U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

SEPTEMBER 2012

Award Number: 048306330 Southern Georgia Regional Commission
Grant Period: 01/01/2013 to 12/30/2018

SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's (SGRC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy. The SGRC CEDS will analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, a regional plan of action, and the investment priorities and funding sources.

As a performance-based plan, this CEDS will play a critical role in adapting to global economic conditions by fully utilizing the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting the private investment that creates jobs. The SGRC CEDS is a regionally-owned strategy that is the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with regional public and private sector participation. This plan sets forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the Southern Georgia region and clearly defines the measures of success.

The organization responsible for the development of this CEDS is the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC). As recipient of EDA Planning Investment funds (Investment #048306330), the SGRC serves as a designated Economic Development District (EDD). The SGRC's planning district includes the eighteen county governments of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Cook, Clinch, Coffee, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware, and the 45 municipal governments within those counties.

The SGRC is a multi-jurisdictional planning agency whose membership includes public officials, private individuals, post-secondary education representatives, workforce development representatives, economic development professionals, and other stakeholders throughout the region. The SGRC provides technical, planning, community and economic development assistance, and aging and workforce development services to the Southern Georgia region. The governing authority, or "Council," of the Regional Commission functions as the District Council in administering the District's EDA programs.

The membership of the SGRC Council includes representatives from all 18 counties as well as 16 of the 45 municipalities in the region. The membership includes: (1) "County Official" - The chief elected official of each county's governing body; (2) "Municipal Official" - Mayor of the county seat; (3) "Private Official" - One private-sector official from each county representing any for-profit enterprise, management official, or executive holding a key decision making position (or designee); (4) Three (3) At-Large Appointments by the Governor of Georgia, (5) One (1) At-Large Appointment by the Lieutenant Governor of Georgia; and, (6) One (1) At-Large Appointment by the Speaker of the House. Currently the SGRC Council representation includes: 33 public officials (Echols & Brantley Counties and the City of Ashburn have vacancies), 16 private officials (Cook & Turner Counties have vacancies), and 4 At-Large officials. (The Governor's office has a vacancy). The Southern Georgia Regional Commission is in compliance with EDA and State of Georgia governing membership requirements.

SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL

County Representative		Municipal Representative	Private Sector Representative
Atkinson	Tommy Guthrie	Ellie Morris	Felton Morris
Bacon	Roger Boatright	Peggy Murphy	Lisa Coley
Ben Hill	Philip Jay	Mark Massee	Lavonia Stepherson
Berrien	Doc Sumner	Travis Harper	Crissy Staley
Brantley	Vacant	Jeffrey Lee	Richard Thornton
Brooks	Howard Lawson	Curtis Pickels	Andrew Jackson
Charlton	John Meyer	Melad Smith	Austin Hickox
Clinch	Kenton McLaine	Peg Blitch	Willie Hardee
Coffee	Charles Deen	James Dennis	Adam Smith
Cook	Michael Dinnerman	Buddy Duke	Vacant
Echols	Derek Herring	Vacant	Willie Collier
Irwin	Joey Whitley	Lamar Royal	Hazel McCranie
Lanier	Ronnie Bennett	Bill Darsey	Sandy Sanders
Lowndes	Joyce Evans	John Gayle	Robert Jefferson
Pierce	Mitch Bowen	Mary Lott Walker	Andy Brannen
Tift	Grady Thompson	Jamie Cater	Ronald Nixon
Turner	Daryl Hall	Vacant	Vacant
Ware	Carlos Nelson	Clarence Billups	Richard Henderson
	Terri Lupo	Lt. Governor’s Office	Keith Stone
Governor’s Office	Gary Strickland		
	Vacant	Speaker’s Office	Randy Crenshaw

SGRC WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (WIB) – AREAS 18 & 19

Area 18 WIB - Valdosta

Pauline Council, Chair
- Private Sector Rep

Jo Wingate, Vice Chair
Tifton - Private Sector Rep

Bernice Street, Parliamentarian
Fitzgerald - Private Sector Rep

Joyce Aigen
- Private Sector Rep

Emily Castleberry
Valdosta - Private Sector Rep

Sandra Cooper
Quitman - Private Sector Rep

Buddy Duke
Adel - Private Sector Rep

Bill Leverette
Ashburn - Private Sector Rep

Beth Veal
- Private Sector Rep

Patricia Smith
Valdosta – Community
Based Organization

Scott Orenstein
Valdosta – Private Sector Rep

Myrna Ballard
Valdosta - Economic Development

Gail Tabor
Valdosta – Dept. of Labor
Title V Older Americans Act

Tony Miller
Valdosta - Organized Labor

Shelley Zorn
Ashburn - Economic Development

Richard Ramsey
Tifton – Dept. of Labor
WIA Title I

Dr. Amanda Brown
Valdosta - Community
Based Organization

Carmen Wilkinson
Valdosta - Telamon
WIA Title I

Margaret Duncan
Valdosta - Vocational Rehab. Act

Niles Reddick, PhD
Tifton - Education

Jerry Connell
Adel – Economic Development

Dr. Ray Perren
Valdosta - Education

Linda A. Ray
Valdosta – Organized Labor

Area 19 WIB - Waycross

Laura Bloom, Chair
Coffee – Private Sector Rep

Amy Baldwin, Vice Chair
Ware – Private Sector Rep

Darlene Strickland, Parliamentarian
Ware – Housing Authority

Steve Arnold
Ware – Organized Labor

Paul McMillan
Ware – Private Sector Rep

Frank Bannamon
Area – Dept. of Labor

Eddie Bennett
Pierce – Private Sector Rep & Older Americans

Sheila Braddock
Ware – Private Sector Rep

Andy Brannen
Pierce – Education & Economic Development

Keith Bryant
Ware – Private Sector Rep

Greg O'Quinn
Ware – Private Sector Rep

LaRahn Phillips
Coffee – Private Sector Rep

Donnie Chaney
Coffee – Private Sector Rep & Education

Renee Giedl
Area – Disabled Persons

William Hardy
Bacon – Private Sector Rep

Austin Hickox
Charlton – Welfare to Work

Melvin Johnson
Pierce – Community
Based Organization

Kleve Mathie
Brantley – Private Sector Rep

Myrtice Moore
Coffee – Migrant & Seasonal Farm Workers

Judy Nino
Area – Dept. of Family & Children Services

Jennifer Rowland
Bacon – Private Sector Rep

Gary Strickland
Brantley – Private Sector Rep

Gail Tabor
Area – Older Americans Act

Darlene Tait
Charlton – Private Sector Rep

Courtney Texada
Coffee – Private Sector Rep

Kim Vickers
Bacon – Community Based Organization

Benny Lariscy
Ware – Organized Labor

The CEDS Strategy Committee for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is served by members of the Area 18 Workforce Investment Board (Valdosta) and the Area 19 Workforce Investment Board (Waycross). The combined membership of 50 public and private sector individuals represents governments, business and industry, higher education, organized labor, housing authorities, and other community based organizations. Additionally, a Chief Elected Officials Executive Committee, made up of Mayors and County Commission Chairmen, provides oversight to the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB). A majority of the WIB/CEDS Strategy Committee members are private sector representatives from for-profit business/industry and are senior management officials or executives holding key decision making positions, or that person's designee.

The utilization of input and ideas from the diverse group of public officials and private sector representatives on the SGRC Council and the Strategy Committee ensures the inclusiveness of all demographic segments of the region in the CEDS planning process.

The Southern Georgia CEDS gives an overview of the region briefly describing geography, population, economy, labor and workforce development and use, education, transportation access, environment, and regional resources. It reviews the state of the Regional Economy and provides a list of achievable Goals and Objectives for the region, a Plan of Action to ensure success, and Performance Measures used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the 2013-2018 CEDS. Implementation of the goals identified in this plan is significant to the economic future of the SGRC District.

The final 2013-2018 CEDS, and subsequent Annual Reports, will be available on the Southern Georgia RC's website at www.sgrc.us. Making the CEDS readily available to local government officials, the CEDS Strategy Committee, and the general public will allow and encourage input into the implementation of the plan and will assist in the attainment of the goals and objectives.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. Background and Analysis of the Regional Economy

This analysis of the regional economy paints a realistic picture of the current economic development situation of the region with a discussion of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information.

II. Problems and Opportunities

This analysis contains strategic findings that identify problems and opportunities posed by external forces affecting Southern Georgia's regional economy. Past, present, and projected future economic development investments in the region are also considered and identified in this section, and economic clusters are analyzed and identified as well.

III. Public/Private Partnerships

This section illustrates the community and private sector participation in the development and implementation of the CEDS.

