Encourage growth through planned actions and services by steering development near sites adjacent to or served by existing infrastructure.

- Support and assist the development of local comprehensive plans and growth management regulations which are consistent with the Regional Plan and appropriately support local community visions and desired growth patterns.
- Support/encourage local policies and regulations which encourage and promote development compatible with conservation and sensitive utilization of the Region’s natural and cultural resources and agricultural and forestry lands, as well as retention of the Region’s rural and small town character.
- Encourage infill development.
- Encourage local policies which locate intense developments in or near the Region’s municipalities in areas already served by water, sewer, and other infrastructure.
- Support all efforts to maintain agricultural and forestry land uses within the Region and keep them vital and viable.
- Support and encourage public and private efforts to protect, connect, and expand conservation lands and uses within the Region, particularly in the Region’s river corridors.
- Support development and utilization of local policies and programs which encourage downtown revitalization, preservation and adaptive use of community landmarks, and otherwise contribute to the retention of unique community character.
- Support local policies and U.S. Army/conservation organization efforts to facilitate conservation uses within the Ft. Stewart Army Compatible Use Buffer Area to minimize encroachment and protect the mission of the Ft. Stewart military installation.
- Support for the Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership collaborative effort to conserve natural resources, benefit working lands, and support military readiness within the Landscape’s boundary.

Goal 6: Enhance Regional Coordination

Work to create a regional approach to leadership, developing growth strategies, and solving common issues through regional partnerships.

- Encourage and support continuing coordination and collaboration between local jurisdictions in growth management planning and delivery of services.
- Encourage the development, support of, and utilization/participation in regional partnerships/organizations which further regional coordination/cooperation, particularly in economic development and tourism.
- Utilize the Regional Commission as a forum and liaison to address/develop solutions for shared regional issues.
- Encourage more hands-on technical assistance to smaller, rural counties from state agencies.
- Seek Regional participation in an annual Regional leadership development program.



2 REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAPS

One. Regional Land Use Map

The Regional Land Use Map illustrates the current land use patterns in the region by identifying the following three general land use categories:

Developed Areas:

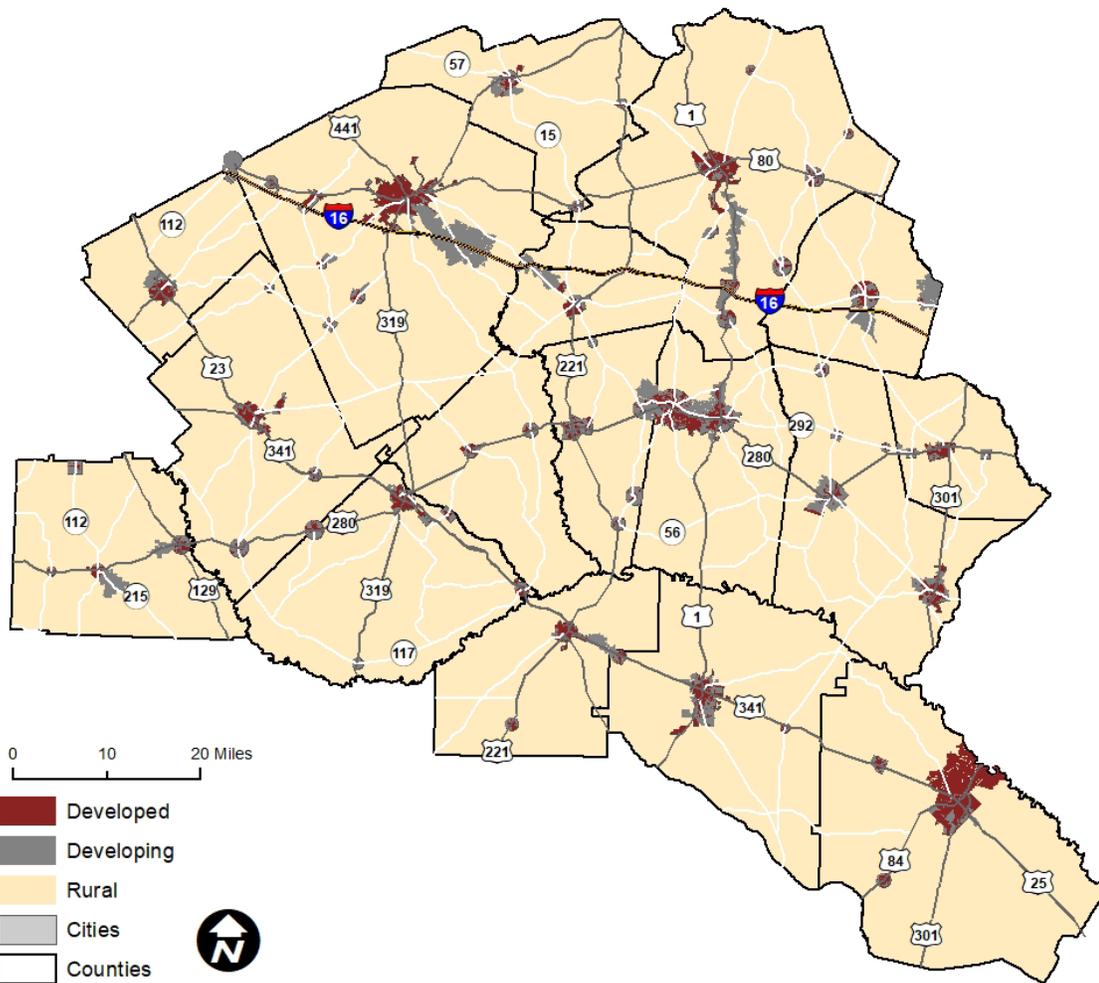
Areas that exhibit urban-type development patterns and have access to urban services. Infill development and renovation efforts should be encouraged.

Developing Areas:

Expected to become urbanized and will require the provision of new urban services in the next 20 years. New development should be expected and encouraged in these areas. Policies should emphasize strategic land use management.

Rural Areas:

Not expected to become urbanized or require the provision of urban services in the next 20 years. Rural characters should be protected.



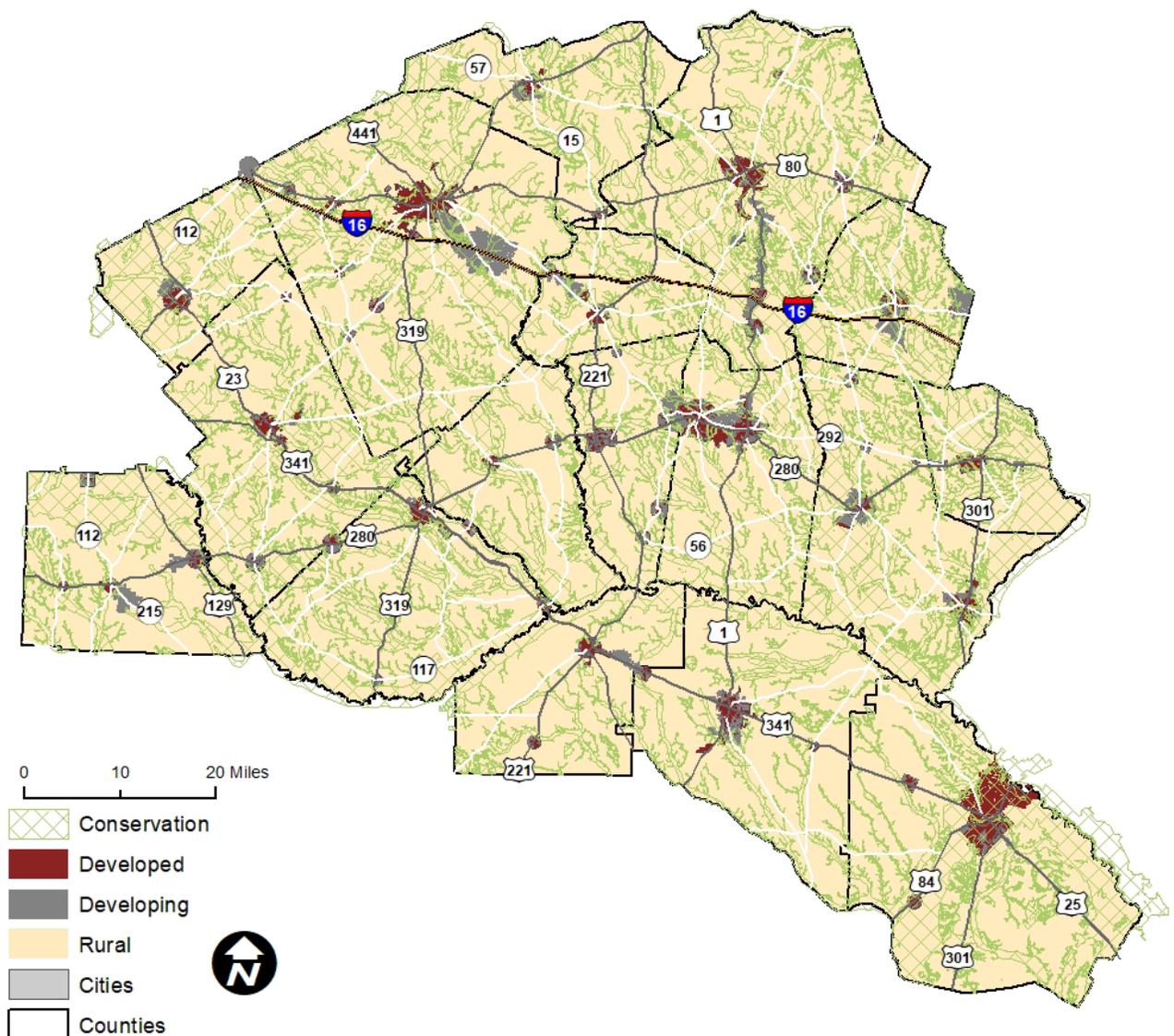
Most of the Region is expected to remain in low density, rural uses. Rural characters should be protected by maintaining relatively low density of residential, commercial, and low intensity industrial uses which should be compatible with surrounding prominent agricultural/forest/conservation uses.

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 and the established transportation network. In recent years, local governments located near Interstate 16 interchanges have made investments to improve or develop infrastructure for potential industry location. The long term impact of the planned Savannah Port deepening will likely mean development at improved interchanges and spur further growth along the corridor. Other growth areas for the region were identified primarily because of infrastructure service areas, school locations, or adjacent growth influences.

Two. Conservation and Development Map

Based on the Regional Land Use map, the Conservation and Development map adds a fourth layer of Conservation, the areas to be preserved in order to protect important regional resources and environmentally sensitive areas. Conservation layer includes Regionally Important Resources, wetlands, protected rivers, significant groundwater recharge areas, conservation lands, and areas of interest to the Georgia Sentinel Landscape program.

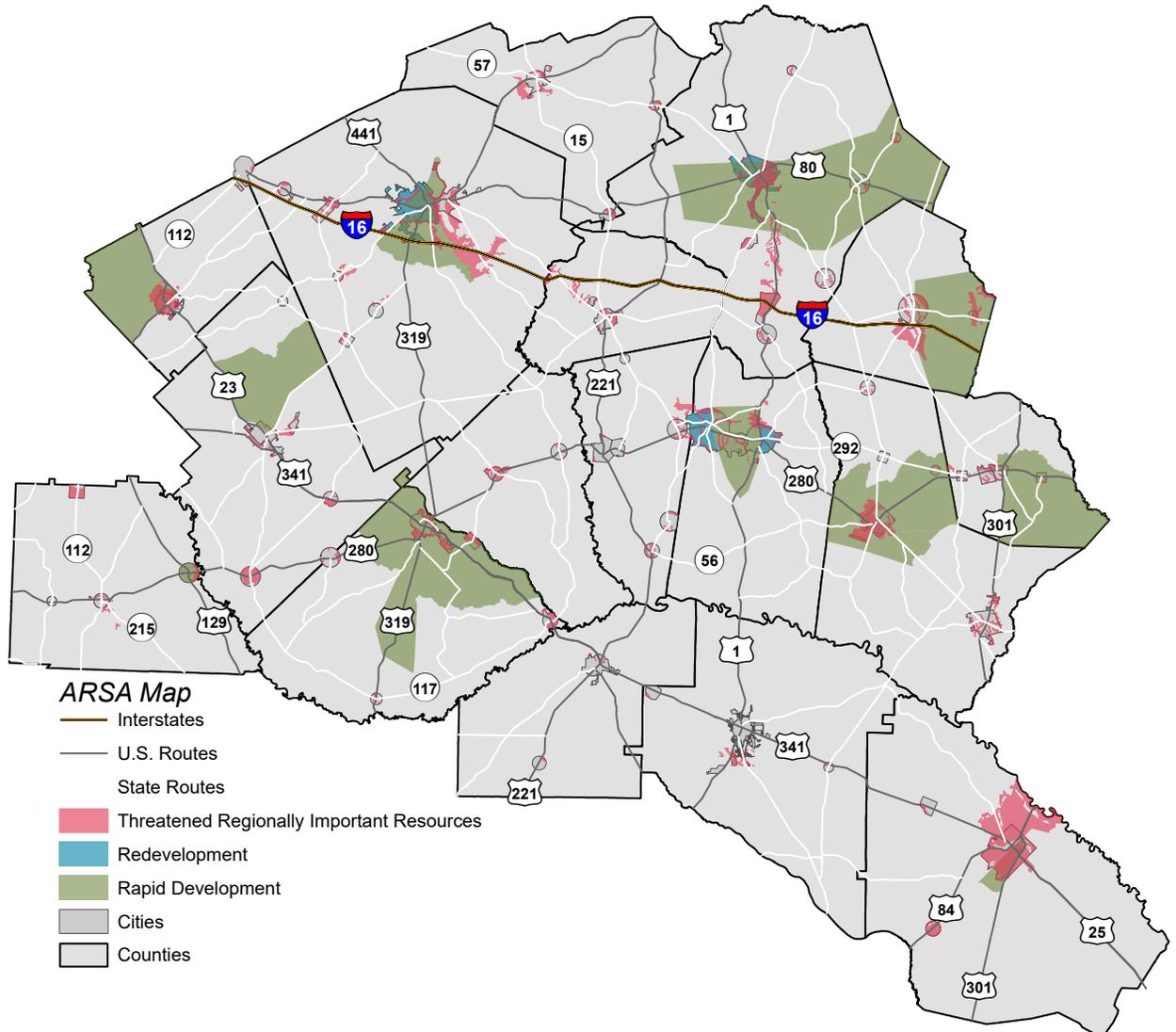


3 ARSA MAP & DEFINING NARRATIVE

Three. Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA) Map

The Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA) map is an illustration of land use trends within the region and the areas which exhibit conditions for close monitoring when considering factors such as:

- Areas where natural and cultural resources are likely to be impacted by development, including areas identified on the Regionally Important Resource Map and the Conservation and Development Map that overlap the “Developed” or “Developing” Areas
- Areas where rapid development or change in land use is likely to occur and may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation
- Areas primed for redevelopment, including the need for significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness, the potential for infill development, the need to address high poverty/unemployment level



The following defining narrative provides a general definition of the types of areas requiring special attention, specific management strategies for each area including recommended development patterns; compatible land use; DCA's Quality Community Objectives to be pursued; and possible implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns.

Threatened Regionally Important Resources

These are areas where significant natural or cultural resources are likely to be impacted by development. Identified resources include the conservation areas as identified on the Conservation and Development Map, adopted Regionally Important Resources from the 2012 Regional Resource Plan, and growth areas of the region to include Developed and Developing categories of the Regional Land Use Map.

Raid Development

There are no areas within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region where truly rapid development is expected; however, there are developing areas adjacent to several cities. In some cases, this development could outpace the availability of community facilities and services.

Redevelopment

There is a need for redevelopment throughout the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region in most municipalities' existing developed areas, primarily in downtowns, historic areas and other older neighborhoods, and early commercial areas. In addition, there are also some former industrial areas needing redevelopment for new industrial or other use, such as passive recreation. The region has also experience multiple golf course closings. This presents excellent opportunities for park creation or other redevelopment possibilities. Significant infill development opportunities are found scattered throughout the Region in currently developed areas, especially in the smaller towns and where public water/sewer are available. There include vacant lots/properties in both residential and commercial areas, most of which have water access and sometimes available sewer infrastructure.

Areas with persistent or high rates of poverty are found throughout the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. Most of the residential redevelopment areas, which are often eligible CDBG target areas, are characterized by significant levels of disinvestment. Portions of some or even entire older downtown commercial areas, especially those in the Region's smaller communities, are also plagued by significant disinvestment. Other indicators of significant disinvestment include Opportunity Zones (State and Federal), Enterprise Zones, Urban Redevelopment Areas, Revitalization Area Strategies, and Rural Zones. Due to sixteen of our seventeen counties being categorized as Tier 1 counties by DCA, the benefits offered by a state designated Opportunity Zone are already in place (i.e. job creation incentives) and are not present in the region. Federal opportunity zones represent some of the most concentrated poverty in the state and will be designated for a ten year period. The region has three Urban Redevelopment Target Areas located in Cochran, Dublin, and Abbeville. In 2022, the cities of Hazlehurst, Baxley downtowns were designated as Rural Zones. Downtown Vidalia also received the designation as a Rural Zone later in 2023. This Rural Zone designation process is designed by the state to provide incentives for job creation, historic building renovation, and investment in the historic city centers of rural Georgia.

DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Threatened Regionally Important Resources

- Clustering development to preserve open space within the development site
- Enlisting significant site features (view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, historic structures, etc.) as amenities that shape identity and character of development
- Site plans, building design, and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site, including topography and views
- Preserving environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trail corridors, or greenbelts
- Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, parking racks, etc.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses
- Reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential developments, particularly when nearby parking alternatives or public transportation is available
- Parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements
- Preserving significant historic or cultural features, structures, or character, and adaptively reusing or incorporating them in modern uses

Rapid Development

- Clustering development to preserve open space within development site
 - Enlisting significant site features (view corridors, water features, farmland, wetlands, historic structures, etc.) as amenities that shape the identity and character of the development
 - Distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout locality/region
 - Encouraging development on appropriate infill sites
 - Encouraging development in existing or planned infrastructure service areas
 - Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily
 - Sign regulation - control the aesthetic impact of signage
 - Addition of new uses to single-use sites (e.g. restaurants and shopping added to office parks)
 - Brownfield redevelopment that converts formerly industrial/commercial sites to mixed-use developments
 - Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets
 - Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, parking racks, etc.
 - Maintaining countryside in productive, viable agricultural/forestry uses
 - Preserving significant historic or cultural features, structures, or character, and adaptively reusing or incorporating them in modern uses
-

Redevelopment

- Traditional downtown areas maintained as community focal point (attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly)
 - Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers
 - Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip
 - Reuse of existing vacant or underutilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities
 - Infill development on vacant sites closer to the center of the community; these sites, with existing infrastructure in place, are used for new development, matching character of surrounding neighborhood rather than more development on greenfield sites
 - New housing opportunities created out of former, underused commercial, warehouse, or industrial spaces
 - New residential development that matches mix of housing types and styles of older neighborhoods
 - New development that reflects traditional neighborhood design principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center
 - Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments), densities and prices in the same neighborhood
 - Residential development with healthy mix of uses (corner groceries, barber shops, drugstores) within easy walking distance of residences
 - Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses
 - On-street parking
 - Rehabilitation of deteriorated housing utilizing Community Development Block Grant or other funding programs
 - Revitalization of existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points
 - Brownfield redevelopment that converts formerly industrial/commercial sites to mixed-use developments or passive recreation
 - Greyfield redevelopment that converts vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets
 - Sign regulation - control aesthetic impact of signage
 - Clustering development to preserve open space within development site
 - Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas
 - Preserving significant historic or cultural features, structures, or character, and adaptively reusing or incorporating them in modern uses
 - Compatible infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites and of vacant properties already served by infrastructure
 - New development matching typical densities of older community center
 - Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods, disguising its density, if appropriate
 - New residential development that matches the mix of housing types and styles of older, closer-in community neighborhoods
-

APPROPRIATE TYPES OF LAND USES

Threatened Regionally Important Resources

- Natural, Cultural, and Historic areas
- Parks and Nature Preserves
- Passive Recreation
- Trails, Greenways, Blueways
- Wildlife Management Areas
- Agriculture and Forestry
- Conservation

Rapid Development

- Residential
- Commercial (office and retail)
- Mixed-Use
- Light industrial/warehouses
- Public/Institutional
- Natural, Cultural, and Historic areas
- Parks
- Trails, Greenways, Blueways
- Agriculture (small-scale)

Redevelopment

- Residential
 - Commercial (office and retail)
 - Public/Institutional
 - Parks
 - Passive Recreation
 - Mixed-Use
 - Light industrial/warehouses
 - Public/Institutional
-



IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Threatened Regionally Important Resources

- Consult Regional Resource Plan: Regionally Important Resources for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region (2012) and implement recommendations contained therein, as appropriate
 - Utilize recommendations included in Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study (2012), as appropriate/feasible
 - Maintain agriculture/forestry/conservation uses
 - Support increased nature-based, heritage, and agri-tourism efforts
 - Adopt and enforce supportive ordinances, as needed
 - Land and Water Conservation - easements, acquisition, land trusts, farm land protection, purchase/transfer of development rights
 - Low-Impact Development - protect natural systems and reduce infrastructure costs
 - Planning for Smart Growth - compact development, efficient infrastructure investment, design guidelines, infill development, cluster development, etc.
 - Sign Regulation - control the aesthetic impact of signage
-

Rapid Development

- Low-Impact Development - protect natural systems and reduce infrastructure costs
 - Planning for Smart Growth - compact development, efficient infrastructure investment, infill development, cluster development
 - Subdivisions and Land Development regulations
 - Quality, diverse housing stock
 - Land and Water Conservation - easements, farmland protection, land trusts
 - Plan for and implement multi-modal transportation - bike and pedestrian plans
 - Intergovernmental Coordination - intergovernmental service agreements to increase efficiency and cost savings
-

Redevelopment

- Infill Development Program - comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill in particular areas
 - Quality, diverse housing stock
 - Overlay Districts - mapped areas where special regulations on development are applied, such as design guidelines in historic district
 - Infrastructure improvement/upgrade
 - Brownfield Site Remediation - clean-up of contaminated properties
 - Strategies for Reuse of Greyfields – reusing sites such as abandoned shopping centers for mixed-use development
 - Business Improvement District (BID)/Community Improvement District (CID) - self-taxing entity formed by property owners and/or businesses within specific geographic area to increase attractiveness and safety, provide additional services, etc.
 - Rehabilitation Codes - reuse older buildings, resulting in reinvestment in blighted areas
 - Historic Preservation Rehabilitation Tax Incentives
 - Targeted Corridor Redevelopment – using public incentives or urban redevelopment powers to encourage revitalization of problem properties, such as declining shopping centers/areas or abandoned businesses
 - Adaptive Use of existing buildings for new uses
 - Public Nuisance Ordinance - control nuisances, such as tall weeds/grass, accumulated junk, abandoned vehicles, loud noises, etc.
 - Sign Regulations - control aesthetic impact of signage
 - Plan for and implement multi-modal transportation - bike/pedestrian plans, corridor studies, etc.
 - Infill development ordinances
 - Utilize Community Development Block Grant and other funding programs to rehabilitate deteriorated housing
 - Provide incentives for developers
-