IV. Goals and Objectives: Defining Regional Expectations

This section sets forth goals and objectives to be achieved by solving the economic problems of the region. All strategic projects, programs, and activities identified in the CEDS work to fulfill the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. The goals represent broad, primary regional expectations. Objectives of the CEDS are more specific than goals, are clearly measureable, and are stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five-year time span of the CEDS. The goals and objectives are accompanied by implementation measures to ensure attainability.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Continued

V. Strategic Projects, Programs, and Activities

This section identifies regional projects, programs, and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. The projects, programs, and activities are separated into two categories: Suggested Projects List and Vital Projects List.

VI. Plan of Action

This section discusses the various methods that will be undertaken to implement the Goals and Objectives. These methods will promote economic development and opportunity, foster effective transportation services, enhance and protect the environment, maximize effective development of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy, promote the use of technology in economic development including access to high-speed telecommunications, balance resources through sound managements of physical development, and obtain and utilize adequate funds and other resources.

VII. Performance Measures

This section lists the performance measures that will be used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS. These performance measures are: the number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS, the number and types of investments that will be undertaken in the region, the number of jobs retained in the region, the amount of private sector investments in the region after the implementation of the CEDS, and the changes in the economic environment of the region.

SECTION I

BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS OF THE REGION

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) is an economic development planning district located in southern Georgia. The vast region covers South Central to Southeast Georgia. Agriculture, commercial timber production, and other rural development initiatives are all cornerstones of the Southern Georgia economy. However, the evidence of manufacturing is seen throughout the region and has helped to raise the per capita income, jobs creation and retention, and capital investments within the region. Valdosta, the major city and county seat of Lowndes, County, is the only designated Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) located in the District. The counties of Lowndes, Brooks, Echols, and Lanier are associated with the MSA. Valdosta has a growing manufacturing, warehouse, and distribution base. It is also home to Moody Air-force Base and Valdosta State University. The City of Fitzgerald (including Ben Hill County and Irwin County), City of Douglas (including Atkinson County and Coffee County) and City of Waycross (including Pierce County and Ware County) are defined as Micropolitan Statistical Areas. Micropolitan cities do not have the economic or political importance of large cities, but are nevertheless significant centers of population and production, drawing workers and shoppers from a wide local area. One county, Brantley, is associated with the Brunswick MSA, located outside the SGRC District. The District has three additional retail trade centers other than Valdosta, including Tifton, Douglas, and Waycross. Southern Georgia has several four-lane transportation arteries and is connected directly to one interstate highway system (I-75) on the western side of the region.

The economies of the SGRC region have become more diversified over the past twenty years; however, this diversity did not make the region immune to the national recession. The District has suffered from the ill-effects of numerous industry and business closures over the past five years, resulting in continual high unemployment. These trends also reflect structural changes in the region's economy that suggest decreased economic competitiveness. The economic base for the south-central area of the region is generated from within the south-central area and from north-central Florida. The southeastern economic base is generated from within the southeast area, the Georgia coastal area, and northeast Florida.

The majority of the eighteen counties in the SGRC area have experienced persistent economic distress and unemployment. Southern Georgia must find ways to reverse negative trends and move the region forward through regional initiatives aimed at fostering sustainable economic development. Goals for economic development need to be integrated with land use and transportation goals and coordinated with the concerns related to natural resources, preservation of water quality, agriculture, and connectivity in the region.

Barriers to economic prosperity in Southern Georgia are numerous. One of many barriers continues to be the lack of adequate funding to fully serve the planning and economic development needs of this extremely large and distressed region. Planning grants, such as those offered by EDA, are essential for providing the tools necessary to assist the Southern Georgia region in realizing its fullest potential.

COUNTY FACTS

Atkinson County
Area: 338.1 square miles
Population: 8,375
County Seat: Pearson
Incorporated Communities:
Pearson, Willacoochee
Established: August 15, 1917

Bacon County
Area: 285 square miles
Population: 11,096
County Seat: Alma
Incorporated Communities:
Alma
Established: July 27, 1917

Ben Hill County
Area: 251.8 square miles
Population: 17,634
County Seat: Fitzgerald
Incorporated Communities:
Fitzgerald
Established: July 31, 1906

Berrien County
Area: 452.5 square miles
Population: 19,286
County Seat: Nashville
Incorporated Communities:
Nashville, Alapaha, Enigma, Ray City
Established: February 25, 1856

Brantley County
Area: 444.4 square miles
Population: 18,411
County Seat: Nahunta
Incorporated Communities:
Nahunta, Hoboken
Established: August 14, 1920

Brooks County
Area: 493.7 square miles
Population: 16,243
County Seat: Quitman
Incorporated Communities:
Quitman, Barwick, Morven, Pavo
Established: December 11, 1858

Charlton County
Area:780.8 square miles
Population: 12,171
County Seat: Folkston
Incorporated Communities:
Folkston, Homeland
Established: February 18, 1854

Clinch County
Area: 809.4 square miles
Population: 6,798
County Seat: Homerville
Incorporated Communities:
Homerville, Argyle, Dupont, Fargo
Established: February 14, 1850

Coffee County
Area: 602.4 square miles
Population: 42,356
County Seat: Douglas
Incorporated Communities:
Douglas, Ambrose, Broxton, Nicholls
Established: February 9, 1854

Cook County
Area: 299.1 square miles
Population: 17,212
County Seat: Adel
Incorporated Communities:
Adel, Cecil, Lenox, Sparks
Established: July 30, 1918

Echols County
Area: 404.2 square miles
Population: 4,034
County Seat: Statenville
Incorporated Communities:
None
Established: Dec. 13, 1858

Irwin County
Area: 356.8 square miles
Population: 9,538
County Seat: Ocilla
Incorporated Communities:
Ocilla
Established: December 15, 1818

COUNTY FACTS

Lanier County
Area: 186.8 square miles
Population: 10,078
County Seat: Lakeland
Incorporated Communities: Lakeland
Established: August 7, 1920

Lowndes County
Area: 504.3 square miles
Population: 109,233
County Seat: Valdosta
Incorporated Communities: Valdosta, Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton
Established: Dec. 23, 1825

Pierce County
Area: 343 square miles
Population: 18,758
County Seat: Blackshear
Incorporated Communities: Blackshear, Offerman, Patterson
Established: December 18, 1857

Tift County
Area: 265.1square miles
Population: 40,118
County Seat: Tifton
Incorporated Communities: Tifton, Omega, Ty Ty
Established: August 17, 1905

Turner County
Area: 286.1 square miles
Population: 8,930
County Seat: Ashburn
Incorporated Communities: Ashburn, Rebecca, Sycamore
Established: August 18, 1905

Ware County
Area: 902.6 square miles
Population: 36,312
County Seat: Waycross
Incorporated Communities: Waycross
Established: December 15, 1824

A. ECONOMY

Income Characteristics 2010 Census 2006-2010 ACS B17010; S1701; B19301; B19113;

County	Median Household Income $	Median Family Income $	Families Below Poverty Level	%	Individuals Below Poverty Level	%	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate %
Atkinson	33,834	34,859	401	19.8	2,331	28	3,062	16.2
Bacon	31,429	45,442	311	11.6	1,723	16.5	4,485	10.3
Ben Hill	30,134	35,868	1012	22.7	4,635	26.9	6,998	14.4
Berrien	32,202	40,869	929	18.2	4,145	23.1	7,933	12.0
Brantley	37,343	43,028	895	18.2	3,730	21.4	7,210	11.6
Brooks	41,309	47,599	682	14.7	2,687	17	7,792	8.8
Charlton	40,850	45,913	454	18.1	2,261	19.8	4,276	11.5
Clinch	31,963	45,350	324	19.1	1,732	25.7	2,691	11.6
Coffee	35,202	39,880	1957	18.3	8,274	21.3	15,323	17.1
Cook	31,390	37,352	939	21.3	3,854	23.3	6,689	13.0
Echols	32,390	33,664	227	21.4	1,274	32.1	2,133	7.1
Irwin	38,376	51,262	369	14.9	2,344	25.4	3,909	13.8
Lanier	37,522	43,162	488	17.9	1,858	20.4	4,022	9.3
Lowndes	39,096	48,296	3905	15.3	21,690	21.6	52,399	8.8
Pierce	37,062	47,157	669	13.6	2,767	15.4	8,578	9.7
Tift	36,847	45,376	1758	16.9	8,919	22.8	18,308	12.0
Turner	30,763	40,446	509	22.7	2,130	25.4	4,274	13.4
Ware	35,517	47,809	1453	16.7	6,869	20.5	14,732	11.3

Per Capita Income Comparison – Georgia Trend April 2012

County	Rank in Region 2001	Year 2001 Per Capita Income $	Rank in Region 2011	Year 2011 Per Capita Income $	Rank in State	% Average Annual Growth
Brooks	6	21,552	1	30,678	52	4.2
Lowndes	2	23,032	2	30,431	57	3.2
Tift	1	23,234	3	30,423	59	3.1
Turner	12	19,624	4	28,196	89	4.4
Ware	7	21,286	5	27,639	94	3.0
Irwin	10	21,002	6	27,483	98	3.1
Pierce	5	21,751	7	27,411	100	2.6
Berrien	4	22,130	8	27,044	108	2.2
Ben Hill	3	22,365	9	26,902	110	2.0
Clinch	16	17,541	10	25,410	127	4.5
Cook	13	19,202	11	25,174	129	3.1
Coffee	8	21,029	12	24,900	132	1.8
Bacon	9	21,003	13	24,640	135	1.7
Echols	17	16,769	14	23,720	141	4.1
Lanier	11	19,861	15	22,409	148	1.3
Brantley	14	18,827	16	22,211	151	1.8
Atkinson	15	18,719	17	22,132	152	1.8
Charlton	18	15,750	18	20,382	155	2.9
Fulton		47,304		57,410	1	2.1
Telfair		18,040		16,937	159	-0.6
State Average		29.346		35,920		2.2

Income

- **Regional Income Figures:**
  - Average median household income = $35,179
  - Average median family income = $42,964
  - Per Capita Income average =$17,143
  - Irwin County has largest median family income at $51,262, in spite of having a -0.4% population loss between 2000 and 2010. Clinch and Brooks County also have higher median family incomes, yet lost population over the ten year period.

- **Regional Poverty Figures:**
  - Average poverty rate = 22.6%
  - Highest poverty rate = Echols County, 32.1%
  - Lowest poverty rate = Pierce County, 15.4%
  - Fourteen of the Region's eighteen counties are considered to be areas of persistent poverty (more than 20% of a county's population lives below the poverty threshold). The four counties that were below the 20% threshold were Bacon, Brooks, Pierce and Charlton County.

- **Regional Unemployment Figures (July 2012):**
  - Average unemployment rate = 11.0%
  - Highest unemployment rate = Atkinson & Ben Hill Counties, 14.4%
  - Lowest unemployment rate = Echols County, 7.9%

Business Summary 2010 GDOL, Area Labor Profiles

	Total # Businesses	Agriculture & Mining		Construction		Manuf/Transp Warehouse		Retail Trade		Information		Health care		Other Service		Govt		Other	
Atkinson	131	9	6.9	3	2.3	20	15.3	27	20.6	0	0	7	5.3	39	29.8	23	17.6	3	2.3
Bacon	282	29	10.2	13	4.6	40	14.2	50	17.7	3	1.0	15	5.3	96	34.0	27	9.6	9	3.2
Ben Hill	390	14	3.6	25	6.4	39	10.0	78	20.0	7	1.8	34	8.7	158	40.5	31	7.9	4	1.0
Berrien	309	16	5.2	26	8.4	24	7.8	66	21.4	3	1.0	27	8.7	109	35.3	28	9.1	10	3.2
Brantley	222	15	6.8	37	16.6	22	9.9	33	14.9	3	1.4	11	4.9	66	29.8	31	14.0	4	1.8
Brooks	276	37	13.4	25	9.4	16	5.8	44	15.9	3	1.1	18	6.5	104	37.7	28	10.1	7	2.5
Charlton	169	14	8.3	12	7.1	14	8.3	33	19.5	1	0.6	9	5.3	58	34.5	22	13.0	6	3.6
Clinch	179	33	18.4	8	4.5	12	6.7	25	14.0	3	1.7	9	5.0	59	33.0	32	17.9	1	0.5
Coffee	933	30	3.2	68	7.3	92	9.9	190	20.4	10	1.1	81	8.7	375	40.2	57	6.1	31	3.3
Cook	368	28	7.6	32	8.7	43	11.7	59	16.0	5	1.4	31	8.4	129	35.1	35	9.5	7	2.0
Echols	50	15	30	6	12.0	3	6.0	2	4.0	0	0.0	3	6.0	9	18.0	10	20	2	4.0
Irwin	163	9	5.5	13	7.8	11	6.8	32	19.6	3	1.8	14	8.6	54	33.1	24	14.7	3	1.8
Lanier	143	9	6.3	16	11.2	13	9.1	22	15.4	1	0.7	12	8.4	28	19.6	20	14.0	2	1.4
Lowndes	2,919	37	6.3	270	9.2	184	6.3	503	17.2	35	1.2	341	11.7	1,364	46.7	119	4.0	66	2.3
Pierce	351	21	6.0	60	17.0	37	10.5	59	16.8	2	0.6	21	6.0	120	34.3	24	6.8	7	2.0
Tift	1,209	49	4.0	99	8.2	83	6.7	228	18.8	13	1.1	110	9.0	529	43.8	72	5.9	26	2.1
Turner	175	6	3.4	6	3.4	17	9.7	31	17.7	2	1.1	9	5.1	77	44.0	24	13.7	3	1.7
Ware	1,006	27	2.7	84	8.4	67	6.7	191	19.0	16	1.6	123	12.2	420	41.7	67	6.6	11	1.1

Business Summary

- The majority of businesses in the region are classified as **Other Services** such as Insurance, Banking, etc (41%) or **Retail Trade** (18%). **Construction** and **Manufacturing** are the next largest industry sectors, constituting 8.7% and 8.0% of all businesses respectively. The "other" category captures all businesses that are not specifically mentioned under the main categories in the table.

- The **Information Technology** and **Healthcare Industries** are the smallest industries in all counties. Given the aging of the population, more attention should be focused on providing quality healthcare throughout the region. Focus should also be given to the Information Technology Sector which is attractive to college graduates and encourages home-based start-up businesses that do not require a significant amount of capital, but significantly increases the skilled workforce.

- It is interesting to note that although most of our region is rural, only three counties Echols (3.0%), Clinch (18.4%), and Brooks (13.4%) have higher percentages in **Agriculture** than in either of the two largest industries of **Other Services** and **Retail Trade**. These numbers would support the idea that the region is moving from an agricultural and manufacturing base to the service industries.

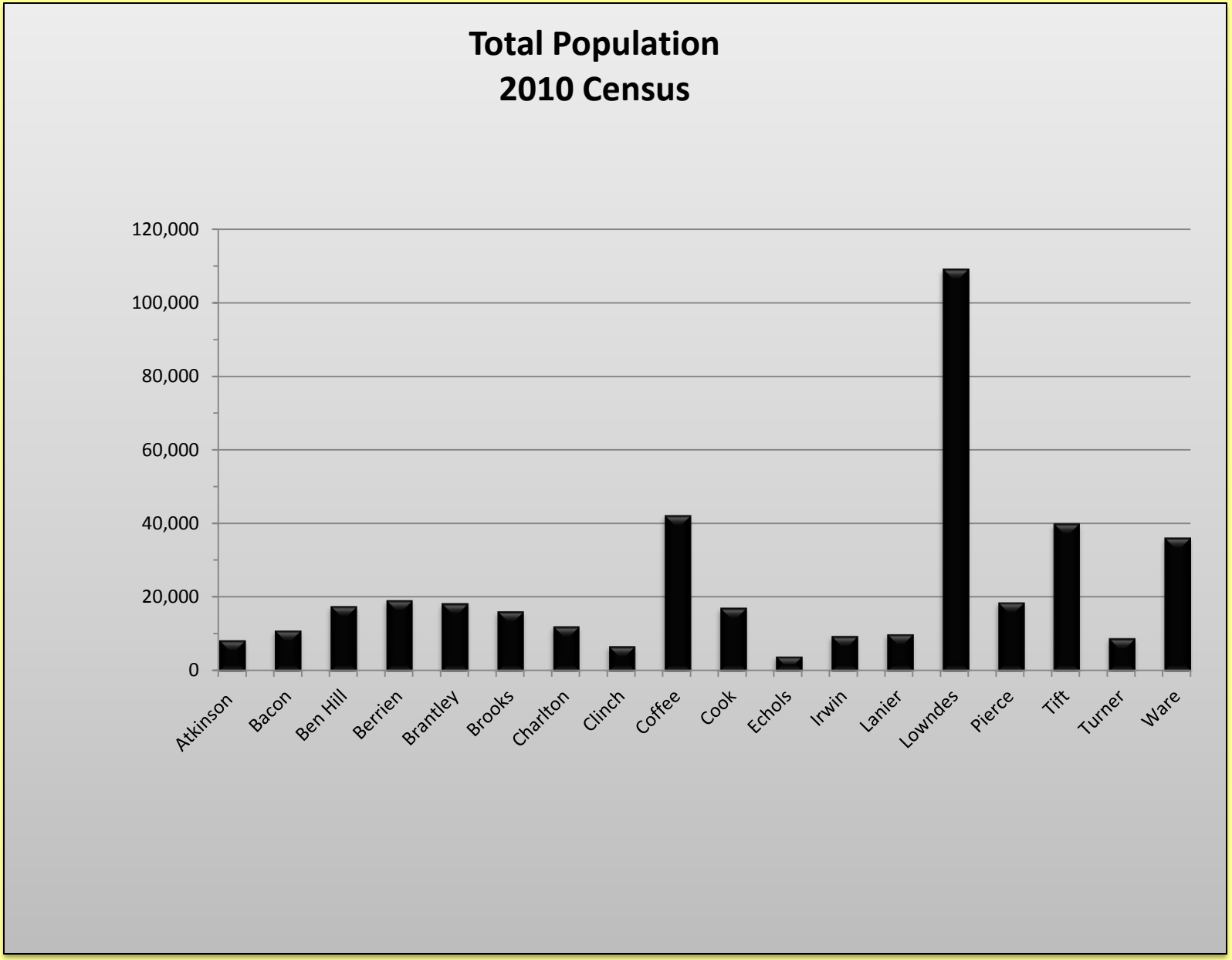
Employment Comparison– Georgia Trend April 2012