REGIONAL NEEDS & OPPORTUNITIES

- Economic Development
- Natural and Cultural Resources
- Community Facilities & Services
- Housing
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Coordination

1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Needs

- Ensure that the population has the skills and training necessary to allow the Region to better attract and retain businesses and industries
- Continue regional tourism cooperation/marketing
- Continue downtown revitalization efforts
- Establish Regional leadership development program
- Increase levels of educational attainment
- Increase income levels as compared to state's
- Enhance affordability of technical college training for immigrant population
- Develop a marketing strategy to promote a regional identity
- More professional development staff
- Improve local marketing strategies
- More active local leadership development training/programs
- Sufficient childcare facilities
- More youth activity programs to enable more people to work
- Attract grocery/retail stores to provide more opportunities to shop locally
- Industry/business retention
- Encourage entrepreneurship

Opportunities

- Passage of the Transportation SPLOST in the HOGARC Region and ongoing transportation improvements
- Georgia's Broadband Ready designation and related incentives for carriers.
- Majority of Region's historic city centers eligible to apply for GDCA's Rural Zone designation.
- Improving high school graduation rates, high number of dual enrolled students, and the presence of technical colleges and post-secondary institutions, as well as additional programs
- Growth of advanced manufacturing
- Growth of industries
- Regional partnerships supportive of economic development efforts
- New markets/uses and alternative agricultural and forestry crops/resources
- Capitalization of Region's advantages in logistics/location
- Location of Fort Stewart within Region
- Attraction of new residents
- Presence of Plant Hatch Nuclear Power
- Regional development organization established to support economic growth region-wide
- Georgia Grown initiatives, such as the Georgia Grown Innovation Center located in downtown Metter
- Expansion of multiple industrial parks and new industrial parks established
- Greater Vidalia® Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
- Growth of training programs, entrepreneurship programs
- Proximity to the New Hyundai Plant
- Increased number of events and activities in the region

2 NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Needs

- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas
- Greater focus on water supply efficiency planning in conjunction with regional and statewide water management plans
- Increased public education concerning conservation/protection of the Region's significant natural/cultural resources
- Compatible utilization of the Region's natural/cultural resources
- Improved promotion mechanisms of Region's natural/cultural resources
- Growth management/regulation/enforcement to preserve the Region's rural character
- Increased utilization/promotion of historic preservation in downtown development efforts
- Promotion of the Region's history/historic sites/museums
- Greater focus on aesthetics/beautification improvements
- More trails installed to increase public access to natural and cultural resources
- Need to identify and utilize more funding resources for increasing outdoor facilities

Opportunities

- Outdoor recreation opportunities promotion and enhancement
- Significant number of protected river corridors
- Capitalize on the Region's history and numerous historic sites to promote heritage tourism
- HOGARC Regional Resource Plan and Multi-Region River Corridor Feasibility Study
- Certified Local Government (CLG) status for Dublin
- Existing and new local advocacy/support organizations
- Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership to promote continuation/protection of compatible land uses near Fort Stewart and Townsend Bombing Range

3 COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

Needs

- Maintain/upgrade/expand public infrastructure
- Modernize Region's transportation network
- Increase connectivity/access to alternative forms of transportation
- Increase walkability in urbanized areas in the region
- Expand public transit throughout the Region
- Continue support to facilitate broadband expansion region-wide
- Increased adoption of "Complete Streets" policies by local governments
- Increased funding to maintain/improve parks/recreational/outdoor facilities
- Regional development of trails, bike routes, events, and cooperative marketing
- Provide resources for aging in place
- Public safety services/facilities enhancements
- Affordable solid waste services/facilities
- Access to quality health care
- Ensure availability of public services for migrant/seasonal population
- Educational facilities/services improvements
- Cultural facilities/services enhancement
- Adequate local government facilities/services and professional management
- Ground water supply facing potential challenges

Opportunities

- Existing public transit programs
- HOGARC Region T-SPLOST and state-designated developmental highways and their planned upgrades
- Major regional transportation routes as interstate alternatives
- Ongoing airport upgrades
- Region's existing rail network and continuing expansion
- Amtrak passenger rail hub in Jesup
- Middle Georgia State University Aviation Campus in Eastman
- Georgia HEART Hospital Program and Georgia Community Paramedicine Program Strategic and Rural Emergency Hospital initiatives
- Telehealth programs in Region schools and new healthcare clinics
- Improved access to parks/recreational facilities
- Region's technical colleges
- Ongoing cultural facilities/services enhancements
- Passage of Regional TIA-2 (Transportation SPLOST)
- Increased broadband internet technology infrastructure/access Regionwide
- Sufficient broadband education for local government officials

4 HOUSING

Needs

- Revitalize declining neighborhoods
- Increase building codes inspection programs
- Safe and affordable housing for all income levels
- Manufactured home park regulations to include mandatory storm shelters
- Inclusion of mandatory safe room provision for new homes in building codes
- Improved regulation of manufactured housing
- Code enforcement to address prevalence of substandard housing
- Incorporate/update codes to allow more development of diverse housing stock
- Land use/growth management regulations to guide future housing growth to desired areas
- Provision of adequate housing options for migrants and seasonal population
- Increase special needs housing, including senior, disabled, assisted living, and shared residences
- Increased resources to assist homeless population
- More education and training opportunities on housing and community development programs

Opportunities

- Construction of more single-family dwellings on smaller lots, including “tiny houses.”
- Availability of ample land.
- Increased utilization of available state/federal/private assistance programs.
- Infill development within Region municipalities or their current service areas.
- OneGeorgia Authority Equity, Rural Innovation, and Rural Workforce Housing Initiative funds
- Mentorship, education, and networking opportunities offered through the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)
- UGA Archway Partnership
- New housing projects being implemented in the region

5 LAND USE

Needs

- Development of coordinated land use management regulations
- Adoption/enforcement of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes
- Provision of land use planning service to facilitate orderly growth
- Manage/guide infrastructure expansion to desired areas/limit sprawl
- Community aesthetics/beautification improvements
- Mitigate neighborhood blight

Opportunities

- Usage of alternative zoning/land use regulations
- Attractive rural character/abundant, outstanding natural and cultural resources
- Available/affordable land for potential development
- Underutilized significant regionally important natural and cultural resources
- No major existing land use conflicts in the Region/room for growth
- Ft. Stewart Army Compatible Land Use Buffer Area
- The Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership's collaborative conservation, economic, and military readiness efforts within its boundary near military installations

6 REGIONAL COORDINATION

Needs

- Annual Regional leadership development program.
- Services sharing, joint delivery of services, and/or consolidation among local governments.
- Improved coordination among jurisdictions in establishing/enforcing growth management regulations

Opportunities

- Regional partnership participation
- Tri-county ownership of Sweetwater Industrial Park in Appling County (Appling, Bacon, and Jeff Davis)
- Significant cooperation among HOGA cities and counties and with state agencies
- The Region's river corridors/other natural/cultural resources' potential for enhanced/coordinated protection, resource utilization, and expanded tourism/economic development.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

- Local Government Performance Standards
- Local Government Performance Standards Update
- Report of Accomplishments and Regional Work Program

1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Local Government Performance Standards are a DCA required subcomponent of the Regional Plan's Implementation Program. They are designed to provide guidance for local leaders in making decisions and taking actions which are consistent with the identified Regional Goals and Policies and help address the identified Regional Needs and Opportunities. The Performance Standards can also assist a local government with measuring its state of development and the quality of its growth. The Minimum Standards are considered essential activities for local governments to undertake for consistency with the Regional Plan. The intent is to ensure a consistent and predictable basic level of local requirements across the Region.

The items included in the Excellence Planning Standards are desirable activities for local governments to work toward implementing to achieve an enhanced quality of growth and improved consistency with the Regional Plan. Each item should be considered a recommended best practice for local government emulation. To be labelled as a "Local Government of Planning Excellence" in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, it has been determined that a local government must have met all six of the Minimum Standards, and also be credited with having achieved a total of 40 of the 96 Excellence Planning Standards. This total of 40 excellence items achieved must include a minimum of at least two from each category (Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources, Community Facilities and Services, Housing, Land Use, and Intergovernmental Coordination). Local governments will self report how they have achieved the "Local Government of Planning Excellence" threshold, but this reporting will be subject to Regional Commission verification and concurrence.

Minimum Standards

- Have an approved and adopted comprehensive plan under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, as amended
- Maintain current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Be a part of an approved countywide Service Delivery Strategy in compliance with Georgia Department of Community Affairs rules
- Maintain a current solid waste management plan in compliance with the Georgia Solid Waste Management Act of 1990, as amended
- Be a part of an approved Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan in compliance with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) standards
- Participate in Regional Commission's Local Plan Implementation Assessment Meetings held in each county, or otherwise cooperate with the Regional Commission to implement the Regional Plan and be informed about other Regional initiatives

Excellence Planning Standards

One. Economic Development

- Have and support an active Chamber of Commerce and/or Economic Development Authority
- Employ a community economic development professional
- Participate in a statewide certification program for community economic development (e.g. Certified Literate Community, Entrepreneur Friendly Community, etc.)
- Maintain state certification for local development authorities
- Have an existing business retention program and/or strategy
- Have a formal business recruitment strategy appropriate to local/regional assets and workforce skills
- Regularly host a local leadership training program and/or participate in the Regional Georgia Academy of Economic Development
- Be an officially designated Broadband Ready community
- Have an active local tourism board and/or convention and visitors bureau
- Hold an annual festival or special event celebrating local heritage, culture, and/or natural and historic resources
- Have an active Downtown Development Authority
- Participate in the Georgia Main Street Program
- Have at least one formally designated scenic byway, bike trail, multi-use trail, greenway, or similar linear recreation/tourism venue
- Host an official community farmers market
- Celebrate a farm day, farm tour, or other recognition/education events for local agriculture, forestry, and agri-business interests
- Actively participate in the Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership
- Participate in multi-county economic development efforts/entities
- Participate in multi-region economic development/tourism efforts/entities
- Participate in regional organizations/efforts designed to promote economic development/tourism/recreation solely within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region
- Participate in Georgia's PlanFirst Program with official designation
- Be or have been an officially designated Rural Zone city through GDCA

Two. Natural and Cultural Resources

- Actively utilize community natural and cultural resources in compatible tourism/economic development efforts
- Regionally Important Resources identified in the HOGARC Regional Resource Plan are recognized as important conservation areas in the local comprehensive plan, especially the Land Use Element
- Support local advocacy groups for existing historic resources, natural resources, conservation areas, state parks, or wildlife within the county
- Support and encourage continued viable conservation, agricultural, and forestry uses within the county (e.g. encouraged/promoted landowner use of Conservation Use, Forest Land Protection Act, or Agricultural Preferential Assessment programs, local right-to-farm/farmland protection ordinances, comprehensive plan strategies, or other identified means)
- Host local natural or historic resource clean-up or improvement efforts/programs
- Adopt ordinances to encourage protection of important natural resources, habitats, and landscapes
- Participate in Georgia's WaterFirst Program with designation
- Support a local heritage center, museum, or environmental awareness/education center or park
- Have an organized community walking or driving tour of local historic resources
- Have one or more properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places
- Have an active local historic preservation commission established by local ordinance
- Be a designated Georgia Certified Local Government
- Support an active local historical society
- Support a local heritage education program within the local school system

Three. Community Facilities and Services

- Have the local water and/or sewer system mapped in a digital format
- Have a written maintenance and replacement plan for utility infrastructure
- Have a written utility expansion plan
- Have a formal Capital Improvements Plan/Program or similar document
- Support a community effort which seeks to improve telecommunications infrastructure and broadband capability and service
- Have, or participate in, an Enhanced-911 system capable of determining location of wireless or mobile telephone calls
- Employ a professional local government administrator or manager
- Have a well-maintained community website
- Have a community Geographic Information System (GIS)
- Have a digitized property tax system available to public
- Participate in a community-sponsored recycling program
- Support programs/facilities which improve local community access to health care
- Provide and maintain a local community park or recreation facility
- Have a current written recreation plan
- Support a local youth program or facility, such as a Boys and Girls Club or other similar programs
- Have a community-sponsored local community center available to the general public
- Have a community-sponsored civic center/auditorium or similar facility for cultural and special events
- Have a written transportation improvement plan
- Have a written airport master plan
- Have a sidewalk/pedestrian master plan
- Have a local bicycle facilities plan
- Have a formally designated local path(s) for bicyclists, joggers, or pedestrians
- Participate in a community-sponsored public transit program
- Utilize local TIA (T-SPLOST) funds for local transportation facilities improvements
- Utilize local SPLOST funds for local transportation facilities improvements
- Have one or more schools participate in the Safe Routes to School Partnership with GDOT
- Have formally adopted a Complete Streets ordinance/policy

Four. Housing

- Have, or participate in, a housing authority
- Have a formal program or plan addressing blight and/or substandard housing
- Have specific neighborhood revitalization/redevelopment plans, housing needs analyses, or urban redevelopment plans
- Support, or participate in, public/private partnerships, such as Habitat for Humanity or Christmas in April, to improve/upgrade/develop local housing
- Support developers/applications seeking to utilize tax credit or other programs to increase/provide low/moderate income housing
- Utilize the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), Comprehensive Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), or similar program to address local housing needs
- Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)
- Have a specific infill development ordinance
- Allow residential development in downtown commercial areas

Five. Land Use

- Implement at least 50 percent of the items included in the community's Short Term or Community Work Program
- Have, or participate in, an active local planning commission
- Enforce Georgia's Minimum Standard Uniform Construction Codes locally
- Require local development/building permits
- Have a certified building codes enforcement officer
- Have an environmental codes enforcement officer authorized to issue citations
- Have and enforce community appearance and/or nuisance control/abatement ordinance(s)
- Have a manufactured housing ordinance
- Have subdivision regulations
- Have a zoning ordinance or alternative land use regulation ordinance
- Enforce the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act locally
- Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program
- Utilize the Transportation Enhancement Program or other means to improve downtown streetscapes
- Have a legal sign ordinance
- Have a stormwater management ordinance
- Participate actively in the Keep Georgia Beautiful Program
- Formally participate in a community sponsored and Georgia Department of Transportation permitted Adopt-A-Highway Program

Six. Intergovernmental Coordination

- Share at least one service with another jurisdiction
- Have formal agreements with other governments for sharing services or mutual aid
- Actively participate in multi-county authorities, partnerships, or organizations
- Develop our comprehensive plan jointly with all local governments in our county
- Participate in an active joint planning commission
- Participate in at least an annual community-wide retreat to discuss local issues of mutual concern
- Participate in regular, formal meetings with other local governments within the county
- Have a written joint-use agreement with the local school system, and/or post-secondary institution, for community use of recreational or other facilities

2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS UPDATE

The following list shows the current status of HOGARC’s local governments in terms of compliance with the Regional Plan’s Minimum Performance Standards.

Local Government	Minimum Performance Standards Not Met	Specific Action Steps taken to Assist Government
Appling	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Baxley	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Graham	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Surrency	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Bleckley	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Cochran	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Candler	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Metter	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Pulaski	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Dodge	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Chauncey	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Chester	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Eastman	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Milan	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Rhine	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Emanuel	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Adrian	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Garfield	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Nunez	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Oak Park	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Stillmore	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Summertown	Maintain Current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Local government was notified of non-compliance status through the Plan Implementation Assessment meeting process and follow-up correspondence. RC staff offered guidance and procedures to reinstate QLG status.
Swainsboro	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Twin City	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Evans	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Bellville	Maintain Current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Local government was notified of non-compliance status through the Plan Implementation Assessment meeting process and follow-up correspondence. RC staff offered guidance and procedures to reinstate QLG status.
Claxton	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Daisy	All Minimum Performance Standards met	

Hagan	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Jeff Davis	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Denton	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Hazlehurst	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Johnson	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Kite	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Wrightsville	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Laurens	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Cadwell	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Dexter	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Dublin	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Dudley	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
East Dublin	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Montrose	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Rentz	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Montgomery	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Ailey	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Alston	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Higgston	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Mount Vernon	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Tarrytown	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Uvalda	Maintain Current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Local government was notified of non-compliance status through the Plan Implementation Assessment meeting process and follow-up correspondence. RC staff offered guidance and procedures to reinstate QLG status.
Tattnall	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Cobbtown	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Collins	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Glennville	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Manassas	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Reidsville	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Telfair	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Jacksonville	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Lumber City	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
McRae-Helena	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Scotland	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Toombs	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Lyons	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Santa Claus	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Vidalia	Maintain Current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Local government was notified of non-compliance status through the Plan Implementation Assessment meeting process and follow-up correspondence. RC staff offered guidance and procedures to reinstate QLG status.

Treutlen	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Soperton	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Wayne	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Jesup	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Odum	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Screven	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Wheeler	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Alamo	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Glenwood	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Wilcox	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Abbeville	Maintain Current Qualified Local Government Status by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs	Local government was notified of non-compliance status through the Plan Implementation Assessment meeting process and follow-up correspondence. RC staff offered guidance and procedures to reinstate QLG status.
Pineview	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Pitts	All Minimum Performance Standards met	
Rochelle	All Minimum Performance Standards met	

3 REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM

This portion of the Implementation Program lays out the specific actions the Regional Commission plans to undertake during the next five years to address the Commission’s Priority Needs and Opportunities. First, a Report of Accomplishments (ROA) provides status updates for the Regional Work Program Annual Update for the Fiscal Year 2023. Following the ROA, the new Regional Work Program contains specific details regarding actions the Regional Commission will pursue in order to meet our Regional Goals. Each Priority Need and Priority Opportunity identified in the Regional Needs and Opportunities section has been addressed in the Regional Work Program. Details include the related Priority Need/Opportunity, Strategies, Actions, Timeframe of Projects, Potential Partners, and Costs.

Report of Accomplishments

This report of accomplishments provides the current status of action items identified in the FY 2023 regional work program

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Modernize Region's Transportation Network	Provide planning and technical assistance to local governments and economic developers to increase safety, community appeal, and provide access to all users	Complete Streets policies adopted by 4 local governments	Ongoing	On track to begin effort in 2025
		Draft model design guidelines to increase infrastructure requirements in new developments	Ongoing	On track to begin effort in 2025
		Complete Land & Water Conservation fund applications for 5 local governments to create pedestrian facilities	Ongoing	RC Staff completed 5 LWCF applications in 2020 and 1 application in 2021. Application for the City of Cochran is in process.
		Facilitate zoning ordinance trainings for local governments to emphasize sidewalk development requirements of new subdivisions	Ongoing	A region-wide Zoning 101 training was held by the RC in 2021. Informational meetings regarding zoning were conducted for two local governments in 2021, and 3 local governments in 2023
Preserve environmentally sensitive areas	Identify and reduce the number of impaired streams in the HOGARC Region	Develop watershed management plans for two (2) impaired streams of the region	Canceled	No longer included in RC staff work scope
		Host a water quality monitoring workshop for area volunteers	Ongoing	RC staff will begin efforts to organize a workshop in 2025.
		Update 6 solid waste management plans	Ongoing	RC staff updated 9 solid waste plans from 2019 to 2023.
Increase downtown revitalization efforts	Utilize historic city centers for a rural renaissance and infill development	Draft or otherwise assist with 3 Rural Zone program applications for eligible local governments	Ongoing	Rural Zone designation application have been completed for the Cities of Cochran, Hazlehurst, Baxley and Vidalia.

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Increase Regional tourism cooperation/marketing	Develop tourism opportunities centered around the rural character of the region	Facilitate quarterly tourism meetings with local officials and chamber of commerce directors	Canceled	Lack of participation from stakeholders
		Conduct quarterly updates to the gohoga.org regional bicycle and pedestrian website	Canceled	No longer included in RC staff work scope
		Provide technical assistance (graphic design, website promotion, etc.) for regional tourism partnerships	Ongoing	No assistance requested. Staff capabilities remain ready to assist.
Increase connectivity and adequate access to alternative forms of transportation	Provide planning and technical assistance to local governments which are improving and developing the built environment in favor of alternative modes of travel	Update the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	Ongoing	Action is on track to update plan in 2024.
		Provide two training opportunities to local governments on Complete Streets topics each year	Ongoing	In process of scheduling training for the region
		Conduct a safety Walk Audit for one school system each year	Ongoing	A walk audit was conducted at the J.D. Dickerson Primary School in Vidalia, Georgia in November 2022.
		Survey and develop a regional GIS database of all sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian crossings	Ongoing	The RC is working with GDOT and ITOS in the Roadway Element Validation and Mapping Program; Phase 1 was completed previous to 2022, phase 2 was completed in 2022; and Phase 3 is ongoing and is on track for completion in 2023. Phase 4 started in 2024.
		Develop local level Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans	Ongoing	Staff completed Bike and Pedestrian Plan for Appling County and Evans County. Additional plans expected in 2025/2026

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Expand Public transit throughout the Region	Promote and provide planning/technical assistance to local governments operating or considering to operate a rural transit program	Develop a Transit Development Plan for one County per year	Ongoing	RC staff completed plans for Laurens County and Toombs County. In process of creating a 5304 plan for FY2024.
		Develop promotional material for existing 5311 (Rural Transit) Programs	Ongoing	No assistance requested. Staff capabilities remain ready to assist.
		Complete 5 Year Transit operator contracts for 5310 funding	Ongoing	Action recently completed in 2024. Additional contracts to be completed in July 2025.
Maintain/ upgrade/ expand public infrastructure	Provide technical assistance and planning to identify infrastructure needs of each local government	Facilitate regional discussions of a TSPLOST 2 referendum	Completed	
		Complete Community Development Block Grant applications for 6 local governments each year	Ongoing	RC staff have worked with 15 local governments in 2021 to apply for CDBG funding and 8 local governments to apply for CDBG funding in 2022. In 2023, 9 CDBG applications were submitted. 6 CDBG applications are expected to be submitted in 2024
		Facilitate public works trainings in the Region	Completed	
Ensure the population has the skills and training necessary to attract and retain businesses and industries	Ensure each member of the Region's workforce is provided an opportunity to achieve advanced training and skills to be a successful employee	Implement WIOA Program(s) and maintain one-stops in each county	Ongoing	Action is in progress; ongoing annually.
		Facilitate at minimum 12 job fairs each year	Ongoing	In the first quarter of 2022, 8 job fairs were held regionally; Since July 1, 2022, 37 job fairs/outreach events have been held or are scheduled to be held before June 30, 2023.
		Update the comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to advance regional economic development	Ongoing	Action completed in 2022. The forthcoming update is scheduled for 2027

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Broadband internet technology infrastructure/ access Regionwide	Provide planning, coordinating and technical assistance to member local governments, development authorities, electrical cooperatives, telephone cooperatives, and other broadband/ ISP providers to develop viable, local projects	Host a Broadband summit to explain need for adopting DCA's Broadband model ordinance	Completed	
		Assist local governments with meeting state requirements for Broadband Ready designation	Ongoing	Comprehensive Plans are updated to include broadband elements.
		Compile a regional list of Community Anchor Institutions	Ongoing	Action is on track to begin in 2025.
		Facilitate elected officials training to increase awareness of Broadband	Completed	
Establish a regional economic development organization(s)	Increase exposure to regional leadership programming and support of HOGA Region	Create an annual Regional Leadership Development Program	Ongoing	Action is on track to begin in 2025.
		Create a regional development organization comprised of the Region's economic development professionals or otherwise facilitate quarterly meetings of Region's development authorities	Completed	
Revitalize declining neighborhoods	Develop, implement, and sustain viable neighborhood revitalization projects to reduce blighted areas	Host Zoning 101 trainings in Region for local government staff and planning board members	Ongoing	RC Staff conducted informational zoning meetings (virtually) for 2 local governments in 2020 and one local government in 2021. A Zoning 101 training was conducted via Zoom in 2021 by RC staff for all regional local governments. A zoning 101 training was held in the region in February 2024.
		Present contract for zoning administration services to 6 local governments	Ongoing	Zoning administration service provided for the City of Twin City
		Develop 3 Urban Redevelopment Plan/ Downtown Master Plan	Ongoing	RC Staff developed urban redevelopment plan/ downtown master plan for the City of Cochran, Hazlehurst, Baxley and Vidalia.