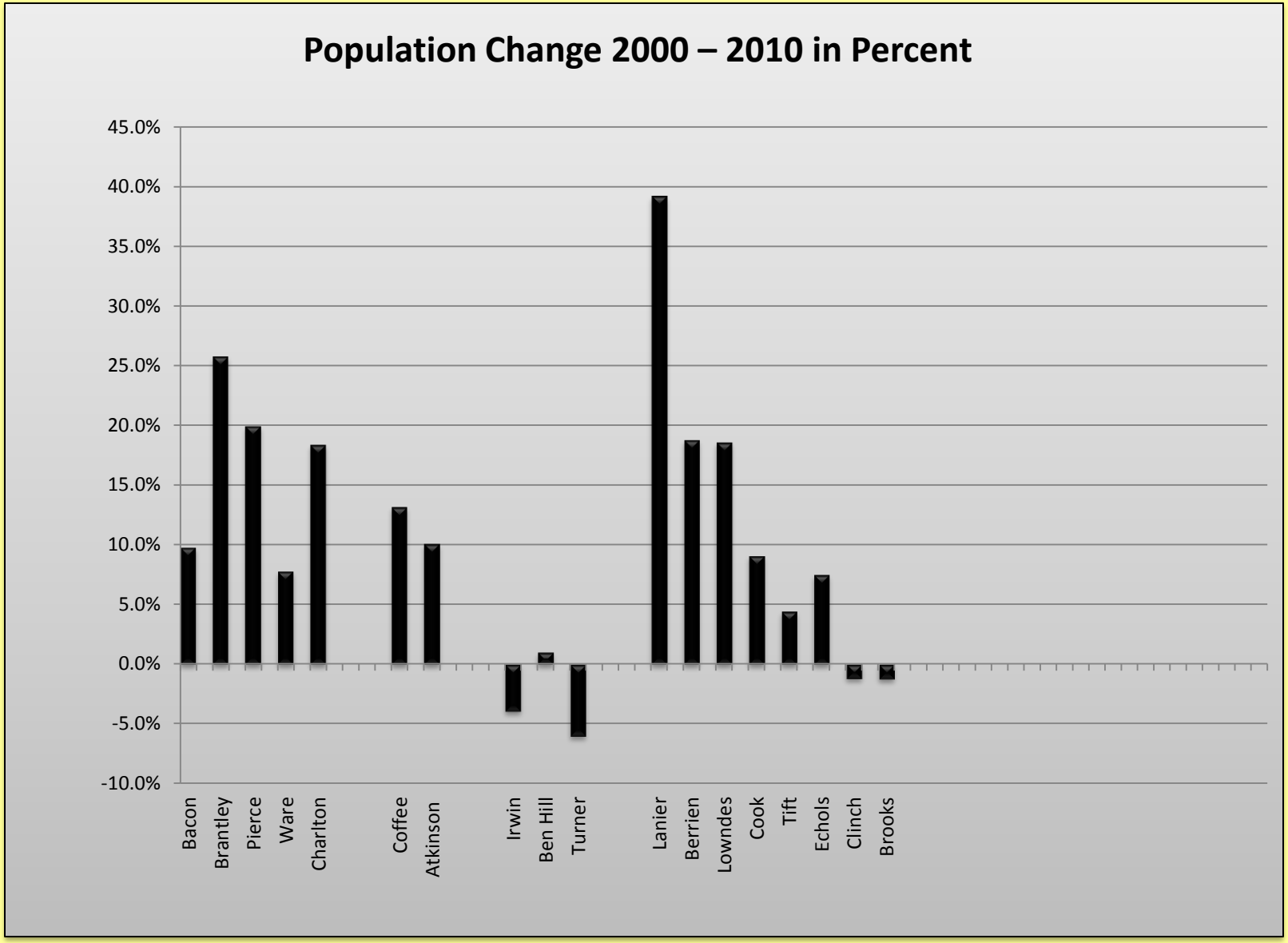
County	Rank in Region 2001	Year 2001 Employment	Rank in Region 2011	Year 2011 Employment	Rank in State	% Average Annual Growth
Lowndes	1	43,310	1	45,440	17	0.5
Tift	2	20,517	2	17,857	37	-1.3
Ware	4	15,431	3	14,537	42	-0.6
Coffee	3	17,682	4	14,336	44	-1.9
Ben Hill	5	8,135	5	5,835	78	-2.8
Cook	6	5,607	6	3,858	97	-3.1
Berrien	7	4,425	7	3,752	98	-1.5
Bacon	9	3,514	8	3,696	100	0.5
Pierce	8	3,853	9	3,607	102	-0.6
Brooks	10	3,193	10	3,187	109	0.0
Clinch	14	2,262	11	2,649	118	1.7
Charlton	13	2,269	12	2,136	124	-0.6
Irwin	12	2,459	13	2,050	125	-1.7
Brantley	15	1,972	14	2,045	126	0.4
Turner	11	2,594	15	1,883	128	-2.7
Atkinson	16	1,702	16	1,502	136	-1.2
Lanier	17	1,330	17	1,363	139	0.3
Echols	18	960	18	786	153	-1.8
Fulton		758,803		710,347	1	-0.6
Telfair		183		185	159	-0.6
State Total		3,873,985		3,774,613		-0.3

Employment Comparison

- Twelve of the eighteen counties experienced a loss of employment for the period 2001 – 2011.
- Five counties gained employment; Clinch (1.7%), Lowndes (0.5%), Bacon (0.5%), Brantley (0.4%), and Lanier (0.3%).
- Pierce County had no (0.0%) change.
- Of the twelve counties that lost employment, all had a larger loss percentage than that of the State of Georgia.

B. POPULATION


Total Population
2010 Census
120,000
100,000
80,000
60,000
40,000
20,000
0
Atkinson
Bacon
Ben Hill
Berrien
Brantley
Brooks
Charlton
Clinch
Coffee
Cook
Echols
Irwin
Lanier
Lowndes
Pierce
Tift
Turner
Ware


Population Change 2000 – 2010 in Percent
45.0%
40.0%
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
-5.0%
-10.0%
Bacon
Brantley
Pierce
Ware
Charlton
Coffee
Atkinson
Irwin
Ben Hill
Turner
Lanier
Berrien
Lowndes
Cook
Tift
Echols
Clinch
Brooks

Population Ranking – Georgia Trend April 2012

County	Rank in Region 2001	Year 2001 Population	Rank in Region 2011	Year 2011 Population	Rank in State	% Average Annual Growth
Lowndes	1	92,402	1	111,637	20	2.1
Coffee	2	38,350	2	42,566	47	1.1
Tift	3	38,133	3	40,367	49	0.6
Ware	4	35,426	4	36,355	51	0.3
Berrien	6	16,392	5	19,540	91	1.9
Pierce	9	15,811	6	19,075	92	2.1
Brantley	10	15,093	7	18,755	93	2.4
Ben Hill	5	17,315	8	17,605	99	0.2
Cook	8	15,885	9	17,303	100	0.9
Brooks	7	16,307	10	16,099	105	-0.1
Charlton	11	10,675	11	12,094	118	1.3
Bacon	12	10,133	12	11,126	121	1.0
Lanier	16	7,253	13	10,528	126	4.5
Irwin	13	9,953	14	9,406	130	-0.5
Turner	14	9,512	15	8,865	137	-0.7
Atkinson	15	7,641	16	8,371	140	1.0
Clinch	17	6,901	17	6,762	147	-0.2
Echols	18	3,774	18	4,066	153	0.8
Fulton		820,213		943,334	1	1.5
Taliaferro		2,031		1,651	159	-1.9
State Total		8,377,038		9,815,210		1.7

Population

- The total population for the Southern Georgia Region increased **from 366,956 in 2001 to 410,520 in 2011**, a **1.2%** population change in those 10 years. The State of Georgia's population increased by 1.7 percent during the same period.