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Safe and affordable housing for all income levels	Facilitate community housing discussions to increase housing options	Provide technical assistance to local governments applying for housing grants	Ongoing	Staff capabilities remain ready to assist.
		Draft model design standards for mobile home parks to include mandatory storm shelters	Ongoing	Action is on track to take place in 2025
		Draft model building standard for mandatory safe room provision in single family dwellings	Ongoing	Action is on track to take place in 2025
		Provide technical assistance to local governments adopting “Tiny House” ordinances	Ongoing	Staff capabilities remain ready to assist.
Increase building codes inspection programs in Region	Develop a regional network of building inspectors and code enforcement officers	Compile a list of the Region’s building inspectors/ departments	Ongoing	The action is on track to take place in 2026
		Facilitate a building inspections conference to identify service area gaps and develop a report of findings for review by RC council	Ongoing	The action is on track to take place in 2026
Provide resources to residents for aging in place	Promote senior centers as a focal point of the community and involve members of the public in center activities	Conduct a sustainable Tai Chi program in 90% (15) of the Region’s senior centers	Completed	Since 2021, Taichi class has been made virtually available in the region. Established a partnership with a gym in Baxley, the Evans County Recreation Department, and Legacy Housing Villa to offer traditional classes.
		Develop community gardens at three senior centers	Ongoing	Community gardens have been established at 2 senior center in Wheeler and Appling County.
		Advocate for gleaning to alleviate senior hunger	Completed	RC staff regularly coordinate efforts for the group and serve areas throughout the region.

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Work Programs (2024-2028)

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (Year 1-5)	Estimated Cost	Ongoing
Goal 1. Strengthen Local Economy						
Increase regional tourism co-operation/marketing	Develop tourism opportunities centered around the rural character of the region	Provide technical assistance (graphic design, website promotion, etc.) for regional tourism partnerships	GA Tourism		Staff Time	Year 1-5
Ensure the population has the skills and training necessary to attract and retain businesses and industries	Ensure each member of the Region's workforce is provided an opportunity to achieve advanced training and skills to be a successful employee	Implement WIOA Program(s) and maintain one-stops in each county	JTU, GTCS, WIOA Board		\$4 mil/year	Year 1-5
		Facilitate at minimum 12 job fairs each year	JTU		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Update the comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) to advance regional economic development	EDA	Year 4	\$5,000	
Goal 2. Preserve and Promote Natural and Cultural Resources						
Preserve environmentally sensitive areas	Identify and reduce the number of impaired streams in the HOGARC Region	Host a water quality monitoring workshop for area volunteers	GDNR-EPD, Altamaha Riverkeeper	Year 4	Staff Time	
	Ensure each county is aware of their capacity needs for solid waste and have a plan in place for disposal	Update solid waste management plans for local governments	Local Governments		\$20,000	Year 1-5
Increase downtown revitalization efforts	Utilize historic city centers for a rural renaissance and infill development	Draft or otherwise assist with Rural Zone program applications for eligible local governments	GDCA		Staff Time	Year 1-5
	Provide technical and planning assistance to local governments	Develop Urban Redevelopment Plan/Downtown Master Plan for local governments	Local governments		\$7,000	Year 1-5
		Create design guidelines to preserve downtown characters				\$5,000

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Short-Term (Year 1-5)</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
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Goal 3. Improve Community Facilities and Services

Modenize Region's Transportation Network	Provide planning and technical assistance to local governments and economic developers to increase safety, community appeal, and provide access to all users	Complete Streets policies adopted by local governments	GDOT, Georgia BIKES		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Draft model design guidelines to increase infrastructure requirements in new developments	GDOT	Year 5	Staff Time	
		Complete Land & Water Conservation fund applications for local governments to create pedestrian facilities	GA DNR		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Facilitate zoning ordinance trainings for local governments to emphasize sidewalk development requirements of new subdivisions	DCA, Carl Vinson Institute		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Ensure that each Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan assisted by the RC incorporates the presentation on the significance of ADA-compliant sidewalks			Staff Time	Year 1-5
Increase connectivity and adequate access to alternative forms of transportation	Provide planning and technical assistance to local governments which are improving and developing the built environment in favor of alternative modes of travel	Update the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	GDOT	Year 1/2	\$20,000	
		Provide two training opportunities to local governments on Complete Streets/Multi-model/ Safety topics each year	GDOT, Georgia BIKES		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Conduct a safety Walk Audit for one school system each year	GA Safe Routes to School, GDOT		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Survey and develop a regional GIS database of all sidewalks, trails, and pedestrian crossings	GDOT/ITOS	Year 1/2	15,000/year	
		Develop local level Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans	GDOT	Year 3/4	\$10,000	

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Short-Term (Year 1-5)</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Goal 3. Improve Community Facilities and Services (continued)						
Expand Public transit throughout the Region	Promote and provide planning/technical assistance to local governments operating or considering to operate a rural transit program	Develop a Transit Development Plan for one County per year	GDOT, Local governments		\$30,000	Year 1-5
		Develop promotional material for existing 5311 (Rural Transit) Programs	GDOT, Local governments		\$2,000	Year 1-5
	Improve access to critical services for clients of human service provider organizations	Complete 5 Year Transit operator contracts for 5310 funding	DHS		\$15,000	Year 1-5
Maintain/ upgrade/expand public infrastructure	Provide technical assistance and planning to identify infrastructure needs of each local government	Facilitate a TIA citizen review panel 3 times a year. Assist local governments with TIA related issues.	GDOT	Year 1/2	Staff Time	
		Complete Community Development Block Grant applications for 6 local governments each year	Local governments		Staff Time	Year 1-5
Broadband internet technology infrastructure/ access Regionwide	Provide planning, coordinating and technical assistance to member local governments, development authorities, electrical cooperatives, telephone cooperatives, and other broadband/ISP providers to develop viable, local projects	Assist local governments with meeting state requirements for Broadband Ready designation	GDCA, GTA, EMCs, Telephone companies		Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Compile a regional list of Community Anchor Institutions	GDCA	Year 4	Staff Time	
Provide resources to residents for aging in place	Promote senior centers as a focal point of the community and involve members of the public in center activities	Develop community gardens at three senior centers	HOGARC AAA, Local Governments, UGA Extension Service	Year 3 - 5	Staff Time	

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Short-Term (Year 1-5)</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	
Goal 4. Affordable Housing for All							
Create safe, affordable, and diverse housing options for all income levels	Facilitate community housing discussions and training opportunities to increase housing options	Provide technical assistance to local governments applying for housing grants			\$10,000	Year 1-5	
		Provide education and training opportunities on housing and community development programs, such as the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) and the UGA Archway Partnership	DCA, local governments	Year 1/2	Staff Time		
	Revitalize declining neighborhoods	Provide technical and planning assistance to local governments to encourage infill development	Local governments			Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Provide technical assistance to local governments for reducing vacancy rate, and tackling other blighted issues	Local governments			Staff Time	Year 1-5
	Provide technical assistance to local governments to help create safe, affordable housing	Draft ordinances that encourage the development of diverse housing options	DCA, Local governments			Staff Time	Year 1-5
		Draft model design standards for mobile home parks to include mandatory storm shelters	DCA, GEMA	Year 2/3	\$5,000		
		Draft model building standards for mandatory safe room provision in single family dwellings	DCA, GEMA	Year 4	\$5,000		
		Provide technical assistance to local governments adopting “Tiny House” ordinances	DCA, Local governments			Staff Time	Year 1-5

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Action</i>	<i>Partners</i>	<i>Short-Term (Year 1-5)</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
Goal 5. Strategic Land Use Planning						
Improved land use planning and management system to effectively accommodate anticipated growth	Create land use training opportunities	Host Zoning 101 trainings in Region for local government staff and planning board members	Carl Vinson Institute		Staff Time	Year 1-5
	Provide technical assistance to meet the needs of each local government	Provide zoning ordinance creation services	Local governments		\$10,000	Year 1-5
		Provide zoning administration services	Local governments		Staff Time	Year 1-5
	Increase building codes inspection programs in Region - Develop a regional network of building inspectors and code enforcement officers	Compile a list of the Region's building inspectors/ departments	Local governments	Year 3/4	Staff Time	
		Facilitate a building inspections conference to identify service area gaps and develop a report of findings for review by RC council	Local governments	Year 4/5	\$5,000	
	Goal 6. Enhance Regional Coordination					
Establish a regional economic development organization(s)	Increase exposure to regional leadership programming and support of HOGA Region	Create an annual Regional Leadership Development Program	DCA, Carl Vinson Institute	Year 3	Staff Time	

APPENDICES

- SWOT Analysis Summary
- QCO Analysis Summary
- Stakeholder Involvement Report
- Supporting Data

1 SWOT ANALYSIS

Stakeholders were engaged throughout the planning process which involved two public hearings, four steering committee meetings, three public listening sessions, and an online survey. Regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were developed based on stakeholders sharing their knowledge of the Region, as well as through surveys and interpretation of regional data. Priority needs and opportunities for each segment were chosen based on needs and the Regional Commission's ability to conduct activities which directly impact the issue.

Strengths:

- George Smith State Park
- Towns Bluff & Heritage Center
- The annual Vidalia Onion Festival
- Annual Peaches to the Beaches event
- Location Between Macon and Savannah (I-16)
- Low Cost of Living compared to other areas in the state
- Amount of land available for relatively low prices
- Rural Zone Designation for communities to grow economically and enhance revitalization
- Meta Plant Brian County (Proximity) which will provide job opportunities to our Region
- The Greater Vidalia Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
- Construction By-Pass (HWY 1)
- Regional Hospital and Medical Centers throughout the Region
- Quality of Life and communities with a small town feel throughout the Region.
- Natural Resources, including Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Ochoopee, and Canoochee rivers
- Commercial Property available in the Region for new developments
- Major HWY 280/451
- Reduction of Blight is beginning to take hold in the Region
- Vidalia and Heart of Georgia Regional Airports
- Regional TSPLOST funding available for all communities
- Education opportunities, including 10 post-secondary institutions

Weaknesses:

- Lack of affordable housing for the current workforce
- Lack of interconnecting transportation systems throughout the Region
- Lack of work force availability for economic development opportunities
- Lack of cellular phone reception in parts of the Region
- Aging Infrastructure – sewer, water, roads, and other critical structures
- County and city leadership- reactive not proactive
- Lack of investment in economic development
- Lack of Zoning in the unincorporated areas
- Landowners not willing to sell land for needed developments
- Regional Collaboration among Counties and all municipalities.
- Retaining young work force by means of higher salaries, available housing, and quality of life.
- Lack of skilled labor to fill the needs of potential new industry.
- Infrastructure funding for projects that do not gratify CDBG income related criteria.
- Homelessness is growing in parts of the Region. There is a need for more programs to fight homelessness.

Opportunities:

- Industry growth from ports and the eastern counties bordering our Region
- State and Federal programs for rural areas-SPLOST, TIA, DDRLF
- Technology based assistance such as Computer Assisted Instruction for learning
- Rural Zone Designation for communities to continue growing economically and enhance revitalization
- Counties striving to become Plan First Communities within our Region and setting the example and goals for others to achieve
- Installation of Broadband and the achievement of Broadband Ready communities across the Region
- New Federal funding for EV charging as the demand for consumers continues to grow
- Recreation and Tourism throughout the Region
- Grants for infrastructure improvements
- Downtown Development Improvements
- Develop Housing for correctional officers at local prisons to help retain the workforce

Threats:

- Depletion of Farmland as new development begins to grow.
- Lack of Broadband infrastructure causing a negative environment for new business and industry, quality of life, and education needs.
- Impact on water resources due to Industry growth
- Out of town investors purchasing property and land with no intention of benefiting the communities.

2 ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

Economic Prosperity

Economic development for the Region begins with the strengths of the Region. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is predominantly rural and has a strong agriculture and natural resource driven economy. Many businesses have developed in the Region to capitalize on the availability of raw materials and labor force. Unemployment has trended lower in coordination with the overall state and national economic recovery. Currently, there is significant industrial expansion taking place on the eastern side of the Region. Thousands of new job opportunities are expected to materialize over the next few years. These new industries will have a significant impact on the employment rate in the future. Members of the local workforce also have opportunities to become trained within the Region with WIOA funds and multiple post-secondary institutions. Small business development is encouraged through WIOA, economic development partnerships, grant services for capacity building, and tourism coordination.

Resource Management

Natural Resource preservation/conservation is a major concern for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region because of the Region's rural nature and the large volume of significant resources. Land conservation is encouraged, although conservation covenants may reduce the property tax base of a county. Inclusion of the Georgia Sentinel Landscape program's identified lands for protection into the conservation layer of the Regional land use map has identified areas to focus on for preservation, as well as action directly related to maintaining national defense training missions and keeping Regional economic engines viable. Each local government within the Region has adopted an environmental conservation ordinance to protect environmentally sensitive areas (protected river corridors, significant groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands). Further monitoring and enforcement of the ordinance has been identified.

Efficient Land Use

Infill development is encouraged by local governments and in several instances, local governments have modified zoning ordinances to allow loft apartments and variations of size to accommodate development. Public infrastructure development has greatly focused on proactively replacing existing systems and limiting sprawl by restricting development locations outside of existing service areas. There is a growing concern to control the rapid development expected to take place on the eastern side of the Region. The expansion of industry in Byran County will increase the population in that area. The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region's need for new housing developments and infrastructure will rapidly manifest as the workforce population begins to migrate west into the Region. This new growth is starting to initiate some of the counties demand for zoning in the unincorporated areas of the Region. All Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region counties support maintaining open space in agricultural, forestry, and conservation uses.

Local Preparedness

Each local government has adopted an updated comprehensive plan in which their vision and future projects are discussed and approved prior to carrying out the action. Growth is guided within the municipalities with zoning approvals and modifications. The Region lacks consistency of design standards within zoning ordinances and may be confusing for developers investing in multiple communities. This lack of regulation inherently allows room for error and a heavy reliance on licensed contractors for proper construction. While each county has an updated pre-disaster mitigation plan in place, the ability to carry out action items has been limited to grant funding for select projects.

Sense of Place

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 architectural 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 National Register-listed historic districts at present (7), 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 Ohoopce).

Regional Cooperation

Throughout 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. A majority of local governments also have mutual aid agreements for public safety services. They also participate as active members of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha RC, which has a Regional Council with all 17 Region counties and their cities represented at regular monthly meetings: joint development authorities, and water planning councils. The Regional Commission has been identified as the source for Region local governments to advance Regional projects and resources going forward.

Housing Options

While a variety of housing options exist throughout the Region, the lack of affordable housing has emerged as a prominent issue. The primary type of housing in the Region remains single-family. In addition, there is 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 and have participated in the GICH program to develop solutions for this need.

Transportation Options

All counties are served by DHR'S Coordinated Transit Program, while less than half of the Region's counties support a 5311 rural transit program. Many counties have expressed a need for transit options and have addressed the issue in their local comprehensive plans. Since 2023, the RC has been working with GDOT to develop a Regional Transit Development Plan. If adopted and implemented, this plan will give residents an option to travel across multiple counties in the Region. Most of the municipalities have a good network of sidewalks in their downtown areas and some in historic neighborhoods. Older sidewalks are often inaccessible to disabled persons and should be further investigated for repair. Airports are generally up to standard for the purposes served as no airport within the Region has commercial service available. Amtrak passenger rail service is available in Jesup, which is an intermediate stop for the Silver Service route between Miami and New York City. Although there are few local bike plans, several communities do sponsor annual bike rides, in recognition of a growing interest in venture cycling activities. TSPLOST 2 has just been officially passed for the Region in 2024. The RC will continue to assist local governments with TIA related issues.

Educational Opportunities

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha WIOA 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. There are ample post-secondary education opportunities available, as the Region is home to three technical colleges (Coastal Pines, Oconee Fall Line, and Southeastern) and two others having a satellite facility (Ogeechee, Wiregrass). East Georgia State College, located in Swainsboro, offers two-year degrees. Georgia Military College has recently located campuses in Dublin and Eastman and offers bachelor's degree programs. Middle Georgia State University, which has recently transitioned to university status upon the merger of Middle Georgia College with Macon State College, is located in Cochran, Dublin, and Eastman. MGSU'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 a private, Christian four-year institution of higher learning. While not located within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, other nearby options include South Georgia College (Douglas and Waycross), and Georgia Southern University (Statesboro).

Community Health

Healthcare for the Region is a major concern due to multiple community hospitals closing in recent years. Several other smaller hospitals are operating in a deficit from year to year and/or otherwise consuming SPLOST and general funds from the counties where they are located. Meadows Regional Medical Center in Vidalia is located in a relatively new building and has expanded services in recent years to include a cancer treatment center. Hospitals in Dublin and Jesup are vital Regional institutions with health and wellness impacts within the greater community. Dublin is also home to the Carl Vinson Veterans Administration Medical Center which serves many counties beyond the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. The Region would be well served with increased telemedicine access; however, broadband capabilities are lacking and do not allow for the required technology connections Regionwide. HOGARC Area Agency on Aging (AAA) offers wellness programs such as Tai Chi for Health, senior farmers markets, and others to help seniors live healthily and independently. The Area Agency on Aging is able to provide workshops to all local community organizations, businesses, hospitals, senior centers, churches and the general public, which could be utilized to a greater extent through the Region's 17 counties.

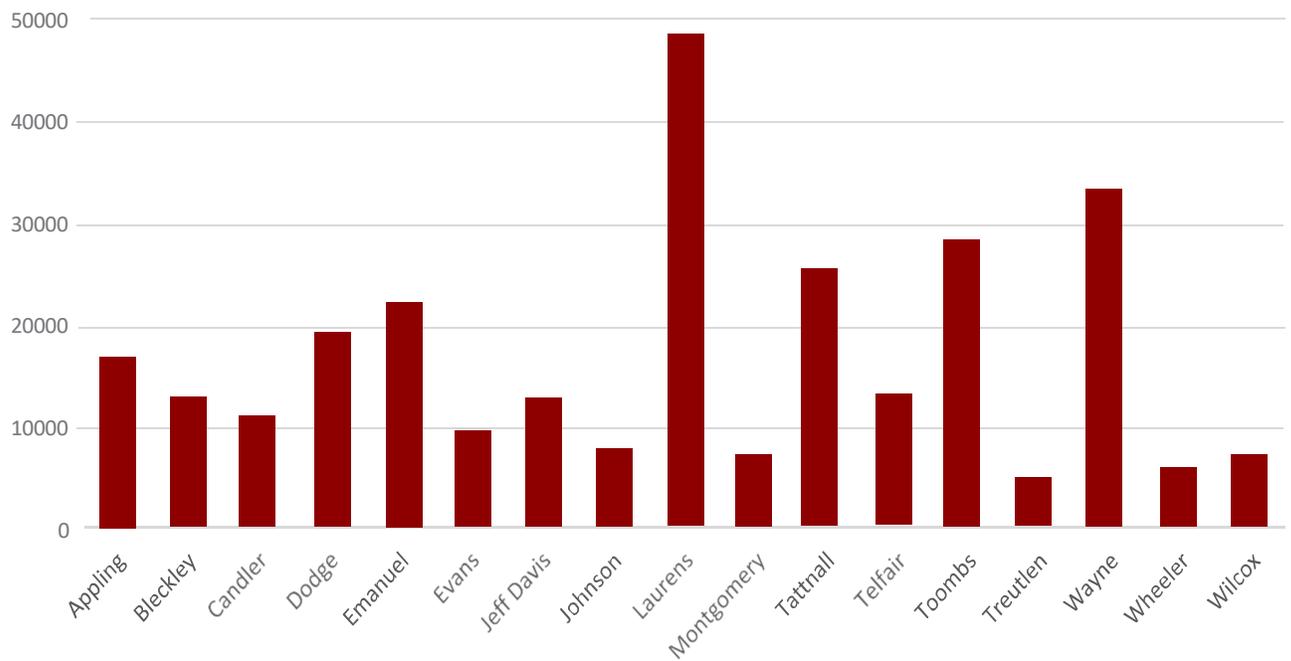
3 DATA & MAPPING

One. Population

1. TOTAL POPULATION

Since 2010, the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has continued to decline at a steady, consistent pace. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, total population within the 17-county region decreased by 4,211 between 2010 and 2020, a 1.4 percent decrease. With a current estimated total population of 292,135, the population of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region is fairly evenly distributed. This total population, derived from the sum of each region county's 2022 GOPB total, reflecting a projected population loss of 4,211 or -1.4 percent. The State of Georgia for the same period (2010-2020) increased in population by 10.6 percent. According to HOGARC staff projections and the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (Figures 1.2, 1.3), the region will experience a decreased growth rate of 2.6 percent during the period of 2020-2030, and a growth rate of 0.8 percent between 2030 and 2040. Expected growth for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region will bring near 6,200 additional residents to the region by 2050.

Figure 1.1 2022 Census Estimate of Total Population for Each HOGARC County



Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2018-2022 Estimate

Figure 1.2 Historical and Projected Regional, State, and National Population

	2000	2010	2020	2022	2030	2040	2050
Region	272,894	303,199	298,988	292,135	291,225	293,651	298,361
State	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,713,771	10,913,150	11,764,473	12,786,367	13,545,662
U.S.	281,421,906	308,745,538	331,449,281	333,288,000	345,074,000	355,309,000	360,639,000

Source: U.S. Census, ACS 2018-2022 Estimate, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

Figure 1.3 Historical and Projected Regional, State, and National Population Growth Rate

	2000-2010	2010-2020	2020-2030	2030-2040	2000-2050
Region	11.10%	-1.40%	-2.60%	0.80%	9.30%
State	18.30%	10.50%	9.80%	8.60%	49.30%
Nation	9.70%	7.09%	4.11%	2.70%	24.70%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS Estimate, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

Figure 1.4 Projection of Regional Population by County 2022 - 2050

County	2022	2030	2040	2050	Difference (2022-2050)	% Increase (2022-2050)
Appling	18,358	18,744	19,213	20,200	1,842	10.03%
Bleckley	12,514	11,748	10,936	10,515	-1,999	15.97%
Candler	11,060	11,374	12,063	12,901	1,841	16.60%
Dodge	19,624	18,897	18,551	18,525	-1,099	5.60%
Emanuel	22,776	23,373	24,329	25,459	2,683	11.80%
Evans	10,686	10,425	10,306	10,084	-602	5.60%
Jeff Davis	14,894	14,947	15,044	15,163	269	1.80%
Johnson	9,103	8,704	8,432	8,502	-601	6.60%
Laurens	49,505	49,781	50,582	51,607	2,102	4.25%
Montgomery	8,600	8,396	8,267	8,362	-238	2.80%
Tattnall	23,050	22,754	22,670	22,618	-432	1.90%
Telfair	12,306	11,873	11,916	12,285	-21	0.17%
Toombs	26,858	26,931	27,302	27,602	744	2.80%
Treutlen	6,272	6,198	6,289	6,358	86	1.40%
Wayne	30,390	31,341	32,272	32,912	2,522	8.30%
Wheeler	7,472	7,446	7,402	7,294	-178	2.40%
Wilcox	8,667	8,293	8,077	7,974	-683	8%
HOGA Region	292,135	291,225	293,651	298,361	6,226	2.10%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS Estimate, Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget

2. 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 under 65 has decreased since 2010. The largest change has occurred among the 65 and older age group, the “Baby Boom” generation. Project distributions for the Region show a much greater percentage of people over 65 while age groups under 54 continue to decrease in percentage. 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.