- Growth centers within the region account for much of the population increases. Lanier County had the largest percentage increase in population (7,241 in 2000 to 10,078 in 2010) of 39.2% percent, due primarily to its proximity to Moody Air Force Base (MAFB), lower property values and taxes and a good school system. The military base and the nearby growth in the north-east portions of Valdosta also contributed to population increases in Lowndes and Berrien County.

- The growth along the coastal counties to the east and influx from Florida, particularly the Jacksonville metropolitan area, drove the population increases in the eastern portions of the region. For example, the second largest population increase of 25.9% occurred in Brantley County from 14,629 in 2000 to 18,411 in 2010. Large population increases also occurred in Pierce and Charlton County due to these nearby growth centers.

- Four of the eighteen counties in the region experienced a loss in population between 2000 and 2010. Turner County experienced the highest loss with 6%, followed by Irwin County with a 4.0% population decrease. In addition, Clinch and Brooks Counties had a 1% population decline. The loss in population is due in part to the lack of job growth. Lack of job opportunities fails to attract new residents to these counties. Lack of jobs especially for those between 18 and 24 years have forced this population group to move outside those counties to work and live.

Population By Race

County	Pop.	White	%	African Am	%	Am Indian	%	Asian	%	Other	%
Atkinson	8,375	5,213	62.24	1,453	17.35	47	0.57	23	0.27	1,639	19.57
Bacon	11,096	8,725	78.63	1,704	15.36	20	0.18	38	0.34	609	5.49
Ben Hill	17,634	10,446	59.24	6,104	34.61	56	0.32	126	0.71	902	5.12
Berrien	19,286	16,327	84.66	2,063	10.70	56	0.28	82	0.43	758	3.93
Brantley	18,411	17,380	94.40	538	2.92	58	0.31	38	0.21	397	2.16
Brooks	16,243	9,722	59.85	5,729	35.27	49	0.31	51	0.31	692	4.26
Charlton	12,171	8,352	68.62	3,464	28.46	45	0.38	76	0.62	234	1.92
Clinch	6,798	4,581	67.39	1,886	27.74	44	0.65	13	0.19	274	4.03
Coffee	42,356	27,386	64.66	11,283	26.64	117	0.27	303	0.72	3,267	7.71
Cook	17,212	11,525	66.96	4,704	27.33	40	0.23	114	0.66	829	4.82
Echols	4,034	3,023	74.94	171	4.24	72	1.78	13	0.32	755	18.72
Irwin	9,538	6,811	71.41	2,472	25.92	2	0.02	61	0.64	192	2.01
Lanier	10,078	7,118	70.63	2,390	23.72	53	0.52	103	1.02	414	4.11
Lowndes	109,233	63,485	58.12	39,142	35.83	416	0.38	1,591	1.46	4,599	4.21
Pierce	18,758	16,293	86.86	1,666	8.88	80	0.43	59	0.31	660	3.52
Tift	40,118	24,645	61.43	11,618	28.96	85	0.21	512	1.28	3,258	8.12
Turner	8,930	4,886	54.71	3,712	41.57	29	0.32	40	0.45	263	2.95
Ware	36,312	24,103	66.38	10,721	29.52	120	0.33	279	0.77	1,089	3.00
SGRC Total	406,583	270,021	66.41	110,820	27.26	1,389	0.34	3,522	0.87	20,831	5.12

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Population by Race

Population By Ethnicity

County	Hispanic/Latino	%	Non-Hispanic/Latino	%
Atkinson	2,039	24.35	6,336	75.65
Bacon	791	7.13	10,305	92.87
Ben Hill	1,026	5.82	16,608	94.18
Berrien	885	4.59	18,401	95.41
Brantley	343	1.86	18,068	98.14
Brooks	853	5.25	15,390	94.75
Charlton	310	2.55	11,861	97.45
Clinch	236	3.47	6,562	96.53
Coffee	4,352	10.27	38,004	89.73
Cook	1,024	5.95	16,188	94.05
Echols	1,183	29.33	2,851	70.67
Irwin	228	2.39	9,310	97.61
Lanier	461	4.57	9,617	95.43
Lowndes	5,238	4.80	103,995	95.20
Pierce	887	4.73	17,871	95.27
Tift	4,037	10.06	36,081	89.94
Turner	282	3.16	8,648	96.84
Ware	1,207	3.32	35,105	96.68
SGRC Total	25,382	6.24	381,201	93.76

Source: U.S. Census Bureau: 2010 Population by Ethnicity

Race

•The Southern Georgia region primarily consists of two races; white (or Caucasian) and Black (or African American). Approximately 66 percent of the region is classified as White, or Caucasian, and approximately 27 percent of the region is classified as Black, or African American. Hispanics make up slightly 6.2 percent of the regional population, and other races including American Indian and Asian make up the remainder of the population in the District.

•The highest percentage of the White population is found in the counties of Brantley (94 percent) and Pierce (86 percent). The highest percentage of the Black population is found in Turner (42 percent), Lowndes (36 percent), and Ben Hill and Brooks (35 percent).

•A significant trend to watch is the projected growth of the Hispanic population in counties that are heavily involved in agriculture and agri-business. Atkinson County with a 24 percent Hispanic population and Echols County with a 29 percent Hispanic population are facing a crucial time in the near future. The “rapid growth” in the Hispanic population taking place in these and other counties is straining public services in the areas of education, healthcare, law enforcement, and housing.

Age Distribution 2010 2010 Census QT-P1;

County	Under 5	%	5 – 17	%	18-24	%	25-44	%	45-64	%	65 - 84	%	85 and over	%
Atkinson	708	8.5	1,722	20.5	804	9.6	2,282	27.2	1,969	23.5	824	9.8	66	0.8
Bacon	825	7.4	2,001	18.1	944	8.5	2,989	26.9	2,857	25.7	1,354	10.7	126	0.8
Ben Hill	1,398	7.9	3,270	18.6	1,515	8.6	4,338	24.6	4,645	26.3	2,181	12.4	287	1.6
Berrien	1,325	6.9	3,614	18.7	1,679	8.7	4,902	25.4	5,102	26.5	2,413	12.5	251	1.3
Brantley	1,326	7.2	3,567	19.4	1,544	8.4	4,680	25.4	5,034	27.3	2,091	11.4	169	0.9
Brooks	1,095	6.7	2,755	17.0	1,401	8.6	3,822	23.5	4,610	28.4	2,296	14.2	264	1.6
Charlton	728	6.0	1,914	15.7	1,153	9.5	3,575	29.4	3,258	26.8	1,412	11.6	131	1.1
Clinch	526	7.7	1,317	19.4	618	9.1	1,638	24.1	1,831	26.9	799	11.8	69	1.0
Coffee	3,113	7.3	7,988	18.9	4,384	10.4	11,723	27.7	10,457	24.7	4,197	9.9	494	1.2
Cook	1,305	7.6	3,377	19.6	1,534	8.9	4,363	25.3	4,313	25.1	2,063	12.0	257	1.5
Echols	358	8.9	825	20.4	404	10.0	1,184	29.4	865	21.4	369	9.2	29	0.7
Irwin	602	6.3	1,713	18.0	819	8.6	2,470	25.9	2,449	25.7	1,300	13.7	185	1.9
Lanier	896	6.9	1,872	20.6	963	9.6	2,858	28.4	2,385	23.7	1,027	10.2	77	0.8
Lowndes	8,264	7.6	18,706	17.1	19,016	17.4	28,856	26.4	23,698	21.7	9,549	8.8	1,144	1.0
Pierce	1,309	7.0	3,587	19.1	1,432	7.6	4,777	25.5	5,022	26.8	2,368	12.6	263	1.4
Tift	2,960	7.4	7,400	18.4	4,824	12.0	10,033	25.0	9,777	24.4	4471	11.2	652	1.6
Turner	597	6.7	1,606	18.0	836	9.4	2,159	24.2	2,331	26.1	1,216	13.6	185	2.1
Ware	2,500	6.9	6,057	16.7	3,464	9.5	9,209	25.4	9,551	26.3	4,747	13.0	784	2.2

Age Distribution

In the Southern Georgia region the:

- 5 and under age group is 7% of the population.
- 5-17 age group is 18% of the population.
- 18-24 age group is 12% of the population.
- 25-44 age group is 26% of the population.
- 45-64 age group is 25% of the population.
- 65-84 age group is 11% of the population.
- 85 and over age group is 1% of the population.