Figure 1.5 Historical and Projected Age Distribution and Percent of Total Population

Age	2000	2010	2022	2030	2040	2050
0-4	18,564	20,682	17,074	18,563	19,529	19,371
	6.80%	6.80%	5.80%	6.40%	6.70%	6.50%
5-9	19,222	20,343	17,861	17,810	19,314	19,486
	7.00%	6.70%	6.10%	6.10%	6.60%	6.50%
10-14	20,491	20,039	19,170	17,710	18,956	19,590
	7.50%	6.60%	6.50%	6.08%	6.50%	6.60%
15-19	21,583	21,398	20,865	20,292	19,294	20,610
	7.90%	7.10%	7.10%	7.00%	6.60%	6.90%
20-24	18,371	19,603	18,715	22,408	20,191	21,323
	6.70%	6.50%	6.40%	7.70%	6.90%	7.20%
25-34	37,465	39,764	38,294	38,966	44,305	41,330
	13.70%	13.10%	13.10%	13.40%	15.08%	13.90%
35-44	41,342	40,564	37,487	38,598	38,837	43,592
	15.10%	13.40%	12.80%	13.25%	13.23%	14.60%
45-54	35,837	43,412	36,236	35,797	36,998	37,047
	13.10%	14.30%	12.40%	12.29%	12.60%	12.40%
55-64	25,149	36,412	35,697	32,190	30,999	31,913
	9.20%	12.00%	12.20%	11.05	10.60%	10.70%
65+	34,870	40,982	50,106	34,712	45,228	44,099
	12.80%	13.50%	17.10%	12%	15.40%	14.80%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS Estimate, Governor's Office of Planning and Budget

3. RACE AND ETHNICITY

There remains 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 beginning to change in some areas within the Region.

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 22,399, an increase of 107 percent. There is seven (7) times the number of Hispanic residents in the Region in 2023 than was the case in 1990. Hispanics in Georgia increased by 166 percent since 2000. In seven (7) Region counties (Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Telfair, Appling, 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.

Figure 1.6 Regional Racial and Ethnic Composition 2010-2022

	White alone	Black alone	Asian or Pacific Islander alone	American Indian or Alaska Native	Other	Two or More
2000	154,738	68,179	1,043	377	3,330	1,406
2010	165,752	74,841	1,739	582	4,587	3,026
2022	159,146	72,527	2,493	1,285	2,176	4,361
Change 2010 - 2022	-3.99%	-3.09%	43.36%	120.79%	-52.56%	44.12%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS 2022 5-Year Estimate

Figure 1.7 HOGA Region and Georgia Hispanic Population 1990 - 2022

	1990	2000	2010	2018	2022
<i>Appling</i>	138	792	1,704	1,803	1,898
<i>Bleckley</i>	43	107	301	360	425
<i>Candler</i>	138	882	1,227	1,252	1,338
<i>Dodge</i>	148	248	732	724	816
<i>Emanuel</i>	82	745	921	1,003	1,095
<i>Evans</i>	109	625	1,441	1,256	1,298
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	144	651	1,577	1,754	1,946
<i>Johnson</i>	35	78	186	229	271
<i>Laurens</i>	180	529	1,143	1,241	1,437
<i>Montgomery</i>	142	271	480	589	645
<i>Tattnall</i>	547	1,883	2,502	2,779	3,039
<i>Telfair</i>	41	215	2,026	1,893	2,194
<i>Toombs</i>	824	2,310	3,055	3,133	3,254
<i>Treutlen</i>	16	79	103	122	60
<i>Wayne</i>	177	1,013	1,719	1,853	1,966
<i>Wheeler</i>	101	219	356	101	428
<i>Wilcox</i>	30	139	338	399	416
REGION	2,895	10,786	19,811	20,491	22,399
GEORGIA	108,922	435,227	853,689	968,463	1,158,068

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS 2018 5-Year Estimate, ACS 2022 5-Year Estimate

Figure 1.8 Hispanic Population as a Percentage of Total Population 1990 - 2022

	1990	2000	2010	2018	2022
<i>Appling</i>	0.90%	4.50%	9.30%	9.8%	10.3%
<i>Bleckley</i>	0.40%	0.90%	2.30%	2.8%	3.4%
<i>Candler</i>	1.80%	9.20%	11.20%	11.6%	12.2%
<i>Dodge</i>	0.80%	1.30%	3.40%	3.5%	4.1%
<i>Emanuel</i>	0.40%	3.40%	4.10%	4.5%	4.8%
<i>Evans</i>	1.20%	6.00%	13.10%	11.7%	12.1%
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	1.20%	5.10%	10.50%	11.7%	13.2%
<i>Johnson</i>	0.40%	0.90%	1.90%	2.4%	2.9%
<i>Laurens</i>	0.50%	1.20%	2.40%	2.6%	2.9%
<i>Montgomery</i>	2.00%	3.30%	5.30%	6.5%	7.4%
<i>Tattnall</i>	3.10%	8.40%	9.80%	11.0%	12.5%
<i>Telfair</i>	0.40%	1.80%	12.30%	11.7%	17.4%
<i>Toombs</i>	3.40%	8.90%	11.20%	11.6%	12.1%
<i>Treutlen</i>	0.30%	1.20%	1.50%	1.8%	0.9%
<i>Wayne</i>	0.80%	3.80%	5.70%	6.2%	6.5%
<i>Wheeler</i>	2.10%	3.50%	4.80%	1.3%	5.7%
<i>Wilcox</i>	0.40%	1.60%	3.70%	4.5%	4.7%
REGION	1.20%	4.00%	6.50%	6.85%	7.65%
GEORGIA	1.70%	5.30%	8.80%	9.4%	10.1%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS 2018 5-Year Estimate, ACS 2022 5-Year Estimate

4. INCOME

There remains 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 beginning to change in some areas within the Region.

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 22,399, an increase of 107 percent. There is seven (7) times the number of Hispanic residents in the Region in 2023 than was the case in 1990. Hispanics in Georgia increased by 166 percent since 2000. In seven (7) Region counties (Candler, Evans, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Telfair, Appling, 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.

Figure 1.9 Median Household Income 1980 - 2022

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2022
<i>Appling</i>	\$10,675	\$22,271	\$30,266	\$36,155	\$43,268
<i>Bleckley</i>	\$13,655	\$22,690	\$33,448	\$35,661	\$56,021
<i>Candler</i>	\$9,892	\$19,375	\$25,022	\$35,828	\$45,519
<i>Dodge</i>	\$10,483	\$18,244	\$27,607	\$33,580	\$46,091
<i>Emanuel</i>	\$10,600	\$17,891	\$24,383	\$30,205	\$46,865
<i>Evans</i>	\$10,863	\$19,972	\$25,447	\$40,796	\$55,222
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	\$13,137	\$21,470	\$27,310	\$32,928	\$41,780
<i>Johnson</i>	\$10,574	\$18,064	\$23,846	\$27,607	\$47,796
<i>Laurens</i>	\$12,378	\$21,788	\$32,010	\$38,280	\$47,776
<i>Montgomery</i>	\$10,156	\$20,054	\$30,240	\$35,182	\$49,138
<i>Tattnall</i>	\$9,482	\$20,293	\$28,664	\$38,522	\$51,868
<i>Telfair</i>	\$10,003	\$16,573	\$26,097	\$23,876	\$41,801
<i>Toombs</i>	\$10,812	\$19,473	\$26,811	\$31,635	\$47,310
<i>Treutlen</i>	\$10,274	\$17,391	\$24,644	\$36,467	\$38,641
<i>Wayne</i>	\$12,120	\$23,311	\$32,766	\$37,340	\$49,847
<i>Wheeler</i>	\$8,511	\$16,585	\$24,053	\$35,422	\$36,354
<i>Wilcox</i>	\$10,680	\$16,333	\$27,483	\$30,784	\$46,759
REGION	\$10,840	\$19,516	\$27,652	\$32,116	\$45,591
GEORGIA	\$16,533	\$29,021	\$42,433	\$49,347	\$71,355
U.S.	\$19,661	\$35,353	\$41,994	\$51,914	\$75,149

Source: U.S. Decennial Census, ACS 2018 5-Year Estimate, ACS 2022 5-Year Estimate

Figure 1.10 Percent of Population Below the Poverty Level 2000 - 2022

	2000			2010			2022		
	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65	Total	Below Age 18	Above Age 65
<i>Appling</i>	18.60%	23.90%	24.40%	23.20%	39.50%	13.50%	20.30%	29.90%	17.20%
<i>Bleckley</i>	15.90%	24.10%	17.80%	20.20%	28.10%	16.20%	16.30%	27.90%	16.80%
<i>Candler</i>	26.10%	36.90%	22.00%	19.00%	20.20%	14.80%	18.50%	28.70%	18.00%
<i>Dodge</i>	17.40%	19.40%	21.30%	21.90%	28.30%	17.40%	24.40%	30.00%	18.00%
<i>Emanuel</i>	27.40%	36.70%	27.50%	24.50%	37.10%	14.70%	20.80%	29.40%	16.10%
<i>Evans</i>	27.00%	36.20%	23.60%	22.00%	31.80%	12.50%	21.60%	29.60%	16.00%
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	19.40%	21.70%	22.10%	23.70%	33.50%	18.70%	20.20%	29.40%	15.70%
<i>Johnson</i>	22.60%	29.60%	30.90%	25.50%	35.10%	26.20%	27.30%	29.60%	18.80%
<i>Laurens</i>	18.40%	26.30%	18.90%	21.40%	30.40%	17.00%	21.40%	30.00%	17.70%
<i>Montgomery</i>	19.90%	24.70%	23.90%	21.60%	25.70%	23.80%	20.20%	29.90%	17.10%
<i>Tattnall</i>	23.90%	32.90%	20.20%	25.10%	32.80%	14.00%	23.50%	29.80%	14.30%
<i>Telfair</i>	21.20%	26.40%	23.70%	32.90%	43.00%	21.60%	30.60%	30.00%	18.10%
<i>Toombs</i>	23.90%	33.80%	18.30%	24.70%	33.20%	16.00%	21.10%	29.70%	16.40%
<i>Treutlen</i>	26.30%	31.80%	33.00%	23.30%	32.20%	11.40%	21.70%	29.80%	18.40%
<i>Wayne</i>	22.70%	22.70%	14.40%	18.60%	24.60%	14.30%	17.80%	29.20%	15.80%
<i>Wheeler</i>	30.20%	30.20%	26.70%	27.70%	38.10%	28.80%	31.10%	29.20%	14.60%
<i>Wilcox</i>	29.80%	29.80%	21.30%	27.40%	42.20%	18.40%	26.40%	29.30%	18.10%
REGION	19.70%	27.30%	19.90%	23.30%	32.00%	16.80%	22.50%	29.50%	16.80%
GEORGIA	13.00%	16.70%	13.50%	16.50%	22.60%	11.50%	11.50%	20.20%	10.00%
U.S.	12.40%	16.10%	9.90%	14.30%	20.00%	9.40%	11.50%	15.00%	10.20%

Two. Economic Development

1. ECONOMIC BASE

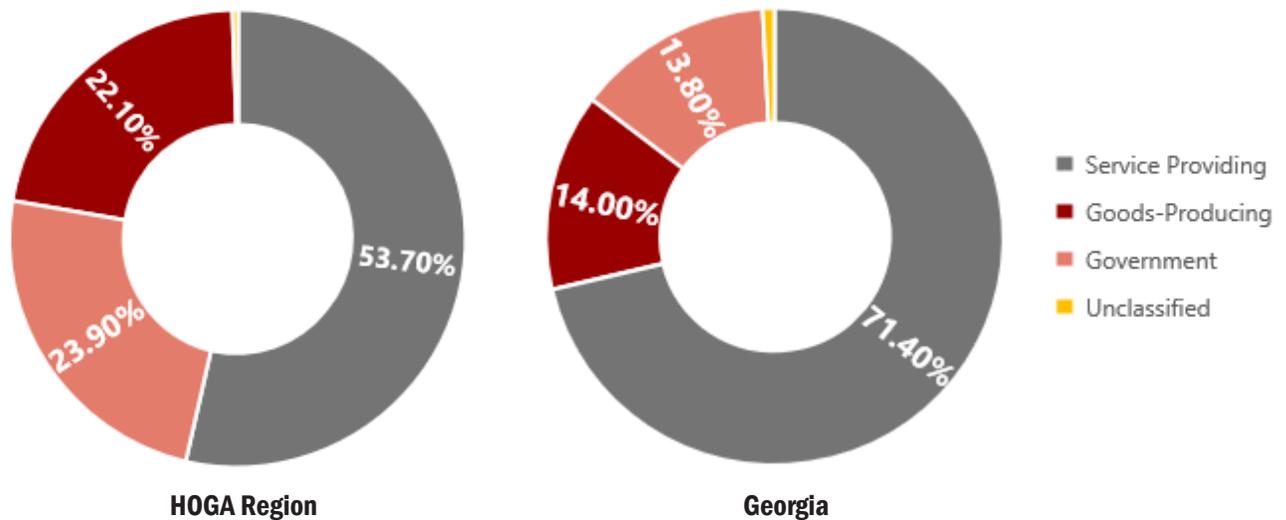
The industry mix for the region remains highly dependent on service providing jobs. As the state and national economies have heavily become service-oriented, those jobs are also a leading source of employment in the Region compared to total employment. And the percentage of the service providing jobs has increased by 3.7% from 2017 to 2022, while the government sector jobs has decreased by about 4% in the same period.

Figure 2.1 HOGARC Industry Mix by Average Monthly Employment

	2017	2022	% Change
Service Providing	45,721	47,413	3.70%
Goods-Producing	15,875	16,010	0.85%
Agriculture	2,970	2,941	-0.98%
Government	21,623	20,795	-3.83%
Unclassified	97	255	162.89%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, 2017, 2022 Industry Mix Annual Report

Figure 2.2 2022 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region and Georgia Industry Mix



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Agriculture-related jobs decreased by a percentage of the total employment since 2017. However, the economic impact of agriculture remains high, with many service jobs being centered on agriculture production. The region's total 2022 Farm Gate value was \$ 2,262,597,433 with many counties ranking on top 10 lists of producers for various commodities. As farming practices become increasingly automated and farms consolidate acreage into larger operations, anticipated trends for this sector are for actual employment numbers to remain at current levels or decline slightly.

Figure 2.3 2022 Farm Gate Value Report

	County	2022 Total Farm Gate Value
1	Tattnall	\$519,807,987
2	Appling	\$367,615,838
3	Wilcox	\$236,642,369
4	Toombs	\$174,312,514
5	Jeff Davis	\$122,705,250
6	Wayne	\$103,345,316
7	Evans	\$102,738,195
8	Dodge	\$102,312,439
9	Telfair	\$100,069,979
10	Emanuel	\$94,831,914
11	Laurens	\$88,748,439
12	Wheeler	\$52,652,159
13	Bleckley	\$51,318,174
14	Candler	\$45,904,840
15	Montgomery	\$44,587,183
16	Johnson	\$36,773,263
17	Treutlen	\$18,231,574
	Total Value	\$2,262,597,433

Source: 2022 Georgia Farm Gate Value Report

The manufacturing sector remains strong in the region with the addition of multiple employers since 2019. Though the closure of the Husqvarna plant in McRae-Helena left up to the loss of 1,000 goods producing jobs in 2019, the continued 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.

2. LABOR FORCE

In 2022, the labor force in the Region totaled 117,895. 113,630 were employed and 4,265 were unemployed, for an unemployment rate of 3.6%. While the total number of labor force has decreased by 1.66% since 2019, the unemployment rate decreased from 6% reported in 2019. Unemployment rates have also decreased for the state and nation, but at a smaller rate.

Figure 2.4 Unemployment Rate

Statistical Area	2019	2023	Change
HOGARC	6.00%	3.20%	-46.67%
Georgia	4.50%	3.20%	-28.89%
United States	4.70%	3.70%	-21.28%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

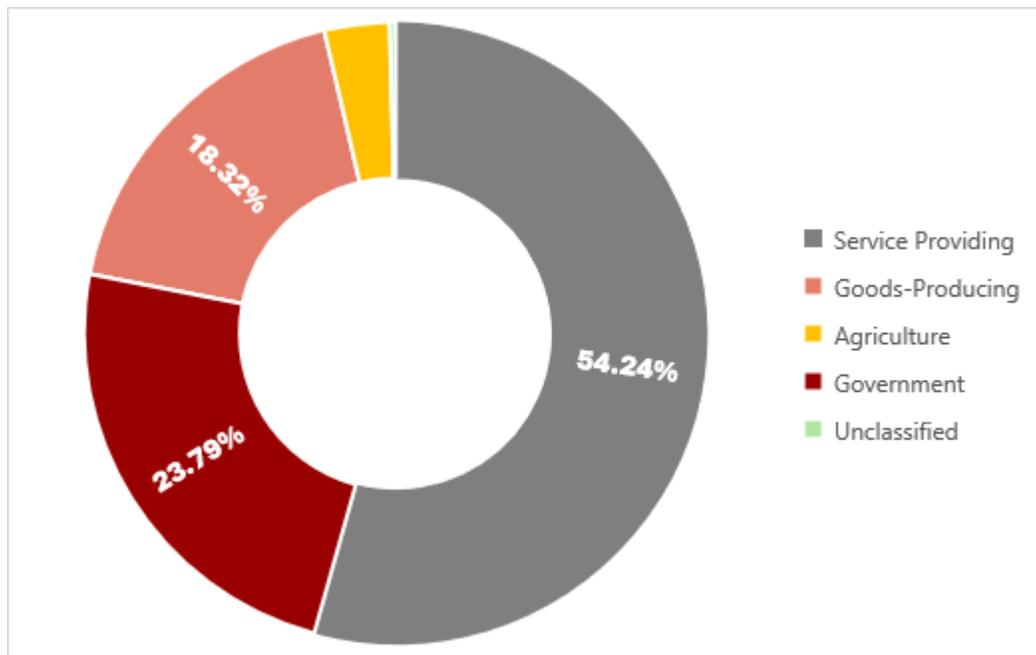
The Region's economy is primarily driven by service providing jobs, which make up more than half of all current jobs locally. Another one-quarter are goods producing jobs, such as manufacturing and construction. The remaining jobs include agriculture and government sectors. The fastest growing occupations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

Figure 2.5 Employment by Occupation (Workers 16 Years and Over)

Occupation	HOGARC	Georgia	United States
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	29.20%	39.40%	40.30%
Service occupations	17.90%	15.50%	16.80%
Sales and office occupations	18.50%	21.40%	20.80%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	14.70%	8.60%	8.70%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	19.60%	14.50%	13.00%
Military specific occupations	0.00%	0.60%	0.40%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2.6 2022 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Industry Mix (Agriculture Extracted from the Sector of Goods-Producing)



Source: Georgia Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The labor force of the Region generally records a 5-35 minute commute for work. Travel times to work for the 30 to 34 minute range are recorded at a higher percentage in the counties without a major city center or major regional employer present within the county. About 38% of workers commute outside of the county of their residence. Without adequate public transportation in the Region, employees rely on automobiles for travel, which negatively impacts affordability.

Figure 2.7 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia and US Commute Time

Commute Time	HOGARC	Georgia	United States
Less than 10 minutes	16.00%	9.80%	12.40%
10 to 14 minutes	17.60%	12.30%	13.20%
15 to 19 minutes	13.50%	15.00%	15.20%
20 to 24 minutes	12.50%	14.20%	14.30%
25 to 29 minutes	6.00%	6.50%	6.70%
30 to 34 minutes	10.40%	14.30%	13.70%
35 to 44 minutes	4.30%	7.60%	7.10%
45 to 59 minutes	9.60%	9.90%	8.20%
60 or more minutes	10.30%	10.50%	9.10%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	26.80	28.60	26.80

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2.8 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, Georgia and US Commute Mode

Commute Mode	HOGARC	Georgia	United States
Drove alone	83.60%	70.02%	67.82%
Carpool	11.00%	8.26%	7.79%
Worked at home	3.00%	18.18%	17.86%
Public transportation	0.10%	0.71%	2.46%
Taxi, motorcycle, or other	1.40%	1.49%	1.47%
Walked	0.70%	1.19%	2.20%
Bicycle	0.10%	0.15%	0.40%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2.9 Commuter Inflow, Outflow

Place of Work	HOGARC	Georgia	United States
Worked in state of residence	98.30%	97.40%	96.50%
Worked in county of residence	60.40%	60.10%	73.60%
Worked outside county of residence	37.90%	37.30%	23.00%
Worked outside state of residence	1.70%	2.60%	3.50%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

3. ECONOMIC RESOURCES

Development Organizations

There are numerous multi-county and multi-jurisdictional organizations and development authorities that serve the Region well. Among these are the Greater Savannah Regional Alliance; the I-16 Corridor Alliance; the Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau; the Southeast Georgia Alliance; the Ocmulgee Regional Joint Development Authority; the Sweetwater Creek Industrial Park (Appling, Bacon, and Jeff Davis Counties), the Emanuel-Johnson County Development Authority; the Laurens-Treutlen Joint Development Authority; the Toombs-Montgomery Chamber of Commerce; and the Golden Isles Parkway Association.

Colleges and Universities

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 University (MGSU), Brewton-Parker College, Coastal Pines Technical College, Southeastern Technical College, Oconee Fall Line Technical College, Wiregrass Technical College, and Georgia Military College (offers courses in Eastman and Dublin). MGSU's Aviation Campus in Eastman is the only public one of its kind in the state.

State and Federal Programming

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 (GDEcD) and Camera Ready (Georgia Office of Film, Music, and Digital Entertainment).

Tax Credits

The statewide job tax credit program for the State of Georgia applies to any business or headquarters of any such business engaged in manufacturing, warehousing and distribution, processing, telecommunications, tourism, or research and development industries, but does not include retail businesses. If other requirements are met, job tax credits are available to businesses of any nature, including retail businesses, in counties recognized and designated as the 40 least developed counties.

Counties and certain census tracts in the state are ranked and placed in four economic tiers using the following factors:

1. highest unemployment rate;
2. lowest per capita income; and
3. highest percentage of residents whose incomes are below the poverty level.