C. GEOGRAPHY

•The Southern Georgia Regional Commission stretches from the central portion of South Georgia, where it borders the State of Florida on Interstate-75, and then spans across the State to the eastern portion of Southern Georgia, where it borders the State of Florida at the northeast Florida line on US #1. This vast region, that spans approximately 8,000 square miles, is the largest Regional Commission and Economic Development District in Georgia, both in number of member counties served, and in land area.

•The entire region is located in the Southern Coastal Plain physiographic province, which occupies the southern two-thirds of the State of Georgia. The Coastal Plain province is broken down into more detailed provinces. The majority of the eighteen counties in the region are situated in the Tifton Uplands classification. The balance of the region is divided somewhat equally among the Vidalia Upland, Bacon Terraces, and the Okefenokee Basin classification. Finally, Brantley County is situated in the Barrier Island Sequence classification. With the exception of the Okefenokee Basin and the Barrier Island Sequence, most of the region's land surface is nearly level to gently sloping and is dissected with numerous shallow rivers and streams, which generally flow north and south. The largest of these rivers are the Alapaha, Ocmulgee, Suwannee, Satilla, St. Mary's, Willacoochee, and Withlacoochee Rivers.

•For the most part, the region's topography and vegetation cover is such that notable views and vistas are not present. However, in the southeastern portion of the region lies the 375,829 acre Okefenokee Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is located in southern Ware County, western Charlton County, and eastern Clinch County. Vast tracts of watery "prairie," cypress and oak hammocks, new growth cypress, and some upland pine forests characterize these three counties. The Barrier Island Sequence, found in Brantley County, features a low, flat, and swampy terrain with mostly slash and loblolly pine and oak-gum-cypress forest in low-lying area and pasture land.

•Most of the region is greater than 200 feet above sea level, with the lowest elevations found generally in the southeastern portion of the District and the highest elevations found in the north. The region's highest elevation is greater than 480 feet along hilltops in western Turner County. The region's lowest elevation is 20 feet below sea level at Burnt Fort in Charlton County near the St. Mary's River.

•All 18-counties in the SGRC region are currently in various stages of updating their Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans. The purpose of this plan is to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural hazards and their effects. Additionally, areas of significant risk, such as the wildfire-prone Okefenokee Swamp, are identified and addressed. These Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans are included in the CEDS by reference in this paragraph.

D. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT & USE

Workforce Development through education and training is a critical need for economic development in Southern Georgia. Statistics show that a high poverty, low diversity region can turn away both potential employers and a potential workforce. Low literacy and educational attainment can cripple attempts at industry diversification towards high skill/high wage job growth. If higher paying industries are to be recruited to the region, then higher skilled employees must be trained and made available. Education and training are recognized as critical needs. Fortunately, there are a number of regionally significant programs available that are making a difference in the lives of many uneducated and/or untrained worker in the region. They are:

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Training and Education Programs & Southern and Southeast Georgia Workforce Investment Boards

- Technical Colleges
  - Wiregrass Georgia Technical College (Adel, Douglas , Fitzgerald, Nashville, and Valdosta)
  - Moultrie Technical College (Satellite campus in Tifton)
  - Okefenokee Technical College (Waycross and Alma)

- Two and Four-Year Colleges and University
  - Georgia Military College, Webster University, Park University, and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (Satellite Campuses in Valdosta)
  - South Georgia College, Douglas, & Waycross College, Waycross (These institutions will consolidate effective January 1, 2013, becoming South Georgia State College.)
  - Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Tifton
  - Troy University, Tifton satellite campus
  - University of Georgia, Tifton satellite campus
  - Valdosta State University

Educational Attainment of Workforce over 18 2010 Census B15001

County		Less than 9th Grade		9th to 12th grade, no diploma		High School Graduate, GED or equivalent		Some College, no degree		Associate's Degree		Bachelor's Degree		Graduate or professional Degree	
	Total	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Atkinson	5815	575	350	585	455	1136	1235	316	438	162	144	84	169	50	116
Bacon	8087	364	557	840	622	1856	1735	478	798	92	180	87	163	136	144
Ben Hill	12923	672	436	1184	1509	2546	2661	1034	1181	116	348	383	433	242	339
Berrien	13871	659	774	1278	1455	2449	2338	1113	1334	561	570	409	493	232	206
Brantley	12920	434	352	1264	994	3119	3147	1123	1189	241	496	147	156	61	195
Brooks	12458	524	402	1193	759	2365	2153	924	1696	227	375	448	762	321	304
Charlton	9455	289	258	1280	572	2461	1788	638	1126	237	164	229	138	85	155
Clinch	5040	265	184	550	474	1045	997	350	216	40	151	178	275	151	164
Coffee	30528	1342	1132	2639	2970	6414	5234	2420	2991	923	1677	1082	735	500	737
Cook	12329	534	481	1379	920	1990	2640	1213	1417	222	410	413	331	118	214
Echols	2691	225	208	258	171	693	525	204	161	28	60	18	71	18	48
Irwin	7234	445	261	934	651	1345	1241	499	818	176	277	153	107	108	224
Lanier	6803	360	136	759	502	1241	1320	550	778	142	408	209	149	129	99
Lowndes	78952	1918	1761	7084	4398	11896	12411	10226	11661	2734	2877	4376	5184	2402	2665
Pierce	13408	694	595	977	823	2774	2629	1244	1831	262	449	384	256	174	287
Tift	29357	1297	1183	2241	2964	4627	4816	2846	3628	991	1153	1076	1187	810	954
Turner	6574	257	300	963	537	1088	1202	479	539	74	361	130	298	111	223
Ware	27281	969	867	2492	1746	5655	5497	2368	3249	616	851	606	846	670	838

Education of the Labor Force SGRC Region B15008 2006-2010 ACS 5 year estimates

	Total	18-24	%	25 – 34	%	35-44	%	45-64	%	65+	%
Less than 9th Grade	22790	1336	5.9	2645	11.6	3829	16.8	6148	27.0	8832	38.8
9th to 12th Grade no diploma	48033	9528	19.8	8137	16.9	7022	14.6	14681	30.6	8665	18.0
High School Graduate, GED or equivalent	102626	17115	16.7	16685	16.3	20528	20.0	31338	30.5	16960	16.5
Some College, no degree	63101	14986	23.7	12271	19.4	11451	18.1	17759	28.1	6634	10.5
Assoc. degree	18673	1956	10.5	4533	24.3	4255	22.8	6368	34.1	1561	8.4
Bachelor's degree	21706	1659	7.6	5122	23.6	4548	21.0	7822	36.0	2555	11.8
Graduate or prof. degree	14256	96	0.7	2308	16.2	2922	20.5	6636	46.5	2294	16.1

Education of the Labor Force

- The highest numbers for educational attainment in the region are for high school graduation, GED or equivalent for all age groups. Those numbers drop off drastically for post secondary education with a degree.
- As these numbers begin to decrease, however, a definite increase can be observed in the percentage of the 45-64 age group with a Bachelor's Degree or Graduate or Professional Degree, especially among woman. This seems to indicate that more people are going back to school later in life after rearing their families or retiring from work.
- A look at the educational attainment of the workforce by gender shows that males represent the vast majority of people without a high school diploma, possibly reflecting early recruitment into the workforce. Of those obtaining a high school diploma only, the number of males and females is fairly even. However, females represent a large majority of the population that obtains a some college education and beyond. This supports the above referenced idea that more people are returning to school, particularly for post secondary educations, after rearing their families.

E. TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

- Transport, or transportation, is the movement of people and goods from one location to another. Transport is performed by various modes such as air, rail, road, water, cable, pipeline, and space. The field can be divided into infrastructure, vehicles, and operations.

- Sufficient highway transportation is essential to commercial and industrial growth. Significant improvements have been made to the highway and road systems in the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in recent years. These improvements have helped to open up areas of the region for various types of development and growth and provide safer more efficient transportation arteries. However, many areas of this vast region are still plagued by deteriorating paved roads, miles of unpaved roads, and roadways without adequate capacity and connectivity for today's business and industry needs.