Tier 1 counties offer businesses a \$3,500 credit per job created with a minimum of two new jobs, Tier 2 counties offer businesses a \$2,500 credit per job created with a minimum of ten new jobs,

Tier 3 counties offer a \$1,250 job tax credit with a minimum of 15 new jobs, Tier 4 counties offer a \$750 job tax credit with a minimum of 25 job created. If a county is a member of a joint development authority, an additional \$500 job tax credit may be applied in addition to the amounts offered per tier.

2024 Georgia Department of Community Affairs Job Tax Credit Tiers

Tier 1 Counties: Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Jeff Davis, Johnson,

Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox

Tier 2 Counties: Evans

Tiers 3 & 4: No counties included in the HOGA region were identified as a tier 3 or tier 4 county

Federal Opportunity Zones

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have designated Opportunity Zones in 18 States, including 260 census tracts in the State of Georgia. Economic investment in these areas, which are some of the most distressed communities in the country, are now be eligible for preferential tax treatment. These new Federal Opportunity Zones are intended to facilitate investment in areas where poverty rates are greater than 20 percent. Designations are in place for 10 years. 18 census tracts in the HOGA region are designated as Federal Opportunity Zones.

4. ECONOMIC TRENDS

Major Employers

The top ten largest employers (alphabetically) for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region in 2023 were:

- Claxton Poultry Co
- Coastal Plains Education Center
- Crider, Inc.
- Day & Zimmerman Nps, Inc.
- Fairview Park Hospital
- Georgia Department of Corrections
- Rayonier Performance Fibers, LLC
- Southern Nuclear Operating Co
- Trane U.S., Inc.
- Walmart

Developments of Regional Impact

Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) are large-scale developments that are likely to have regional effects beyond the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The HOGARC has reviewed two DRIs since 2019. One DRI review was completed in 2022 for the Dublin Logistics Center which is a 116 acre industrial development site. The other review was completed in 2023 for the RaceTrak fuel Station in the City of Metter.

Summary of Trends

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region relies heavily on small and medium sized businesses. With a total employment (jobs covered by unemployment insurance) of 89,469 in the third quarter of 2023, establishments with total employees ranging between 20 and 249 accounted for 53.2 percent of employment totals. Large businesses of 500 or more employees accounted for 10.6 percent of employment totals. The unemployment rate for the region reached a high of over 12 percent in 2010 and has continued to decline since 2011 and dropped to region lows at 3.6 percent in 2022, slightly higher than Georgia's 3 percent. The establishment of a new industrial park in Toombs County, coupled with the expansion initiatives in industrial parks in Evans County, Laurens County, and neighboring areas, is poised to draw additional industries to the region. These developments are also anticipated to contribute to maintaining a low unemployment rate. The economy of the region is dominated by service providing industries (54.2%), and near equal reliance on government organizations (23.79%) and goods producing (22.1%) industries. Average weekly wages are highest for the goods-producing industries with a wage of \$1,041.

Three. Housing

1. HOUSING TYPES & MIX

Between 2017 and 2022, the Region experienced a modest decrease of approximately 4% in its total housing inventory. This reduction occurred across both manufactured housing units and stick-built single-family homes. Notably, the steepest decline was observed in the multi-family unit sector. Manufactured housing units saw the most significant decrease, accounting for a loss of 2,820 units within the region. Presently, manufactured homes constitute 29.43% of the total housing units, a slight decrease from 30.03% in 2018. Despite these changes, detached single-family housing remains the predominant housing type, comprising 60.52% of the total housing stock.

Figure 3.1 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Housing Stock Change

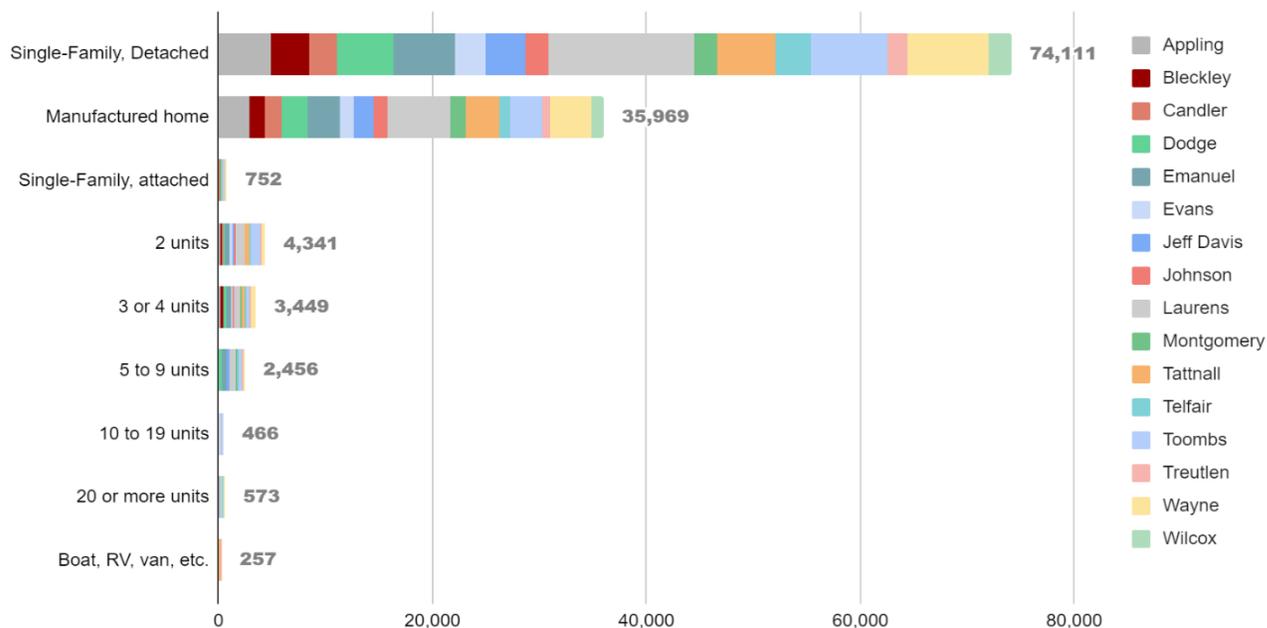
	2017 Region	2022 Region	Region %Change	GA %Change
Single-Family, Detached	79,355	75,542	-4.80%	5.48%
Manufactured home	39,530	36,728	-7.09%	-6.26%
Single-Family, attached	583	759	30.18%	16.40%
2 units	4,035	4,416	9.44%	0.53%
3 or 4 units	2,721	3,501	28.68%	1.81%
5 to 9 units	2,440	2,534	3.84%	-7.58%
10 to 19 units	598	498	-16.74%	0.84%
20 or more units	839	572	-31.76%	27.11%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	160	258	61.40%	5.32%
Total Housing Units	130,243	124,813	-4.17%	5.32%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Despite the decrease of manufactured homes, 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. 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. Also, manufactured homes present significant challenges to the Region's local governments in terms of tax revenue and maintenance/upkeep. This reduces 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.

The Region's housing stock is likely to remain not very diverse. In 2022, only 5.69% of housing stock in the region is made up of multi-family housing units. Three counties (Dodge, Emanuel, Emanuel, and Toombs County) have slightly higher stock in multi-family housing units which only make about 7% of the county's total housing stock. Emanuel County is home to the East Georgia State College, while Toombs and Laurens are home to major growth centers.

Figure 3.2 2022 Regional Housing Stock by County and Housing Type



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.3 2022 Regional Housing Stock by Type

Housing Type	Housing Units	Percentage
Single-Family, Detached	75,542	60.52%
Manufactured home	36,728	29.43%
Single-Family, attached	759	0.61%
2 units	4,416	3.54%
3 or 4 units	3,501	2.81%
5 to 9 units	2,534	2.03%
10 to 19 units	498	0.40%
20 or more units	572	0.46%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	258	0.21%
Total housing units	124,813	100.00%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.4 Regional Housing Stock by County

	Single-Family, Detached	Mobile home	Single-Family, attached	2 Units	Multi-Family	Boat, RV, van, etc.	Total housing units
<i>Appling</i>	4,969	2,949	43	196	349	9	8,524
<i>Bleckley</i>	3,452	1,330	10	141	287	0	5,215
<i>Candler</i>	2,663	1,587	107	153	130	0	4,640
<i>Dodge</i>	5,222	2,490	95	112	681	9	8,617
<i>Emanuel</i>	5,770	2,965	60	449	709	30	9,982
<i>Evans</i>	2,859	1,301	5	266	224	0	4,664
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	3,823	1,937	6	185	401	19	6,372
<i>Johnson</i>	2,131	1,166	7	90	176	14	3,587
<i>Laurens</i>	13,627	5,881	88	900	1,448	0	21,943
<i>Montgomery</i>	2,113	1,453	26	26	155	0	3,773
<i>Tattnall</i>	5,432	3,138	37	384	300	84	9,366
<i>Telfair</i>	3,327	1,112	0	73	329	0	4,836
<i>Toombs</i>	7,129	2,955	133	917	881	60	12,062
<i>Treutlen</i>	1,903	663	3	146	123	17	2,858
<i>Wayne</i>	7,505	3,871	125	262	712	12	12,487
<i>Wheeler</i>	1,431	759	7	75	161	0	2,434
<i>Wilcox</i>	2,186	1,171	7	41	41	3	3,453
Region	75,542	36,728	759	4,416	7,106	258	124,813

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

2. CONDITION AND OCCUPANCY

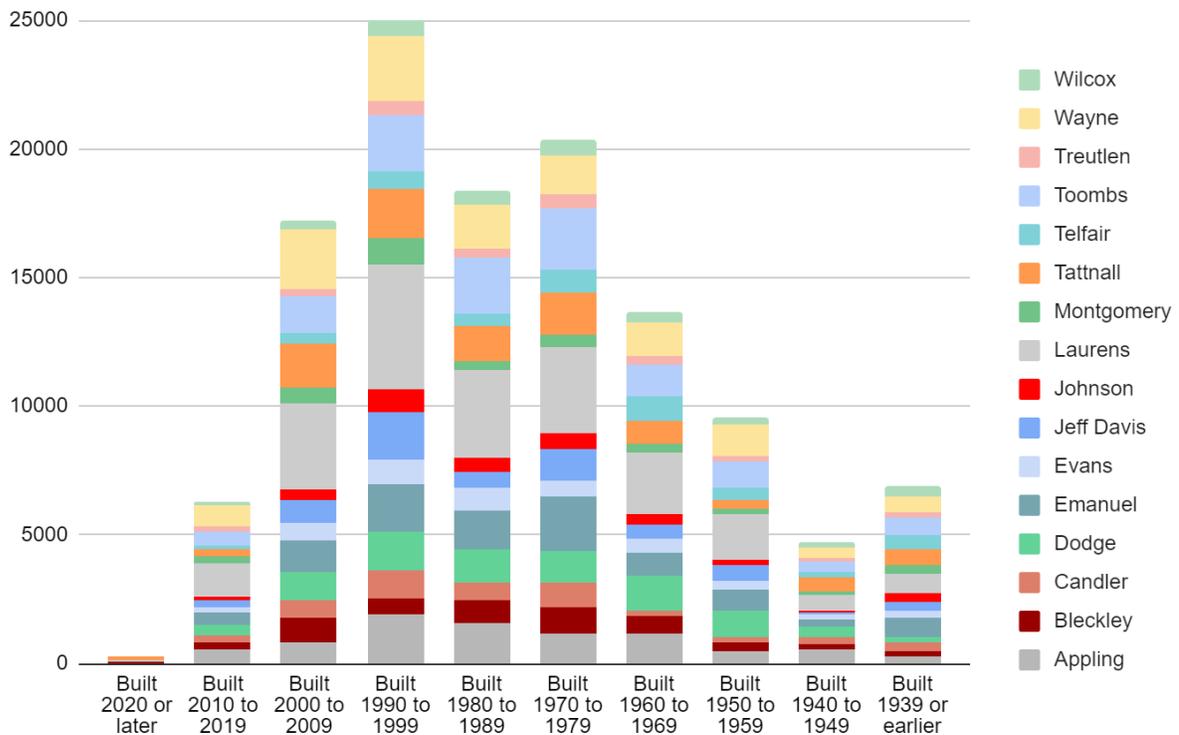
Based on 2022 Census data, about 35 percent of total housing stock in the Region were constructed between 1990 and 2009. Only 5.3% of the total housing units in the region are built since 2010. This is lower compared to the state of Georgia's 10.6%. Approximately another quarter (27.5 percent) were built during the 1960s and 1970s. Combined some two-thirds (63.5 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. 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.

Figure 3.5 Regional Housing Stock by Age

	Region	Region% Housing Stock by Age	Georgia
Built 2020 or later	292	0.23%	0.70%
Built 2010 to 2019	6,345	5.09%	9.90%
Built 2000 to 2009	17,573	14.08%	20.80%
Built 1990 to 1999	25,404	20.36%	19.30%
Built 1980 to 1989	18,775	15.05%	16.00%
Built 1970 to 1979	20,832	16.70%	13.00%
Built 1960 to 1969	13,875	11.12%	8.10%
Built 1950 to 1959	9,768	7.83%	5.70%
Built 1940 to 1949	4,846	3.88%	2.50%
Built 1939 or earlier	7,059	5.66%	4.00%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.6 Regional Housing Age by County



Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

The overall rate of vacant housing units in the Region has slightly increased since 2017, while the total vacant units decreased, which indicates a decline of occupancy of properties in the region. As rehabilitation of old neighborhoods has continued to come to one of the top concerns of the communities regionwide, tools like incentives, blight taxes, vacancy tax, ordinances, and Urban Redevelopment Plans have been utilized by many communities in an attempt to revitalize areas of blight. These measures help identify areas of substandard units and develop solutions to provide for needed housing rehabilitation and removal of dilapidated housing where necessary.

Figure 3.7 Occupied and Vacant Housing Units

	2017	2022	2017-2022 % Change
Total housing units	130,243	124,813	-4.17%
Occupied housing units	105,554	100,898	-4.41%
Owner-occupied	69,703	66,975	-3.91%
Renter-occupied	35,851	33,924	-5.38%
Vacant housing units	24,689	23,915	-3.14%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.8 Regional Housing Vacancy Rate

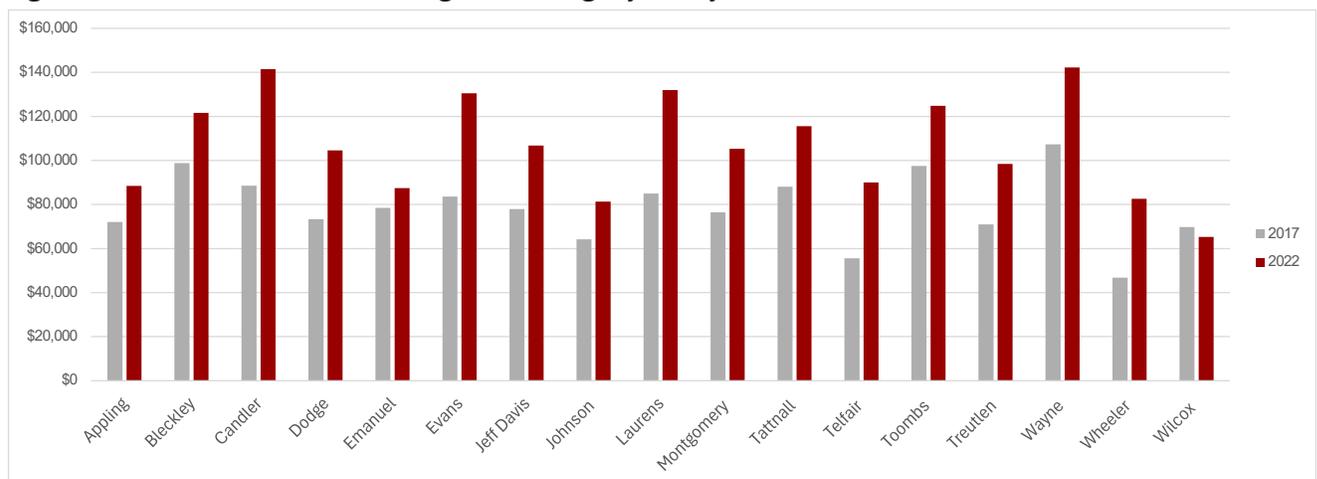
	2017	2022
Occupied housing units	81.04%	80.84%
Owner-occupied	66.04%	66.38%
Renter-occupied	33.96%	33.62
Vacant housing units	18.96%	19.16%

Source: 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

3. COST OF HOUSING

The median value of homes in the Region (\$105,300) is only one-half that of the state (\$245,900), as of 2022. Values have increased for the region and state since 2017. The highest median home values in the Region are located in two of the Region’s main growth centers (Toombs and Wayne) and in close proximity to outside the Region economic attractions (Bleckley) due to their larger availability of jobs. 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.

Figure 3.9 2017 - 2022 Median Housing Value Change by County



Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

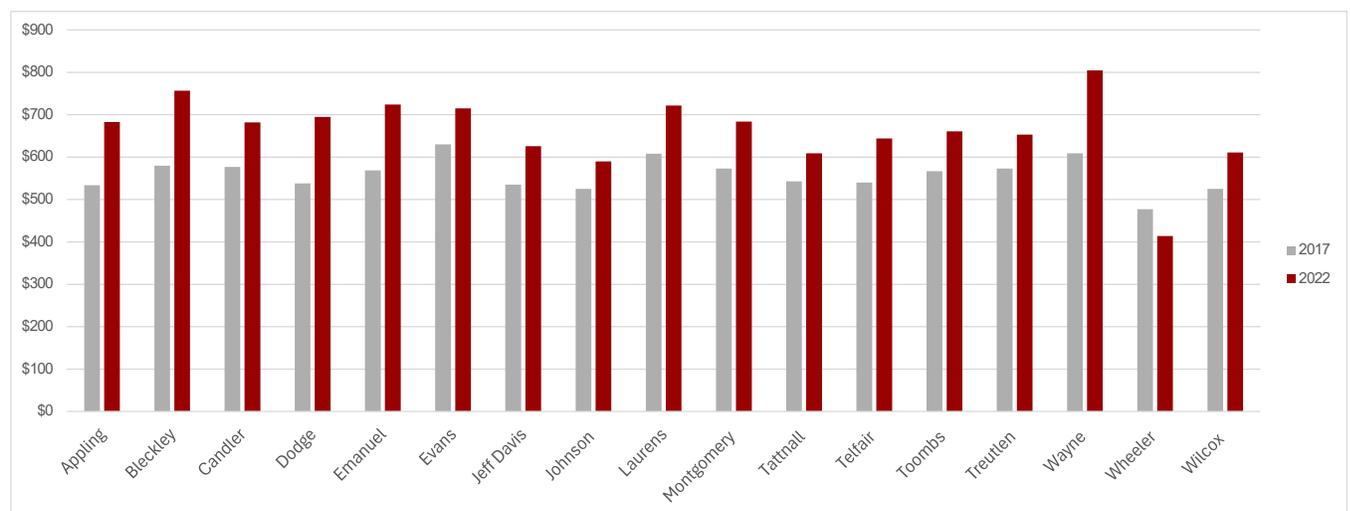
Figure 3.10 Median Housing Value

	2017	2022	% Change
Appling	\$72,100	\$88,500	22.75%
Bleckley	\$98,800	\$121,600	23.08%
Candler	\$88,600	\$141,500	59.71%
Dodge	\$73,400	\$104,600	42.51%
Emanuel	\$78,500	\$87,500	11.46%
Evans	\$83,600	\$130,500	56.10%
Jeff Davis	\$77,900	\$106,800	37.10%
Johnson	\$64,200	\$81,300	26.64%
Laurens	\$85,000	\$132,000	55.29%
Montgomery	\$76,500	\$105,300	37.65%
Tattnall	\$88,100	\$115,600	31.21%
Telfair	\$55,600	\$90,000	61.87%
Toombs	\$97,500	\$124,800	28.00%
Treutlen	\$71,000	\$98,500	38.73%
Wayne	\$107,300	\$142,200	32.53%
Wheeler	\$46,800	\$82,600	76.50%
Wilcox	\$69,800	\$65,300	-6.45%
Region	\$77,900	\$105,300	35.17%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

By 2022, median rent in the Region (\$682) is slightly more than half of that of Georgia (\$1,221). Since 2017, median rent in the region increased by 20.28%, following a decrease since 2010, indicating a high demand for the limited number of rental units that are available. This increase rate is especially large in Appling, Bleckley, Dodge and Wayne County which is about 30%. As is the case with median home values, median rent is higher in the Region’s growth centers. The highest median rent can be found in Wayne County (\$805). This figure is near other high median rent counties including Bleckley (\$757), and Laurens (\$722), and is likely due to a lower number of multi-family housing combined with a top 10 employer located within the county.

Figure 3.11 2017 – 2022 Median Rent Change by County



Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.12 Median Rent

	2017	2022	% Change
<i>Appling</i>	\$534	\$683	27.90%
<i>Bleckley</i>	\$580	\$757	30.52%
<i>Candler</i>	\$577	\$682	18.20%
<i>Dodge</i>	\$538	\$695	29.18%
<i>Emanuel</i>	\$569	\$724	27.24%
<i>Evans</i>	\$630	\$715	13.49%
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	\$535	\$626	17.01%
<i>Johnson</i>	\$525	\$590	12.38%
<i>Laurens</i>	\$608	\$722	18.75%
<i>Montgomery</i>	\$573	\$684	19.37%
<i>Tattnall</i>	\$543	\$609	12.15%
<i>Telfair</i>	\$540	\$644	19.26%
<i>Toombs</i>	\$567	\$661	16.58%
<i>Treutlen</i>	\$573	\$653	13.96%
<i>Wayne</i>	\$609	\$805	32.18%
<i>Wheeler</i>	\$477	\$414	-13.21%
<i>Wilcox</i>	\$525	\$611	16.38%
Region	\$567	\$682	20.28%

Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates



4. COST-BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

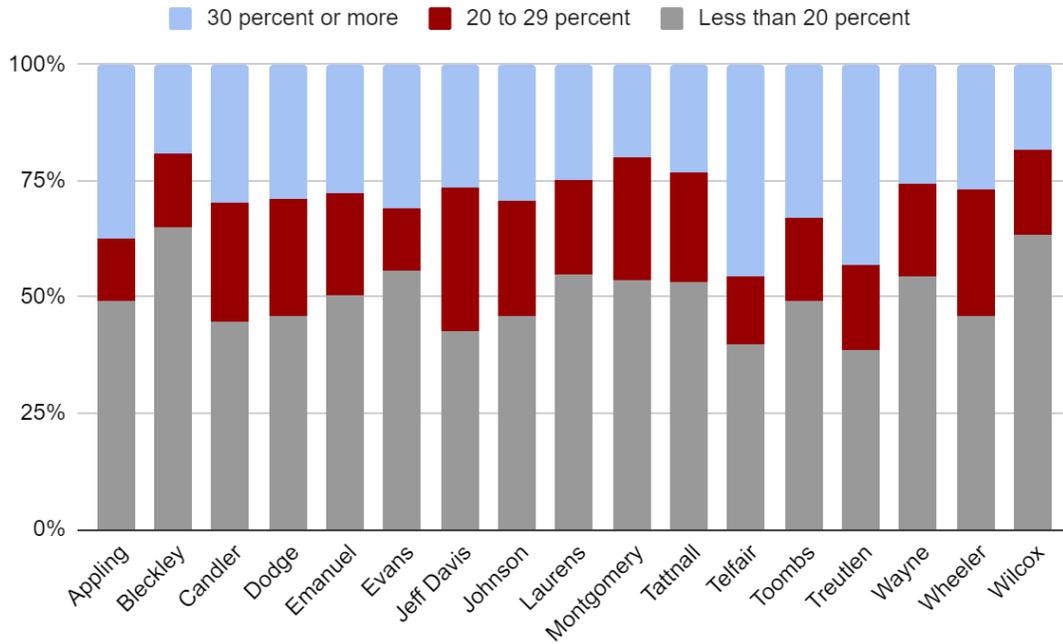
The percentage of owner-occupied households (both housing units with a mortgage and those without) that is either cost-burdened or severely cost-burdened is on par with the state average. In the Region, about 28 percent of housing units with a mortgage spend at least 30 percent or more of their income in housing costs, almost equal to the 27.9 percent statewide. In Treutlen and Telfair counties, 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, about 15 percent are considered to be 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.