Travel Time to work 2010 US Census B08303

	Total	< 5 minutes	5 – 9 minutes	10 – 14 minutes	15 – 19 minutes	20 – 24 minutes	25 – 29 minutes	30 – 34 minutes	35 – 39 minutes	40 – 44 minutes	45 – 59 minutes	60 – 89 minutes	90 < minutes
Total													
Atkinson	2,996	244	371	255	455	427	162	549	111	103	146	137	36
Bacon	3,927	384	993	585	666	141	39	448	122	33	191	166	179
Ben Hill	5,883	209	984	1,552	1,363	353	292	414	81	43	296	113	183
Berrien	6,893	426	776	807	1,362	1,054	425	910	120	57	477	340	139
Brantley	7,082	280	355	538	857	733	411	1,518	257	427	944	686	76
Brooks	6,923	308	798	495	1,361	1,156	770	1,110	120	177	363	126	139
Charlton	4,149	216	528	499	324	205	166	372	332	142	670	619	76
Clinch	2,656	256	762	310	403	180	49	308	74	81	153	37	43
Coffee	15,760	444	2,014	4,024	3,967	2,101	396	1,269	179	191	544	263	368
Cook	6,873	496	778	1,039	1,066	725	414	1,030	330	258	310	308	119
Echols	1,547	27	187	57	184	84	101	502	71	23	125	186	0
Irwin	3,035	113	328	430	761	312	248	585	0	15	120	52	71
Lanier	3,754	201	340	439	511	474	513	606	200	45	212	209	4
Lowndes	46,602	2,177	7,590	10,384	10,610	7,164	2,263	3,379	561	298	1,136	643	397
Pierce	7,244	364	823	1,135	1,163	1,350	249	1,005	162	120	362	319	192
Tift	16,587	887	3,298	4,284	3,450	1,725	503	1,097	131	136	675	307	94
Turner	2,982	270	498	284	309	256	299	548	78	100	231	94	15
Ware	13,067	522	1,966	3,089	2,286	1,404	388	1,266	250	154	827	488	407

Travel Time to Work

- Residents must travel farther to find work as evidenced by the elevated spikes in 30 minute and 60 minute travel times.
- The counties with the shortest commute times (5-20 minutes) are those with larger commercial areas (Lowndes, Tift, Ware, Ben Hill and Coffee County).

F. RESOURCES

The Southern Georgia region has many resources available to assist in planning and development, and in support of economic development projects. Collaboration among the private sector entities, university system partners, and local, state, and federal government organizations speeds the innovation process when planning a project.

The following is a listing of the local, state, and federal resources utilized by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in its ongoing efforts to foster economic development in the region:

- Economic Development Administration
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- OneGeorgia Authority
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- State of Georgia Regional Staff –"Team Georgia"
- Statewide Economic Developers - Georgia Power Company, Oglethorpe Power Company, Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia (MEAG) Power, and Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia (MGAG).
- Georgia Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
- Georgia Centers of Innovation – Aerospace, Agribusiness (located in Tifton), Energy, Life Sciences, Logistics, and Manufacturing.
- City and County Community and Economic Development Staff
- Local Chambers of Commerce and Development Authorities
- Joint Development Authorities

G. ENVIRONMENT

- The Southern Georgia Regional Commission pays special consideration to the environment when planning for future growth patterns. The characteristics of the natural environment including soils, topography, climate, water supply, and wildlife habitats are essential information in defining the region's attributes and possible shortcomings. Through a regional emphasis and understanding of the environment, SGRC staff, including an Environmental Planner and a Historic Preservation Planner, assists in maintaining a higher quality of life and protecting the Southern Georgia region's future for residents of the District.

- The region's climate is classified as mild, ranging from almost perfect, to hot and sultry. The District experiences all four seasons; however, winter is fairly short and relatively mild with only occasional snow or sleet (5 percent probability). Spring and autumn are extended and very pleasant, and summer can reach high temperatures of 100 (+) with a very high heat index. Annual precipitation typically ranges from 39 – 55 inches and is spread evenly throughout the year (2-5 inches each month). However, the average temperature throughout the eighteen county District ranges from a low of 44 degrees Fahrenheit in January to a high of 90 degrees Fahrenheit in July. The region's growing season ranges from 8 - 9 months with an average of 250 days that have daily minimum temperatures greater than 32 degrees. The first winter freeze typically occurs in early November and the last freeze typically occurs in mid-March.

- Most of the Southern Georgia region's consumer water comes from underground aquifers, which are porous underground rock layers containing water. The main aquifer beneath the region is the Floridan aquifer that consists of confined limestone, dolostone, and calcarious sand. The aquifer serves as the water supply watershed for all of the regions' municipal water systems as well as many agricultural irrigation systems.

H. HOUSING

Housing Characteristics 2010 US Census B25024; B25034; B25075

County	Total Units	Single Family	%	Multi-Family	%	Manufactured Homes	%
Atkinson	3,481	1,694	48.7	227	6.5	1,561	44.8
Bacon	4,759	3,041	63.9	253	5.3	1,465	30.8
Ben Hill	7,929	5,080	64.1	1,011	12.8	1,826	23.0
Berrien	8,454	5,404	63.9	258	3.1	2,770	32.8
Brantley	7,839	3,813	48.6	181	2.3	3,845	49.0
Brooks	7,582	5,230	69.0	389	5.1	1,957	25.8
Charlton	4,383	2,304	52.6	254	5.8	1,832	41.8
Clinch	2,994	1,990	66.5	304	10.1	745	24.9
Coffee	16,996	9,820	57.8	1,316	7.7	5,849	34.4
Cook	7,191	4,576	63.6	352	4.9	2,273	31.6
Echols	1,567	690	44.0	59	3.8	818	52.2
Irwin	4,065	2,776	68.3	141	3.5	1,148	28.2
Lanier	3,983	2,295	57.6	232	5.8	1,456	36.6
Lowndes	42,519	28,966	68.1	8,119	19.1	5,424	12.8
Pierce	7,787	4,753	61.0	414	5.3	2,620	33.6
Tift	16,372	9,796	59.8	2,468	15.1	4,080	24.9
Turner	3,873	2,446	63.2	755	19.5	672	17.4
Ware	16,349	10,543	64.5	2,249	13.8	3,557	21.6

Housing Characteristics

- Regional Housing Statistics:
  - Single Family = 60.3% of total housing units
  - Multi-Family = 8.3% of total housing units
  - Manufactured Homes = 31.5% of total single family housing units are manufactured homes

- The large number of manufactured homes may be attributed to the fact that they are easy to purchase, are less costly, and can be quickly set up and ready for move in, even in rural areas.

- The low numbers for Multi-Family housing stock are reflective of a more agrarian and rural region where there are few areas with sufficient population density to warrant multi-family housing development. This is supported by the fact that the highest numbers of multi-family housing occur in counties with larger urban areas and population centers.

Number of Residential Structures by Age and County 2010 US Census B25034

	Built 2005 or later	Built 2000 to 2004	Built 1990 to 1999	Built 1980 to 1989	Built 1970 to 1979	Built 1960 to 1969	Built 1950 to 1959	Built 1940 to 1949	Built 1939 or earlier
Atkinson	173	115	877	581	721	221	296	149	348
Bacon	53	240	999	658	1,362	469	364	197	417
Ben Hill	207	433	1,433	1,245	1,860	1,070	501	454	726
Berrien	124	500	2,424	1,507	1,224	602	623	398	1,052
Brantley	91	609	2,430	2,437	1,055	433	287	198	299
Brooks	268	300	2,175	1,205	1,237	650	584	282	882
Charlton	96	265	1,121	729	619	516	447	195	395
Clinch	112	384	571	431	555	395	244	119	183
Coffee	594	1,549	4,148	3,568	2,863	1,572	972	521	1,209
Cook	312	392	1,883	1,101	1,361	788	494	187	673
Echols	109	158	435	349	56	215	215	12	18
Irwin	40	293	800	754	586	488	467	186	451
Lanier	314	163	977	990	473	367	406	95	198
Lowndes	3,522	4,998	8,847	7,192	6,808	3,569	4,087	1,491	2,005
Pierce	202	668	2,074	1,548	1,366	579	557	246	547
Tift	681	1,361	2,995	3,495	2,686	1,851	1,531	919	853
Turner	128	173	609	720	689	484	374	179	517
Ware	384	921	2,850	1,745	2,457	2,223	2,630	1,135	2,004

Number of Residential Structures by Age and County

- The largest gain of housing stock occurred in the twenty year period between 1980 and 1999. After 1999, the number of new structures begins to drop.

- Lowndes County and Ware County both contain the highest number of older structures (those built in 1939 or earlier).