Figure 3.13 Regional Cost Burdened Households

	Households with a Mortgage	Households without a Mortgage
Less than 20 percent	51.51%	75.98%
20 to 29 percent	20.64%	8.68%
30 percent or more	27.85%	15.33%

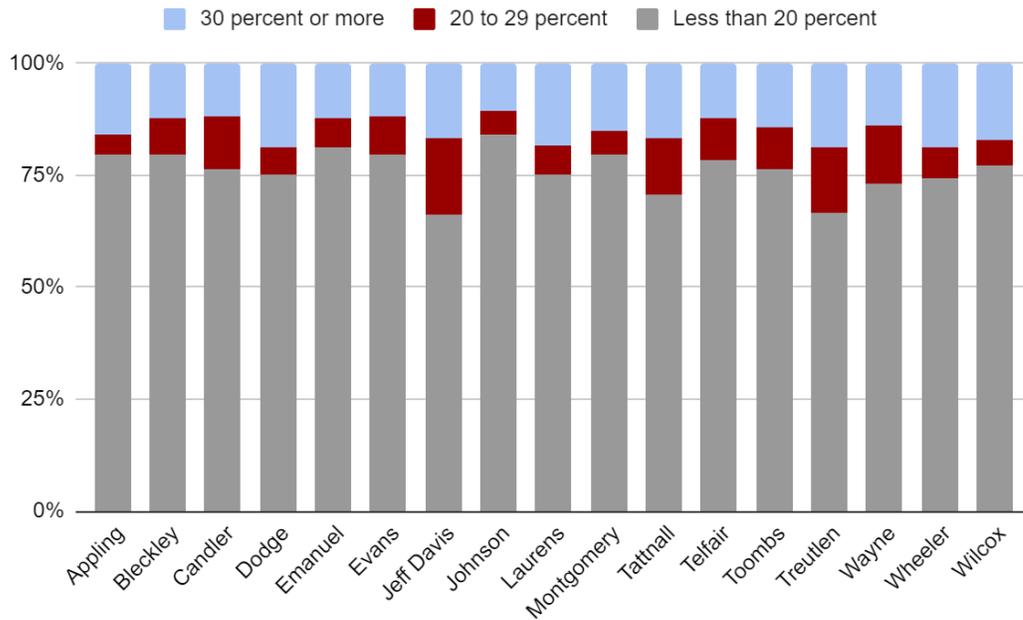
Source: 2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.14 Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (With Mortgage)



Source: 022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 3.15 Monthly Housing Costs as a Percentage of Household Income (Without Mortgage)



Source: 022 ACS 5-Year Estimates

5. SPECIAL HOUSING NEEDS

About 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. According to the 2024 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Area Plan, the top 5 concerns for those in need of energy assistance, financial assistance, home delivered meals, congregate meals, and homemaker services.

In the region, 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 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.

Homelessness throughout the HOGA region was determined using the Georgia Department of Community Affairs's 2022 Continuum of Care Housing inventories. DCA's COCs work to collect data of the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population. Figures for the region predict a homeless population of 206 which slightly increased compared to 144 in the year 2017. The gap of unsheltered homeless suggests a need for increased service by 50 percent.

Figure 3.16 2022 Homeless Persons Count

County	Unsheltered Count	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Housing	Total homeless Count
1 <i>Appling</i>	7	0	0	7
2 <i>Bleckley</i>	13	0	0	13
3 <i>Candler</i>	14	0	0	14
4 <i>Dodge</i>	2	0	0	2
5 <i>Emanuel</i>	7	0	0	7
6 <i>Evans</i>	33	0	0	33
7 <i>Jeff Davis</i>	2	0	0	2
8 <i>Johnson</i>	1	0	0	1
9 <i>Laurens</i>	16	6	7	29
10 <i>Montgomery</i>	3	0	0	3
11 <i>Tattnall</i>	4	0	0	4
12 <i>Telfair</i>	11	0	0	11
13 <i>Toombs</i>	14	12	0	26
14 <i>Treutlen</i>	34	0	0	34
15 <i>Wayne</i>	16	0	0	16
16 <i>Wheeler</i>	2	0	0	2
17 <i>Wilcox</i>	2	0	0	2
Region	181	18	7	206

Source: Department of Community Affairs Statewide Point in Time Count Homeless Report for 2022

6. 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.

The Center of Neighborhood Technology (CNT) Housing and Transportation Affordability Index is an online tool to measure affordability when combining the two most common household expenditures. The following figures indicate the challenge of living in a rural region and the need to commute outside of the community for work. According to the index, about 30% of households in the region pay at least 66 percent of their income in housing and transportation costs combined. Regionally, a majority of households spend over 45 percent of their income on housing and transportation.

Figure 3.17 Commuter Inflow, Outflow

Place of Work	HOGARC	Georgia	United States
Worked in state of residence	98.30%	97.40%	96.50%
Worked in county of residence	60.40%	60.10%	73.60%
Worked outside county of residence	37.90%	37.30%	23.00%
Worked outside state of residence	1.70%	2.60%	3.50%

Source: 2022 Center for Neighborhood Technology

Figure 3.18 Housing and Transportation Costs as Percentage of Household Income by County

	Total Households Count	<45%	45% - 66%	>66%
1 Appling	18,440	3.61%	80.38%	16.01%
2 Bleckley	12,807	14.33%	85.68%	0.00%
3 Candler	10,812	0.00%	39.40%	60.60%
4 Dodge	20,829	17.99%	61.67%	20.34%
5 Emanuel	22,533	22.37%	28.06%	49.57%
6 Evans	10,687	7.82%	92.18%	0.00%
7 Jeff Davis	15,036	0.00%	50.21%	49.79%
8 Johnson	9,691	8.96%	63.97%	27.08%
9 Laurens	47,405	17.31%	47.70%	34.99%
10 Montgomery	9,058	0.00%	86.67%	13.33%
11 Tattnall	25,382	18.63%	59.77%	21.60%
12 Telfair	16,035	0.00%	64.24%	35.76%
13 Toombs	26,972	14.76%	53.76%	31.48%
14 Treutlen	6,795	0.00%	15.54%	84.46%
15 Wayne	29,788	10.46%	83.11%	6.44%
16 Wheeler	7,928	0.00%	32.66%	67.34%
17 Wilcox	8,824	5.15%	44.95%	49.91%
Region	299,022	11.20%	58.73%	30.07%

Source: 2022 Center for Neighborhood Technology

Four. Community Facilities and Services

1. 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 Community 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.

2. 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 their Community 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.

3. 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 regard to fire protection, improved response times and assistance with needed equipment such as new Fire Trucks, Tankers 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 Community 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 12 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 new state park along the Oconee River in Wilkinson County has direct impacts on the Region counties of Johnson and Laurens. 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 stormwater management is generally adequate within municipal boundaries. Multiple pre-disaster hazard mitigation plans have identified areas of need concerning dirt roads in unincorporated county areas.

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.

The 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 services varies throughout the Region, often depending on the number 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 beginning to become more available.

According to the 2023 Georgia Broadband Ready Map, three (3) counties in our region are drastically underserved, and more than 40% of their locations don't have any access to broadband technology. While there have been significant improvements in broadband coverage within the region since 2019, future upgrades and continued construction of fiber cable access will still be needed to adequately service and accommodate future growth and maximize communication 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.

Figure 4.1 2023 Broadband Availability

County	% Unserved Locations
1 <i>Appling</i>	15
2 <i>Bleckley</i>	19
3 <i>Candler</i>	0
4 <i>Dodge</i>	28
5 <i>Emanuel</i>	0
6 <i>Evans</i>	14
7 <i>Jeff Davis</i>	13
8 <i>Johnson</i>	43
9 <i>Laurens</i>	17
10 <i>Montgomery</i>	7
11 <i>Tattnall</i>	13
12 <i>Telfair</i>	26
13 <i>Toombs</i>	10
14 <i>Treutlen</i>	40
15 <i>Wayne</i>	17
16 <i>Wheeler</i>	36
17 <i>Wilcox</i>	40

Source: 2023 Georgia Broadband Availability Map

Five. Transportation System

1. ROAD NETWORK

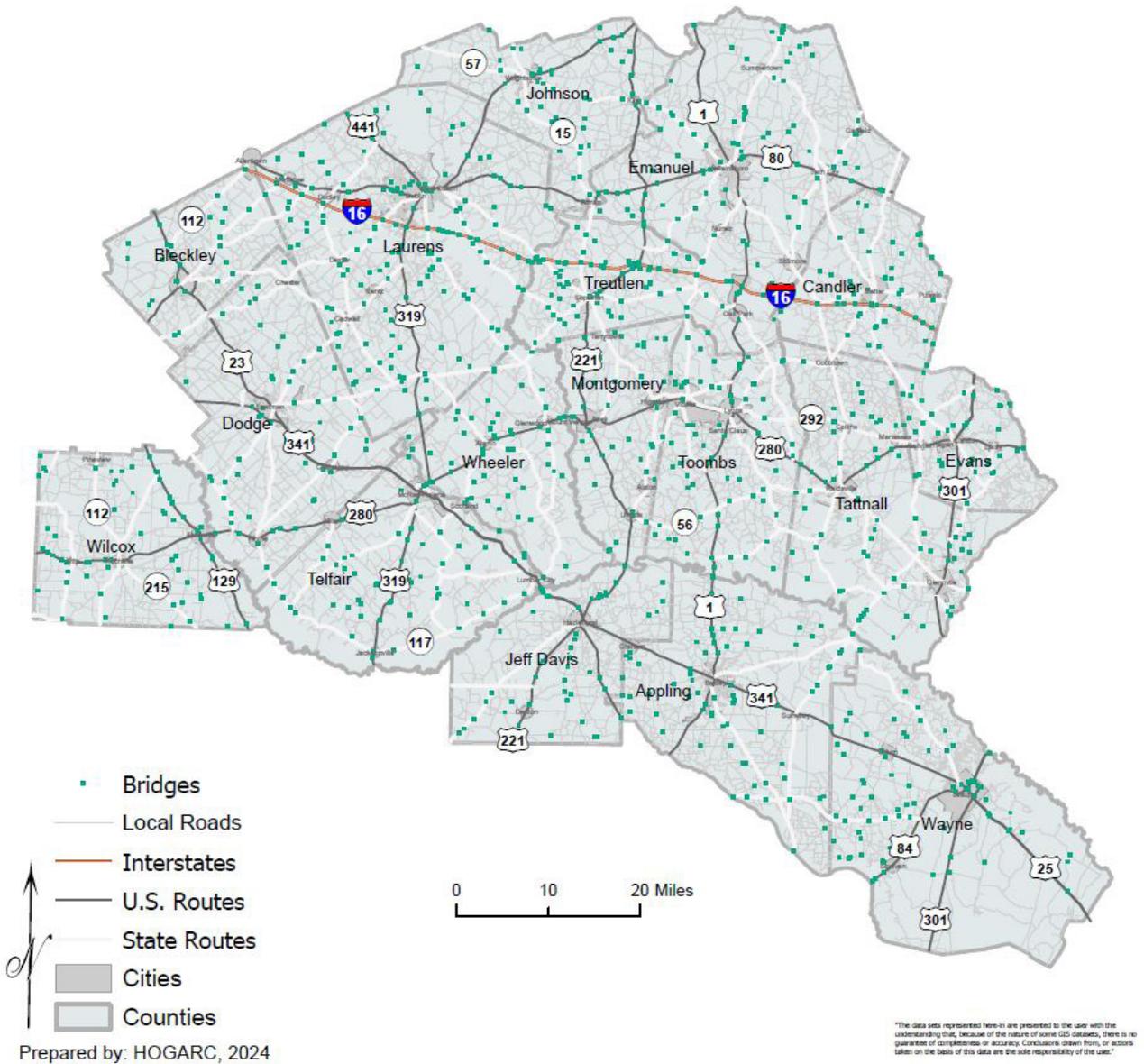
The Region has a comprehensive road network spanning over 12,700 miles, with nearly 2,100 miles designated as state routes. Despite its rural character and absence of a metropolitan area, the Region is well-connected by I-16, an essential rural Interstate arterial initially developed to enhance access to the Port of Savannah. Other key arteries serving the Region include U.S. Highways such as US 1, US 280, US 341, and US 441, categorized as “rural principal arterials.” Additionally, the Region features various state and federal highways like US 23, US 80, US 129, US 129A, US 221, US 301, US 319, and Georgia 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, classified as “rural minor arterials,” with others designated as “rural collectors.” These classifications reflect generally low traffic volumes, often less than 2,000 Annual Average Daily Traffic, particularly outside municipalities within the Region. Most of these arterial roads were designed by the Georgia Department of Transportation to maintain a Level of Service B (Reasonable Free-Flow Operations). Congestion within the Region is typically confined to peak periods during school and workdays in municipalities such as Baxley, Claxton, Cochran, Dublin, Eastman, Hazlehurst, Jesup, Lyons/Vidalia, McRae, and Swainsboro.

Figure 5.1 Mileage of Public Roads by County and Paving Status

	Total Mileage	Unpaved Mileage	Paved Mileage	Percent Unpaved
<i>Appling</i>	1,070	616	453	57.57%
<i>Bleckley</i>	443	124	320	27.99%
<i>Candler</i>	496	241	254	48.59%
<i>Dodge</i>	947	448	499	47.31%
<i>Emanuel</i>	1,261	618	643	49.01%
<i>Evans</i>	370	141	228	38.11%
<i>Jeff Davis</i>	639	327	312	51.17%
<i>Johnson</i>	539	245	294	45.45%
<i>Laurens</i>	1,641	642	998	39.12%
<i>Montgomery</i>	470	190	279	40.43%
<i>Tattnall</i>	970	490	479	50.52%
<i>Telfair</i>	627	270	357	43.06%
<i>Toombs</i>	830	371	459	44.70%
<i>Treutlen</i>	418	162	255	38.76%
<i>Wayne</i>	1,012	518	493	51.19%
<i>Wheeler</i>	414	184	231	44.44%
<i>Wilcox</i>	626	336	289	53.67%
Region	12,773	5,923	6,843	46.37%

Source: GDOT County Mileage of Public Roads by Surface Type, 441 Report, 2022

Figure 5.2 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Road Network

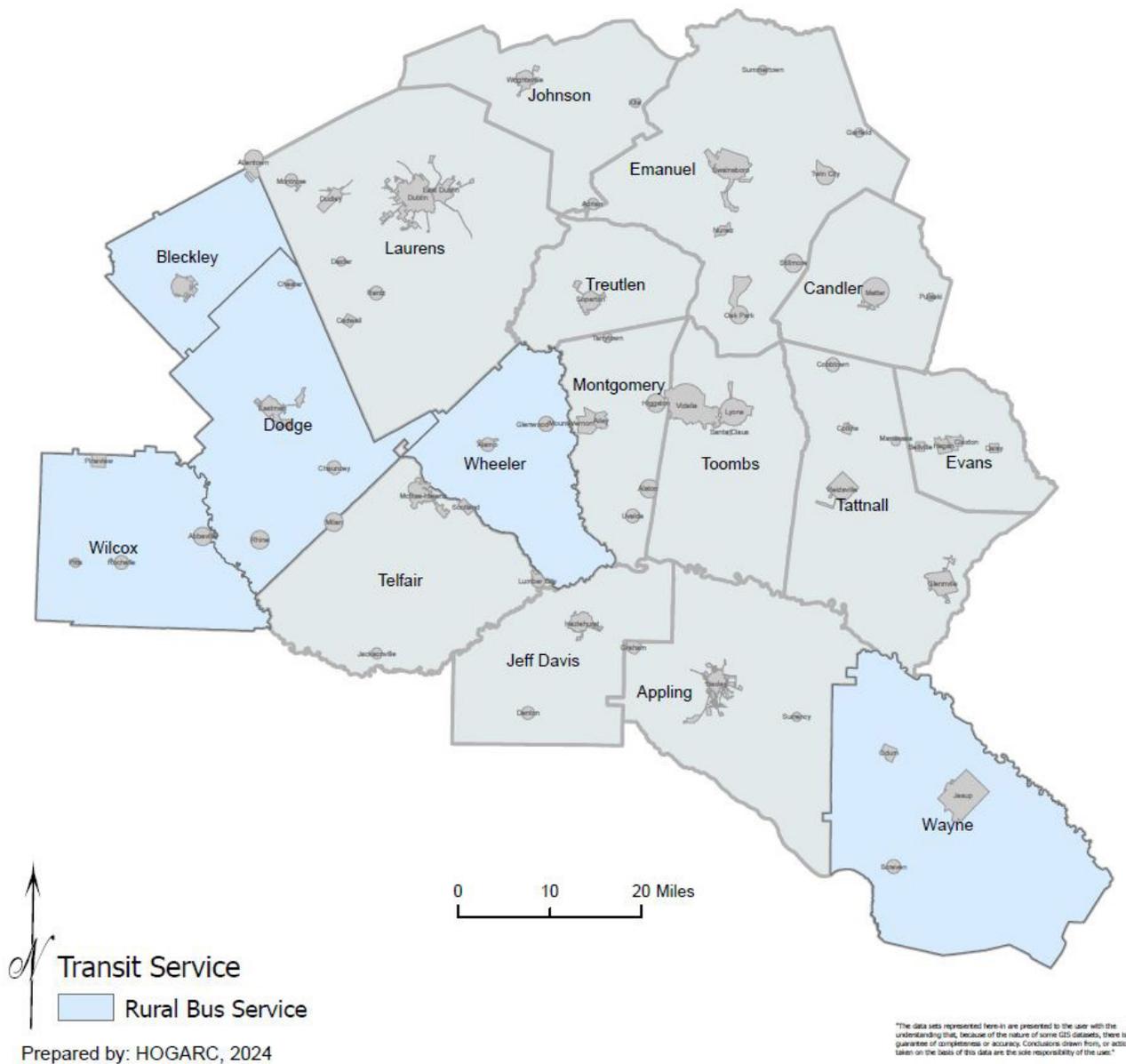


The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region was one of only three (3) regions statewide to initially approve the penny sales and use tax (T-SPLOST) under the Georgia 2010 Transportation Improvement Act for regionwide transportation improvements. This funding has improved transportation infrastructure and spurred economic growth within the Region. Major regional projects have been completed since 2019, including a bridge replacement at SR 135, a new bridge built over the Altamaha River at U.S. 1, and SR 23, 57 Passing Lanes extended from Glennville to Reidsville. The focus on road network improvement in the region predominantly revolves around resurfacing roads, replacing bridges, and repairing sidewalks.

2. ALTERNATIVE MODES

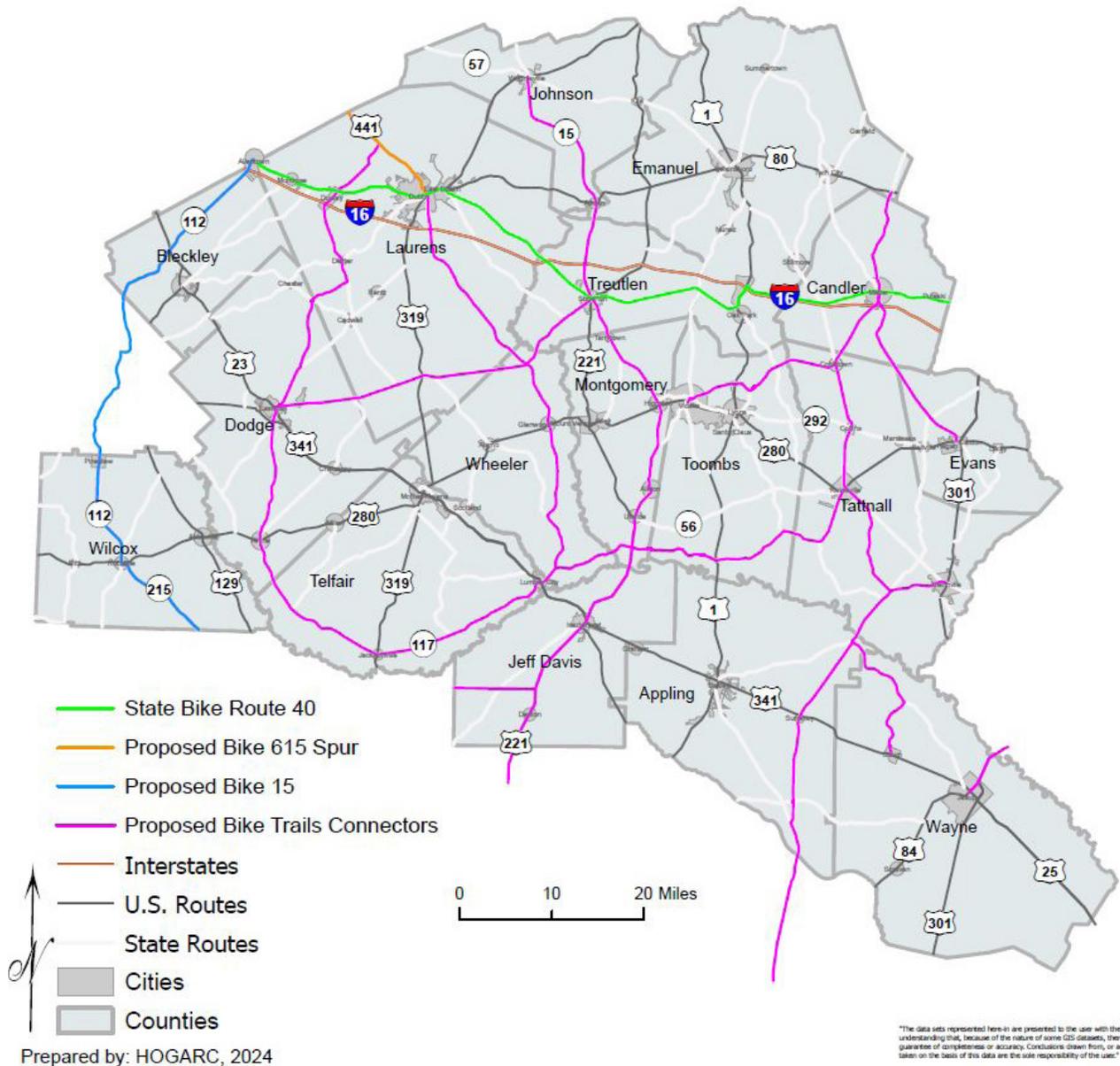
The rural Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region has no fixed-route public transit systems. On-demand response Section 5311 systems operate in 6 of 17 counties (Bleckley, Dodge, Telfair, Wheeler, Wilcox, Wayne counties). The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission also manages a Section 5310 Coordinated 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.

Figure 5.3 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Transit Service



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.

Figure 5.4 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Bike Routes



The 2016 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region identified 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. A new U.S. Bicycle Route spanning from Florida to North Carolina has recently been submitted for approval by the national biking organization, Adventure Cycling Association. This new route to be known as United States Bicycling Route (USBR) 15, will travel in a North-South direction along existing highways in Wilcox, Bleckley, and Laurens counties. There is also only one formally designated bike trail, the Yamsee Bike Trail in Montgomery County, within the Region. Bike rides are expanding events within the Region at present.

Opportunities and benefits for multi-use trail connectivity along and connecting to the Region's river corridors within the Region have been identified in multiple regional planning documents. 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.

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.

3. 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 June 2022 Economic Impact Report noted that the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region exported 700,848 tons of products, primarily wood/pulp, and 33,019 Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEU). Jeff Davis County ranks top 3 in total import and export products. 13,634 jobs in the Region are directly impacted by the Georgia Ports.

Railroads.

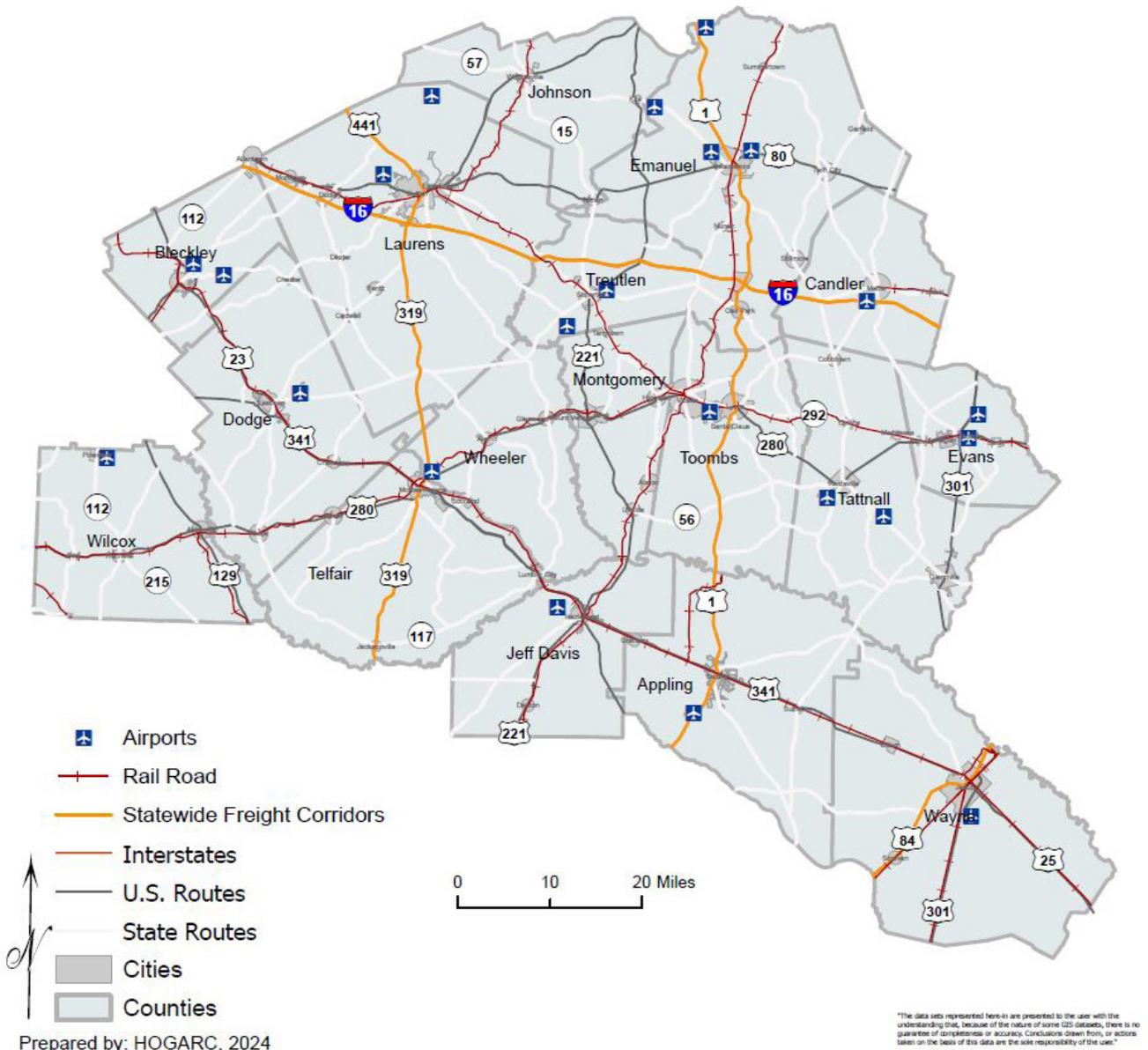
The Region is served by both of Georgia's Class I Railroads (Norfolk Southern and CSX) as well as by the shortline railroads, Georgia Midland, Georgia Central, and Heart of Georgia. All 17 counties have access to rail service from at least one carrier, including eight (8) from at least one of the Class 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 is in the process of upgrading and opening the currently inactive rail line between Vidalia and Kirby (Swainsboro) in Emanuel County.

Trucking.

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 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 examined options, both through the Region, using existing rail rights-of way 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. A dedicated use option has also been studied which would develop rail along Interstate 16 for the Macon-Savannah leg. 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 (Coastal Pines, Oconee Fall Line, and Southeastern) having commercial truck driving programs.

Figure 5.5 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Transportation Network



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) and report private airstrips for agriculture use. 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 5,000 feet in length. Continued maintenance of these Region airports and protection from navigation obstructions are important to both current and future Region economic development. Another airport related asset unique to the Region are the aviation programs of Middle Georgia State University campus at the Heart of Georgia Regional Airport in Eastman which are unique to Georgia and highly rated nationwide.

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 conducted navigation, runway improvements, perimeter fence installation and hangar expansion. Without question, the airports are an asset to the Region which should be vigilantly maintained and nurtured.

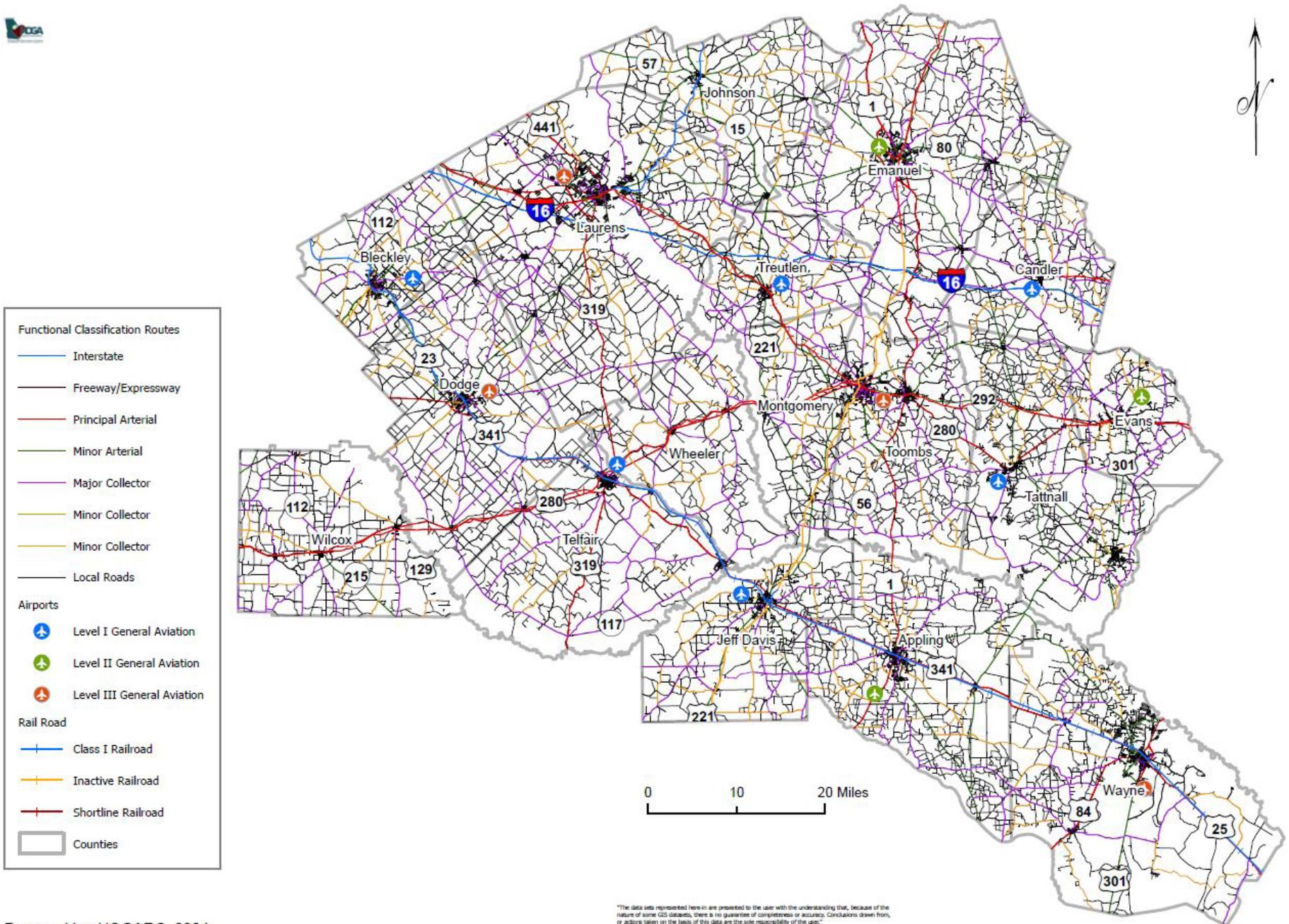
Figure 5.6 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Airports

Airport Name	Acreage	GDOT Classification	FAA Classification
Baxley Municipal	303	Level II	Basic
Claxton-Evans County	105	Level II	Basic
Cochran	69	Level I	Local
W.H. “Bud” Barron (Dublin)	905	Level III	Local
Heart of Georgia Regional (Eastman)	89	Level III	Local
Hazlehurst	125	Level I	Local
William A. Zorn (Jesup-Wayne County)	139	Level III	Basic
Telfair-Wheeler	104	Level I	Basic
Metter Municipal	62	Level I	Basic
East Georgia Regional (Emanuel County)	157	Level II	Basic
Vidalia Regional	1,245	Level III	Local
Swinton Smith Field at Reidsville Municipal	298	Level 1	Not Classified
Treutlen County	32	Level 1	Unclassified

4. 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.

Figure 5.7 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region Transportation System



The data sets represented here-in are presented to the user with the understanding that, because of the nature of some GIS databases, there is no guarantee of completeness or accuracy. Conclusions drawn from, or actions taken on the basis of this data are the sole responsibility of the user.

4 STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT REPORT

One. Identification of Heart of Georgia Altamaha Stakeholders

There are many organizations and other interested parties that have a vested interest in the successful growth and development of the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region. These groups are not only essential for the formation of a purposeful plan, but also for assistance in the execution of some of the programs outlined in the plan.

Representatives from the following were invited to participate as Regional Stakeholders for developing the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Plan:

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Local Governments (17 County and 62 Municipal Governments)

1. Appling County
 - City of Baxley
 - City of Graham
 - City of Surrency
2. Bleckley County
 - City of Cochran
3. Candler County
 - City of Metter
 - Town of Pulaski
4. Dodge County
 - City of Chauncey
 - Town of Chester
 - City of Eastman
 - City of Milan
 - City of Rhine
5. Emanuel County
 - City of Adrian
 - City of Garfield
 - City of Nunez
 - City of Oak Park
 - City of Stillmore
 - City of Summertown
 - City of Swainsboro
 - City of Twin City
6. Evans County
 - City of Bellville
 - City of Claxton
 - City of Daisy
 - City of Hagan
7. Jeff Davis County
 - City of Denton
 - City of Hazlehurst
8. Johnson County
 - City of Kite
 - City of Wrightsville
9. Laurens County
 - Town of Cadwell
 - Town of Dexter
 - City of Dublin
 - City of Dudley
 - City of East Dublin
 - Town of Montrose
 - Town of Rentz
10. Montgomery County
 - City of Ailey
 - Town of Alston
 - City of Higgston
 - City of Mount Vernon
 - City of Tarrytown
 - City of Uvalda
11. Tattnall County
 - City of Cobbtown
 - City of Collins
 - City of Glennville
 - City of Manassas
 - City of Reidsville
12. Telfair County
 - City of Jacksonville
 - City of Lumber City
 - City of McRae-Helena
 - City of Scotland
13. Toombs County
 - City of Lyons
 - City of Santa Claus
 - City of Vidalia
14. Treutlen County
 - City of Soperton
15. Wayne County
 - City of Jesup
 - City of Odum
 - City of Screven
16. Wheeler County
 - City of Alamo
 - City of Glenwood
17. Wilcox County
 - City of Abbeville
 - City of Pineview
 - City of Pitts
 - City of Rochelle

State/Federal/Private Partners

- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Historic Preservation Division
- Pine Country and Seven Rivers Resource Conservation and Development Councils (federal)
- Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission
- The Nature Conservancy
- Georgia Department of Human Services
- Fort Stewart Growth Management Partnership (federal)
- Georgia-Alabama Land Trust
- Southern Company
- Georgia and Region EMCs

Local/Regional Partners

- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Council
- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Plan Technical Advisory Committee
- Universities/Colleges/Technical Colleges
- Local Boards of Education
- Job Training Unlimited (WIOA)
- Vidalia Onion and Vegetable Research Center
- Vidalia Onion Committee
- Heart of Georgia Altamaha Main Street Programs
- Altamaha/Oconee/Ocmulgee Riverkeeper
- Ogeechee Riverkeeper
- Satilla Riverkeeper
- UGA Cooperative Extension District and County offices
- Local Tourism Boards
- Vidalia Area Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Chambers of Commerce
- Development Authorities

Two. Identification of Participation Techniques

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission utilized several strategies and techniques in an effort to obtain broad input from Region citizens and stakeholders. These included the following:

1. STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee consisted of the Regional Council members as well as other interested stakeholders. Draft documents and comments were reviewed in each Steering Committee meeting. The members of the Regional Plan Steering Committee are as follows:

Regional Plan Steering Committee Member List

Appling County

Leslie Burch
Theodore Wilkerson*
Al Meadows
Tim Varnadore
Keri Crosby-Orvin
Ora S. Hall*
Don Rentz
Kyle Blanton
Gerry Moore*
Dr. Janet Goodman
Livvy Hiers

Bleckley County

Mike Davis*
Billy Yeomans*
Britt Stewart*
Richard Newbern
Andy Lucas
David Canady
Dr. Trey Belflower

Candler County

Glyn Thrift
Bryan Aasheim
Brad Jones*
Chyrileen Kilcrease*
Marcus McCray*
Teresa Concannon
Carter Crawford
Paul Greene
Hannah Mullins
Brianna Dillon
Dr. Bubba Longgear
Heidi Jeffers

Dodge County

Conner Bearden*
Dan McCranie
Brian Watkins*
Buddy Pittman
Raymond Mullis*

Harrell Burch
Glynn Pittman
Spence Barron
Chad Puckett
Hardy Eady
Robert Pruitt
Dr. Susan Long

Emanuel County

Guy Singletary*
Hugh Foskey
Greg Bennett
Wynola Smith
Tommy Paul
Michelle Wimberly
Mickey Lindsey
Regan Slater
Don Bishop
Matt Donaldson*
Jack Bareford
Ken Warnock
Scotty Hattaway

Evans County

Terry Branch*
Terry McCorkle*
Irene Burney*
Tony Lewis
Casey Burkhalter
Brad McCooey
Eddie Ball
Gena Roberts
Claxton-Evans County
Industrial Development
Authority
Tammi Hall
Dr. Martin Waters

Jeff Davis County

Vann Wooten*

James Benjamin*
Dywane Johnson*
Ricky Crosby
Heather Scott
Matt McCall
R. Bayne Stone
Jim Sewell
Dr. Chris Roppe
Robyn Williams

Johnson County

Mike Keene*
Jeff Hall*
Bill Lindsey*
James McAfee
Jimmy Claxon
Janibeth Outlaw
Hugh Darnley
Dr. Christopher Watkins

Laurens County

Jimmy Rogers*
Ronald Harrington*
Len Tanner*
Jeff Davis
Clifton Smith
Emmett Waites
Michael Hatcher
Joshua Kight
Josh Powell
Jason Locke
Dale Fuller
George Gornto
Tara Bradshaw
Lindsay Neumann
Bryan Rogers
Miriam Lewis
Ryan Waldrep
Clifford Garnto
Dr. Frederick C. Williams

Regional Plan Steering Committee Member List (continued)

Montgomery County

Chad Kenney*
Harold Quarterman*
Elizabeth Williams*
Leland Adams
James Mitchell Fulmer Jr.
Doyle Waller
Jesse Ledford
Joey Fountain
Jamie H. Mosley
Elaine Manning
Brandon Braddy
Joe Fillippone
Dr. Stan Rentz

Tattnall County

Frank Murphy*
Jackie Trim*
Bernie Weaver*
Buddy Collins
Sandra Spikes
Tonya Edwards
Curtis Colwell
Stan Dansby
Vickie Fountain-Nail
Glenda Cowart
Wayne Dasher
Kristen Waters

Telfair County

Terry Neal*
Waylon Spires*
Susan Evans*
Jason Boone
Johnny Burkett
Mike Young
Jeff Hardin
Andrew Harris
Rebecca Jackson
Paula Rogers
Lenard F. Harrelson, Jr

Toombs County

John Jones*
John Raymond Turner*
David Sikes*
Nick Overstreet
Jason Hall
Willis D. NeSmith, Jr.
Donita Bowen
Sue Grisham
Doug P. Roper, III
Michele Johnson
Debbie Evans
Ann Owens
Tonya Parker
Daphne Walker
Alexa Britton
Barry Waller
Dr. Garrett Wilcox
Mike Lothridge
Jeff McCormick

Treutlen County

Cali Hollis*
Cashaunda Smith*
Izell Stephens, Jr.*
TJ Hudson
Thomas Shepard
Bradley Anderson
Soperton-Treutlen County
Chamber of Commerce

Wanye County

James Thomas*
Greg Leggett*
Dawson Trapnell*
Amanda Hannah
Kevin McCrary
Ralph Hickox
Rose Marcus
Greg Rozier
Jason Weaver

Barbara Daniels
Deena Bennett
Dell Keith
Sean Kelly

Wheeler County

Keith McNeal*
G.M. Joiner, Jr.*
Steve Jones
Jeffery Floyd
Dana Burkhalter
G.M. Joiner, Jr.
Janice Mock
Suzanne Couey

Wilcox County

Alfonza Hall*
Ronald Spires*
Clay Reid*
Brandon Holt
Lisa M. Willis
Wayne McGuinty
Michael Pomirko
Niki Coody
John Wilson Gordon
Joseph Lopez
Dale Garnto

** Heart of Georgia Altamaha
Regional Commission
Regional Council Member*

2. TECHNIQUES APPLIED

Several techniques are applied in an effort to obtain broad input from Region citizens and stakeholders. These included the following:

Two Public Hearings

Throughout the planning process, we conducted two public hearings to engage the community. An initial public hearing was held at the beginning of the planning process on November 16, 2023, at 5:30 P.M. at the Montgomery County Senior Center in the City of Mount Vernon. This kick-off to the planning process was held prior to a regularly scheduled Regional Council meeting. Additionally, a final public hearing was convened on March 21, 2024, at 5:30 P.M. at the same venue in Mount Vernon to conclude the process of collecting public input.

From: Michelle Brown
To: [Baxley News Banner](#); [chris.lewis@cordeledispatch.com](#); [Claxton Enterprise \(mpeace@claxtonenterprise.com\)](#); [Cochran Journal](#); [Dodge County News \(publisher@dodgecountynews.com\)](#); [Jeff Davis Ledger](#); [Metter Advertiser \(news@metteradvertiser.com\)](#); [Telfair Enterprise](#); [The Advance \(theadvancenews@gmail.com\)](#); [The Courier Herald \(theaditor@gmail.com\)](#); [The Forest Blade](#); [The Johnson Journal](#); [The Journal Sentinel - Glennville](#); [The Journal Sentinel - Reidsville](#); [The Press-Sentinel](#); [Tri-County Connector](#)
Cc: Mandy Britt
Subject: HOGARC Public Hearing Notice for Regional Plan Update Kick-Off Meeting
Date: Friday, November 3, 2023 10:17:00 AM
Attachments: [HOGARC Regional Plan Public Hearing Notice Kick-off.pdf](#)
[HOGARC Regional Plan Public Hearing Notice Kick-off.docx](#)

Attached is a Public Hearing Notice for the HOGARC Regional Plan Update Kick-Off meeting. We would appreciate any publicity you would provide.

Please call or email me if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Michelle

Michelle Brown

Senior Secretary/Public Information Coordinator

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
331 West Parker Street | Baxley, GA 31513

Phone: 912-367-3648 ext. 207

Fax: 912-367-3640

Email: brown@hogarc.org



HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL COMMISSION

331 West Parker Street, Baxley, Georgia 31513
Phone: (912) 367-3648
Fax: (912) 367-3640

5405 Oak Street, Eastman, Georgia 31023
Phone: (478) 374-4771
Fax: (478) 374-0703

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL COMMISSION
REGIONAL PLAN 5-YEAR UPDATE

DATE: Thursday, March 21, 2024 5:30 PM

LOCATION: Montgomery County Community Service and Senior Citizens Center,
391 Morrison Street, Mount Vernon, GA

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission has prepared a regional draft update in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning, Chapter 110-12-6. A public hearing on the draft Regional Plan will be held at 5:30 p.m. on March 21, 2024 at the Montgomery County Community Service and Senior Citizens Center, 391 Morrison Street, Mount Vernon, Georgia. The Regional Plan update includes Regional Goals, Development Maps, Needs and Opportunities, and an Implementation Program for actions the Regional Commission and partner organizations will undertake in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region.

Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Office at 912-367-3648. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or aweaver@hogarc.org.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

**Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
Regional Plan 5-Year Update**

A public hearing will be held at 5:30 p.m. on November 16, 2023 at the Montgomery County Community Service and Senior Citizens Center, 391 Morrison Street, Mount Vernon, Georgia 30445 to announce the beginning on the 2024 Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission 5-year update of the "Regional Plan 2040". The purpose of this hearing is to brief the communities on the process to be used to develop and update the Regional Plan, announce opportunities for the public participation in development of the plan, and obtain input on the proposed planning process.

Persons with special needs relating to disability access or foreign language should contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission's Office at 912-367-3648. Persons with hearing disabilities may consider using the Georgia Relay Service at 1-800-255-0135.

All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact Mandy Britt at the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or mbritt@hogarc.org.

the State Greenhouse the fourth inning to give County at 5:30 p.m.
High.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

**HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL COMMISSION
REGIONAL PLAN 5-YEAR UPDATE**

DATE: Thursday, March 21, 2024 5:30 PM

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All persons are invited to attend the public hearing. If you would like more information, please contact the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission, 912-367-3648 or aweaver@hogarc.org.

Three Listening Sessions

The Listening Sessions were held throughout the Region and were designed to be within a one hour or less drive for Region citizens and stakeholders.

Listening Session #1 – Santa Claus, 12/5/2023 – This session focused on conducting a regional SWOT analysis and reviewing plan requirements.

Listening Session #2 – Hazlehurst, 1/18/2024 – This session focused on conducting a regional SWOT analysis and vision input. Documents from the first Steering Committee Meeting were discussed.

Listening Session #3 – Dublin, 2/21/2024 – This session focused on conducting a regional SWOT analysis and vision input. Draft documents from the Steering Committee meetings were discussed.

The collage shows three different digital touchpoints for the listening session. On the left is a Facebook event page for 'Listening Session #1 Regional Plan Update' in Santa Claus, US, with 2 attendees. In the center is a LinkedIn feed snippet featuring promoted posts about revenue generation, a scholarship at WGU, and real estate work. On the right is a screenshot of the HOGARC website's 'CONTACT INFORMATION' page, which includes a 'REGIONAL PLAN LISTENING SESSION IN SANTA CLAUS' banner and a QR code for the survey.



Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

NEWS RELEASE

January 2, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
 Regional Commission Preparing Regional Plan and Requests Public Input, January 18, 2024 from 5:00-6:00 p.m., Towns Bluff Park and Heritage Center (45 Riverwood Trl) Conference Room, Hazlehurst

Want an improved place to live, work, recreate, and do business?

Regional Plan Listening Session #2

Thursday, January 18, 2024, 5 to 6 p.m.

Towns Bluff Park & Heritage Center

Address: 45 Riverwood Trl, Hazlehurst, GA

Your Voice Matters!

Scan the QR code to take the survey for the Regional Plan on your device:



The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) is a regional planning agency organized by state law, but governed by its member counties, which include Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox. The Regional Plan is a guide to making the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region an improved place to live, work, recreate, and do business for all concerned. All comments submitted through online survey will be anonymous, confidential, and will factor into the shaping of regional priorities. You may also send comments to baxley@hogarc.org, or mail them to the Regional Commission at 331 West Parker Street, Baxley, Georgia 31513. Please submit comments by March 1, 2024.

You may also use the following link to access the survey: <https://arcg.is/14GK5D0>
 Find our meeting updates on the Regional Plan website here: bit.ly/3QZKELw
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 912-367-3648, or baxley@hogarc.org



Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

NEWS RELEASE

February 5, 2024
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
 Regional Commission Preparing Regional Plan and Requests Public Input, February 21, 2024 from 5:00-6:00 p.m., at Carnegie Library, 314 Academy Avenue, Dublin, GA

Want an improved place to live, work, recreate, and do business?

Regional Plan Listening Session #3

Wednesday, February 21, 2024, 5 to 6 p.m.

Carnegie Library

Address: 314 Academy Avenue, Dublin, GA

Your Voice Matters!

Scan the QR code to take the survey for the Regional Plan on your device:

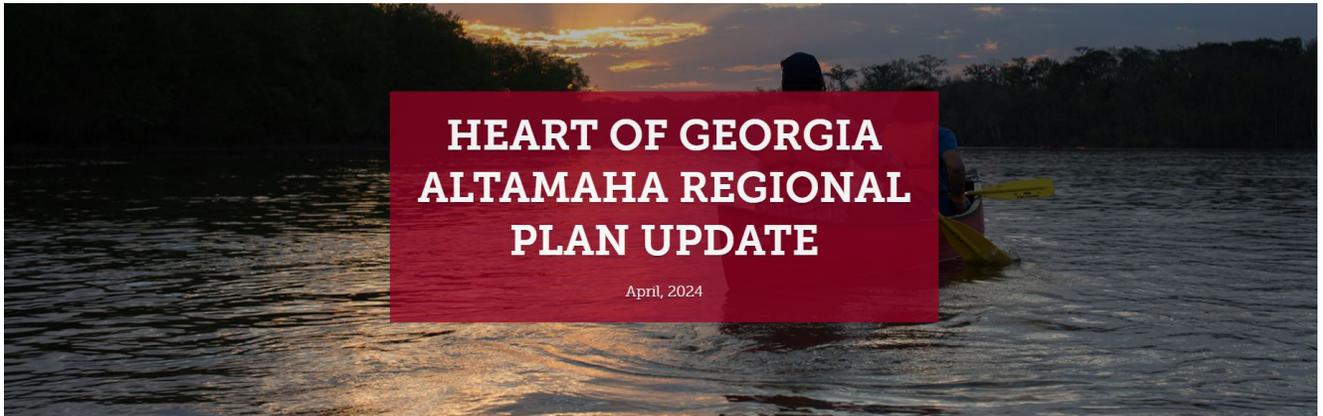


The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) is a regional planning agency organized by state law, but governed by its member counties, which include Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler, and Wilcox. The Regional Plan is a guide to making the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region an improved place to live, work, recreate, and do business for all concerned. All comments submitted through online survey will be anonymous, confidential, and will factor into the shaping of regional priorities. You may also send comments to baxley@hogarc.org, or mail them to the Regional Commission at 331 West Parker Street, Baxley, Georgia 31513. Please submit comments by March 1, 2024.

You may also use the following link to access the survey: <https://arcg.is/14GK5D0>
 Find our meeting updates on the Regional Plan website here: bit.ly/3QZKELw
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 912-367-3648, or baxley@hogarc.org

Regional Plan Website

A Regional Plan website was developed at the beginning of the process. The website, bit.ly/3vack9C, includes links to various regional plan documents, a meeting timetable for the process, links to Steering Committee meeting documents, and the regional plan survey. The website address was distributed on all emails sent to stakeholders and included with any public correspondence regarding the plan. Dedicated space was also given to the Regional Plan on the HOGARC website homepage, hogarc.org. The website visitors were able to review previous Regional Plan documents as well as were directed to the Regional Plan website.



The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) is a quasi-governmental agency comprised of 17 counties and 62 municipalities. Our mission is to provide professional advice and assistance to our member governments and the State of Georgia in the areas of planning, community and economic development, local government administration and management, historic preservation, aging services, geographic information system services, workforce investment, and coordinated transportation. Our goal is to assist the planning and provision of efficient and effective services to improve the quality of life for citizens in the region's counties, the region, and for all of Georgia.

HOGARC 2024 Regional Plan Timetable

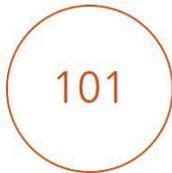


1. Thursday, 11/16/2023, 5:30 p.m. - Initial Public Hearing #1/Stakeholder Steering Meeting #1/Council Meeting, Mount Vernon, Georgia
2. Thursday, 12/5/2023, 5:00 p.m. - Listening Session #1 (Location: Santa Claus Community Center)
3. Wednesday, 1/17/2024, 10:30 a.m. - Stakeholder Steering Committee Meeting #2 (Location: Vidalia Municipal Annex, 302 E. First Street, Vidalia)
4. Thursday, 1/18/2024, 5:00 p.m. - Listening Session #2 (Location: Towns Bluff Park & Heritage Center, 45 Riverwood Trl, Hazlehurst)
5. Wednesday, 2/21/2024, 2:00 p.m. - Stakeholder Steering Committee Meeting #3 (Location: Vidalia Municipal Annex, 302 E. First Street, Vidalia)
6. Wednesday, 2/21/2024, 5:00 p.m. - Listening Session #3 (Location: Carnegie Library, 314 Academy Avenue, Dublin)
7. Tuesday, 3/21/2024, 5:30 p.m. - Stakeholder Steering Committee Meeting #4/Public Hearing #2 (Location: Mt. Vernon Senior Center)

Regional Online Survey

We utilized the ArcGIS Survey 123 platform to create an anonymous survey online aimed at gathering comprehensive input across various vital topics, including economic development, housing, broadband, transportation, community facilities and services, land use, natural and cultural resources, short-term and long-term goals. Over the course of four (4) months, we received a total of 101 responses from individuals spanning all 17 counties. The survey was made accessible to the general public through direct email outreach to stakeholders, placement on local community websites, inclusion in flyers posted on the HOGARC website, and distributed to the general public.

This survey is shared with **Everyone (public)** and **Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission**



Total records



Total participants



First submitted on



Last submitted on

Regional Plan Flyer

Regional Plan Flyer was utilized to drive traffic to the Regional Plan website and Regional Plan Survey to garner awareness of the planning process and to seek input through the survey.

Email Notifications

Email reminder system is utilized to contact stakeholders with meeting dates, reminders and links to various items. Questions and comments were encouraged to be submitted via email to the planning staff.



Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission

Share your thoughts
Shape our tomorrow!

Heart of Georgia Altamaha
Regional Commission

**REGIONAL
PLAN**

Scan the QR code to
take the survey for
the Regional Plan on
your device:

Residents in Appling, Bleckley, Candler, Dodge, Emanuel, Evans, Jeff Davis, Johnson, Laurens, Montgomery, Tattnall, Telfair, Toombs, Treutlen, Wayne, Wheeler and Wilcox Counties and their municipalities, welcome to take the "Regional Plan Survey".

You may also use the following link to access the survey: <https://arcg.is/14GK5D0>
Find our meeting updates on the Regional Plan website here: bit.ly/3QZKELw

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT 912-367-3648

From: [Michelle Brown](#)
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[citymanager@cityofalamo.us](#); [cityofailey@windstream.net](#); [cityofalstonga@gmail.com](#); [cityofchauncey@windstream.net](#); [cityofcollins@windstream.net](#); [cityofdudley@progressivetel.co](#); [cityofgrahamga@att.net](#); [cityofhiggston@gmail.co](#); [cityofmilan@windstream.net](#); [cityofnunez@pineland.net](#); [cityofodum@hotmail.com](#); [cityofodumclerk@outlook.com](#); [cityofodummayor@outlook.com](#); [cityofrhine@windstream.net](#); [cityofsantaclaus@att.net](#); [cityoftarrytownga@gmail.com](#); [cityofvalda@windstream.net](#); [ckenney@montcoga.gov](#); [ckilcrease@cityofmetterga.gov](#); [cliffordgarnto@lcoe.net](#); [cm@cityofglennville.com](#); [cobbtownusa@pineland.net](#); [conner.bearden@dodgecounty-ga.com](#); [councilwomanwilliams.mtv@gmail.com](#); [countyadministrator@evanscounty.org](#); [craw@planters.net](#); [czhvac1000@gmail.com](#); [daac@baxley.org](#); [dadselectric@pineland.net](#); [Daisymayor2022@yahoo.com](#); [daphne@lyonsmainstreet.com](#); 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[manager@baxley.org](#); [manassasgeorgia30438@gmail.com](#); [mayor@cityofclaxton.net](#); [mayor@cityofsantaclaus.org](#); [mayor@hazlehurstga.gov](#); [mayormccoey@hotmail.com](#); [mayoroflyons@lyonsga.org](#); [mayorwynolasmith@gmail.com](#); [mdavis@bleckley.org](#); [mdonaldson@twincityga.com](#); [melissa@cityofswainsboro.org](#); [metterchamber@gmail.com](#); [mike.young@mcrae-helena.org](#); [mlothridge@gortca.com](#); [mpomirko@wilcoxcountygeorgia.com](#); [murphy@tattall.com](#); [mvcityclerk@windstream.net](#); [mwaters@evans.k12.ga.us](#); [neumannl@dublinga.org](#); [niki.newberry@gmail.com](#); [noverstreet@vidaliaga.gov](#); [OPCityclerk3857@gmail.com](#); [ora_jene@hotmail.com](#); [paula@eastman-georgia.com](#); [pineviewcity@windstream.net](#); [powellj@dublinga.org](#); [rahickox@yahoo.com](#); [raymondmulissr@yahoo.com](#); [rdtrapnellj@hotmail.com](#); [rebecca@visitdublinga.com](#); [regan.slater@yahoo.com](#); [rmarcus@jesupga.gov](#); [rnewbern@cityofcochran.com](#); 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Subject: Upcoming Public Input Listening Session for HOGARC Regional Plan Update, Thursday, January 18, 2024, Towns Bluff Park & Heritage Center
Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 12:32:00 PM
Attachments: [2024 Regional Plan Flyer listening session#2 News Release new.pdf](#)

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission (HOGARC) will be holding a public input listening sessions to gather input for development of an updated Regional Plan. We are seeking your ideas on how to improve the Region, which will be incorporated into a vision for the HOGARC Region over the next 20 years. What are the HOGARC Region’s priority needs and opportunities and how

can the RC address them to enhance the Region’s economy and quality of life for all citizens?

The second Public Input Listening Session will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2024 at Towns Bluff Park & Heritage Center at 45 Riverwood Trail, Hazlehurst, GA from 5-6 p.m. An additional regional Public Input Listening Sessions is planned in Dublin over the coming months.

Please invite anyone interested to attend the Hazlehurst Listening Session. We would also appreciate it if you would help publicize it on your website or Facebook page, as appropriate. Please see the attached news release for more detailed information. Thanks for helping to spread the word!

Michelle Brown

Senior Secretary/Public Information Coordinator

*Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
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Cc: [Anna Weaver](#); [Brett Manning](#); [Mark Carter](#); [Shane Richardson](#)
Subject: Public Service News Release for Regional Plan Update Listening Session
Date: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 11:45:00 AM
Attachments: [2024 Regional Plan Flyer_listening session#2_News Release_new.docx](#)
[2024 Regional Plan Flyer_listening session#2_News Release_new.pdf](#)

Attached is a Public Service News Release concerning the Regional Plan Update listening session. We would appreciate any publicity you would provide.

Please call me if you have any questions.

Thanks,
Michelle

Michelle Brown

Senior Secretary/Public Information Coordinator

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Cc: [Mandy Britt](#)
Subject: HOGARC Public Hearing Notice for Regional Plan Update Kick-Off Meeting
Date: Friday, November 3, 2023 10:17:00 AM
Attachments: [HOGARC Regional Plan Public Hearing Notice Kick-off.pdf](#)
[HOGARC Regional Plan Public Hearing Notice Kick-off.docx](#)

Attached is a Public Hearing Notice for the HOGARC Regional Plan Update Kick-Off meeting. We would appreciate any publicity you would provide.

Please call or email me if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Michelle

Michelle Brown

Senior Secretary/Public Information Coordinator

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331 West Parker Street | Baxley, GA 31513*

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[citymanager@cityofalamo.us](#); [cityofailey@windstream.net](#); [cityofalstonga@gmail.com](#); [cityofchauncey@windstream.net](#); [cityofcollins@windstream.net](#); [cityofdudley@progressivetel.com](#); [cityofgrahamga@att.net](#); [cityofhiggston@gmail.co](#); [cityofmilan@windstream.net](#); [cityofnunez@pineland.net](#); [cityofodum@hotmail.com](#); [cityofodumclerk@outlook.com](#); [cityofodummayor@outlook.com](#); [cityofrhine@windstream.net](#); [cityofsantaclaus@att.net](#); [cityoftarrytownga@gmail.com](#); [cityofuvalda@windstream.net](#); [ckenney@montcoga.gov](#); [ckilcrease@cityofmetterga.gov](#); [cliffordgarnto@lcoe.net](#); [cm@cityofglennville.com](#); [cobbtownusa@pineland.net](#); [conner.bearden@dodgecounty-ga.com](#); [councilwomanwilliams.mtv@gmail.com](#); [countyadministrator@evanscounty.org](#); [craw@planters.net](#); [czhvac1000@gmail.com](#); [daac@baxley.org](#); [dadselectric@pineland.net](#); [Daisymayor2022@yahoo.com](#); [daphne@lyonsmainstreet.com](#); 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[manager@baxley.org](#); [manassasgeorgia30438@gmail.com](#); [mayor@cityofclaxton.net](#); [mayor@cityofsantaclaus.org](#); [mayor@hazlehurstga.gov](#); [mayormccoey@hotmail.com](#); [mayoroflyons@lyonsga.org](#); [mayorwynolasmith@gmail.com](#); [mdavis@bleckley.org](#); [mdonaldson@twincityga.com](#); [melissa@cityofswainsboro.org](#); [metterchamber@gmail.com](#); [mike.young@mcrac-helena.org](#); [mlothrige@gortca.com](#); [mpomirko@wilcoxcountygeorgia.com](#); [murphy@tattall.com](#); [mvcityclerk@windstream.net](#); [mwaters@evans.k12.ga.us](#); [neumann@dublinga.org](#); [niki.newberry@gmail.com](#); [OPCityclerk3857@gmail.com](#); [ora_jene@hotmail.com](#); [paula@eastman-georgia.com](#); [pineviewcity@windstream.net](#); [powelli@dublinga.org](#); [rahickox@yahoo.com](#); [raymondmulissr@yahoo.com](#); [rdtrapnellj@hotmail.com](#); [rebecca@visitdublinga.com](#); [regan.slater@yahoo.com](#); [rmarcus@jesupga.gov](#); [rnewbern@cityofcochran.com](#); [Robert@Eastman-Georgia.com](#); 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[treyb@bleckleyschools.org](#); [tvnadore@atc.cc](#); [vann.topfarms@gmail.com](#); [vickie.nail@yahoo.com](#); [wayneadasher@gmail.com](#); [wflindsey@johnsongco.org](#); [wheelerco@windstream.net](#); [wilkerns@bellsouth.net](#); [Bill Bedingfield](#)
Subject: Reminder - February 21, 2024 HOGARC Regional Planning Steering Committee Meeting #3
Date: Friday, February 16, 2024 12:26:00 PM
Importance: High

Please remember and plan to attend tomorrow's meeting in Vidalia at 2:00 p.m. at the Vidalia Municipal Annex, 302 E. First Street, Vidalia, GA - Courtroom

We need your important input to develop and update the regional plan so that it is a meaningful tool to move the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region forward. Please contact us at aweaver@hogarc.org if you have any questions.

Michelle Brown

Senior Secretary/Public Information Coordinator

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission
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HOGARC REGIONAL PLAN PUBLIC HEARING/ 1ST STAKEHOLDER MEETING MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY AND SENIOR CITIZEN CENTER 391 MORRISON STREET, MOUNT VERNON Thursday, November 16, 2023			
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Tzell Stephens Jr	Soperton City Council	478 279-0281	itzellstephensjr@yahoo.com
MULLIS Raymond	Eastman city council	478-689-6057	
John R. Turner	City of Vidalia	912-293-2937	Johnturner70941@gmail.com
David & Cynthia		912 368-2272	
Keith E. Mendenhall	Wheeler Co.	912-568-7125	
CLAY K REID	Wilcox Co.	229 365 3683	SMACKER D WENDSTREAM -ALT
Jeff Floyd	City of Alamo	912 423 9341	citymanager@cityofalamo.us
Jimmy Rogers	Lawrence Co. Comm.	478-278-6304	Jimmy R Rogers @ ATT.NET
Barbely Gaskin	City of Clayton	912-568-7796	
Joey Brown	CLAXTON	912 616 9701	JB@CITYOFCLAXTON.net
Ralph Dawson Trophelt Jr	Wayne	912-704-2516	Dawson@jesajia.com
Berrie Wenzel	Glenville	912-237-1303	WEAVER@GLENVILLE.COM
Terry M Goble	Evans Claxton GA	912 618 9730	Terry@MSGobleSales.com
Griff Dins	JTM	(912) 739-7158	Ki.M.Tins@johntainsunlimited.com
Chad Kenney	Montgomery County	912 293 0424	chadkenney@att.net
Brian Watkins	Dodge Co	229 425 9715	bwatd3@gmail.com
Marcus McCray	Panther Co.	912-314-3476	dmccray599@gmail.com

3rd Steering Committee Meeting Sign-In Sheet

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Start time	Completion time	First name	Last name	Title	Full Address	Phone number	Email address	Organization	
1	2/21/24 13:41:49	2/21/24 13:43:10	Jason	Hall	City manager	161 ne broad st Lyons	9122930763	jhall@lyonsga.org	The city of Lyons ga
2	2/21/24 13:54:15	2/21/24 13:56:11	Ken	Warnock	CEO	102 South Main Street,	9126902304	kjcw@goemanuel.org	Swainsboro-Emanuel Co
3	2/21/24 13:58:10	2/21/24 13:59:41	Teresa	Concannon	Planning Director	49 South Rountree Stre	912-426-1916	tconcannon@cityofme	City of Metter
4	2/21/24 13:58:29	2/21/24 14:00:08	Courtney	Soley	Clerk	3857 Harrington St Lyo	9125784115	Opacityclerk3857@gmail	City of Oak Park
5	2/21/24 13:58:29	2/21/24 14:01:30	Helen	Harris	County clerk	100 Courthouse suite 1	9122930363	hharris.toombsco@gm	Toombs County Board of
6	2/21/24 13:58:45	2/21/24 14:01:52	Mickey	Lindsey	Mayor City of Oak Park	3857 Harrington Street	912-578-4115	opcityclerk3857@gmail	Com
7	2/21/24 14:15:34	2/21/24 14:16:47	Dakkia	Bradshaw	Commissioner	115 Main Street #334	9124230833	Dbradshawtelfaircomm	Telfair County Board of

**HOGARC REGIONAL PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2018
10:30 A.M.
VIDALIA MUNICIPAL ANNEX
VIDALIA, GEORGIA**

Agenda

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**
- 2. Needs and Opportunities Review/Prioritization**
- 3. Regional Vision Input**
- 4. Guiding Principles Input**
- 5. Next Meeting**
Wednesday, January 23, 2018, Vidalia Municipal Annex, 10:30 a.m.

***Community Input Listening Session #3, Tuesday, January 10, 2019, Vidalia, TBD**

**HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL PLAN
2ND STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
VIDALIA MUNICIPAL ANNEX**

January 17, 2024

AGENDA

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Regional Facts Review**
- 3. Survey Results Review**
- 4. SWOT Analysis/SWOT Draft Review**
- 5. Input on Regional Maps**
- 6. Input on Regional Goals, Needs & Opportunities**

Next Steering Committee Meeting:

Vidalia Municipal Annex -302 E. First Street, Vidalia, GA – Courtroom

Wednesday, February 21, 2024 2:00 PM-3:00 PM

- Input on Regional Maps and Narrative
- Input on Implementation Programs
- Input on Performance Standards

**HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA REGIONAL PLAN
3RD STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
VIDALIA MUNICIPAL ANNEX**

February 21, 2024

AGENDA

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Input on Maps**
- 3. Survey Results Review**
- 4. Input on Needs and Opportunities/Regional Work Programs**

Next Steering Committee Meeting/2nd Public Hearing:

Montgomery County Community Service and Senior Citizens Center,

391 Morrison Street, Mount Vernon, GA

Thursday, March 21, 2024 5:30 PM-6:30 PM

- Draft Review

HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA
REGIONAL PLAN