Value of Housing Stock 2010 US Census B25075

	Total	Less than $25,000	$25,000 - $50,000	$50,000 - $100,000	$100,000 - $200,000	$200,000 - $500,000	$500,000 - $1,000,000	Above $1,000,000
Atkinson	1,987	612	266	642	263	152	40	12
Bacon	2,573	266	477	1,062	549	204	15	0
Ben Hill	4.106	514	832	1,386	1,193	199	0	0
Berrien	5,249	1,001	566	1,695	1,434	553	0	0
Brantley	5,656	1,066	1,178	1,348	1,612	425	27	0
Brooks	4,680	544	527	1,499	1,335	631	81	63
Charlton	2,822	435	492	842	788	241	16	8
Clinch	1,828	268	214	683	510	144	0	9
Coffee	10,191	1,926	1,687	2,774	2,689	952	114	44
Cook	4,667	497	755	1,650	1,393	335	0	37
Echols	918	106	259	170	238	130	15	0
Irwin	2,630	333	378	1,082	579	210	21	27
Lanier	2,070	428	240	511	639	187	51	14
Lowndes	22,665	1,423	2,012	4,826	9,189	4,574	545	96
Pierce	5,186	694	785	1,625	1,345	721	40	17
Tift	9,373	1,130	969	2,238	3,374	1,480	172	10
Turner	1,993	283	237	607	547	317	2	0
Ware	8,690	1,071	1,829	2,465	2,627	624	63	11

Value of Housing Stock

- **General Housing Stock Values:**
  - 12.9% are less than $25,000
  - 14% are $25,000 - $50,000
  - 27.9% are $50,000 - $100,000
  - 31.1% are $100,000 - $200,000
  - 12.4% are $200,000 - $500,000
  - 1.2% are $500,000 - $1,000,000
  - 0.4% are above $1,000,000

- Lowndes County has 96 structures valued above $1,000,000, and Brooks County has 63 structures valued above $1,000,000.

- The majority of the housing stock values in the region (59%) fall between $50,000 - $200,000.

Section II

Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities

The Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities is an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the region makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy.

Housing

Problems

•Lack of quality housing choices for all income levels
•Large blighted areas with distressed housing
•Outdated zoning ordinances
•Lack of enforcement and/or funding and demolition programs for blighted areas
•Lack of subdivisions and housing regulations
•Lack of manufactured home regulations to control placement and improve aesthetics
•Lack of balance between available housing and major employment or commercial centers

A community specific and region wide effort should be undertaken to provide an adequate and diverse supply of quality housing stock in the region to serve the existing and future workforce. This will assist to sustain and improve the economy by attracting and retaining prospective employers.

A current housing inventory not only allows a community to determine its housing needs, but also to assess the adequacy of their current housing stock in regards to age and condition, number and types, owner or renter occupied, costs and commuting distance. When a community supplies quality housing for its workforce, it also provides a valuable marketing tool for recruitment of new employers.

Opportunities to promote a quality housing stock include homebuyer education, code enforcement, infill development and zoning/subdivision regulations.

Obstacles to providing adequate, affordable and quality housing include outdated zoning ordinances, lack of housing rehabilitation programs and large blighted areas.

Opportunities

• Local jurisdictions can support and/or assist organizations that provide educational workshops, seminars and other programs for potential homeowners to improve. homeownership rates in the community.
• Communities can modify their local zoning regulations to encourage the location of small stores in walking distance of residences to create mixed-use neighborhoods.
• Removing condemned houses through an established demolition program is an opportunity to improve local housing.
•Local communities have the opportunity to apply to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for possible selection to participate in the Georgia Initiatives for Community Housing program.
•Opportunity and Enterprise Zones are useful tools to promote redevelopment efforts in declining and blighted areas.
•Each jurisdiction has the opportunity to encourage the development of public and private housing choices in various locations throughout the community to serve a variety of housing needs.
•Opportunities exist to create rehab and incentive programs for affordable infill housing.
•Local jurisdictions have the opportunity to promote good quality housing in their communities through the implementation, updating and continued enforcement of subdivision, zoning and mobile home regulations.
•Opportunities exist to support homeowners in the maintenance and upkeep of blighted homes and properties through the development of a code enforcement program.

Transportation

Problems

- Lack of public transportation
- Excess of unpaved roads
- Lack of alternative transportation choices
- Lack of connectivity and continuity of sidewalks and biking trails
- Aging roadway infrastructure and rail
- Need for creation and/or improvement of sidewalks to promote walkability and to be handicap accessible
- Lack of funding

Existing and future transportation infrastructure has a great impact on the region's and individual communities' growth and development, including potential for economic development, land use practices, and quality of life for residents.

The region needs to work with its communities in seeking to enhance the transportation infrastructure by constructing missing connections, improving safety, prioritizing projects to promote economic development, and also by providing for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure which will serve to enhance quality of life for residents and to provide for tourism opportunities and connections.

Opportunities

- Local communities have the opportunity to support and promote improved access to I-75 and I-95 for better connectivity and accessibility to and within the region.
- By developing regional transportation priorities for projects, and supporting other jurisdictions to implement major regional projects, local communities have the opportunity to improve the regional transportation network.
- Each community has the opportunity to promote and support the enhancement of regional accessibility and mobility.
- A bicycle and pedestrian master plan is a great opportunity for each community to address sidewalks, trails and bicycle paths, as well as safety and multi-modal transportation improvements.
- Opportunities exist within the region to support/promote local airports.
- Development of an access management plan for all major corridors is an excellent way to improve local and regional transportation.
- Future road construction planning can be improved through the development of a rights-of-way plan.
- The updating and implementation of the regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is a great opportunity for local communities to participate in regional transportation matters.

Land Use

Problems

•Development pressures on environmentally sensitive lands and farm lands
•Lack of regional consistency
•Local interests often supersede regional cooperation
•Lack of adequate regulations to minimize incompatible land uses
•Lack of code enforcement
•Lack of or very outdated zoning, land use, or subdivision ordinances in most communities in region
•Inadequate farm to market connections
•Lack of community and regional identity

Encourage land use planning policies and practices in tandem with economic development, tourism, conservation and transportation to strengthen the community structure within the region.

Opportunities

•The region is mostly rural and undeveloped in character. Therefore, there is an opportunity to preserve environmentally sensitive lands by creating an inventory of developable land and environmentally sensitive lands to ensure the preservation thereof.
• The many historical and natural resources of the area can help create a unique sense of community and space, which local communities can facilitate through land planning.
• Communities within the region may coordinate infill planning efforts within the area.
• The connection between greenbelts and recreational and tourism planning create an opportunity to coordinate green belt planning and recreation and tourism efforts.
• Local communities can facilitate growth by coordinating infrastructure systems.
• All local jurisdictions can encourage stormwater and flood plain management.
• Open space can serve both recreational and greenspace purposes, thereby helping local communities reach multiple goals through the preservation of open space.
• Land use regulations are crucial to effective local governance, and each local community has the opportunity to improve through regularly updating zoning and land use regulations.
• Economic development can be improved by local governments providing consistent and adaptive land use regulations so developers can understand requirements throughout the area.
• By providing a diversity of land uses, local economies can be improved. Local communities can pursue such land use alternatives to further economic development.

Community Facilities

Water and sewer infrastructure are important services offered throughout the region, primarily in the incorporated areas, often acting as an engine to neighborhood rehabilitation or economic development. Many jurisdictions are faced with aged and outdated infrastructure, systems at or near capacity, and the need for expansion of water and sewer lines to meet increasing demand in services. Limited funds force postponement of all except the most urgent projects.

For the benefit of the region as a whole, future major infrastructure projects should be coordinated locally and regionally to efficiently provide services and properly direct future growth while minimizing impacts on the environment.

Problems

- Lack of comprehensive stormwater management planning and initiatives
- Lack of funds for implementation of needed projects
- Outdated water and sewer infrastructure in many parts of the region
- Public facilities are at or near capacity
- Insufficient EMS coverage and medical personnel (doctors)
- Lack of regional recycling services
- Insufficient coordination of health services within the region
- Need regional Trauma Care facility
- Lack of adequate broadband services; EMS, High Tech Industries and Colleges

Opportunities

- Often facilities projects in the region have far reaching impacts, and would benefit from inclusion in a joint Capital Improvement Plan for long range planning purposes. Therefore, local communities have the opportunity to assist the Regional Commission in establishing a joint Capital Improvement Plan for major regional facilities projects.
- Throughout the region many communities duplicate services within a single county. Thus, the Regional Commission has the opportunity to encourage consolidation of selected services and/or facilities.
- Few local communities have impact fees or other requirements for local developers to contribute to the cost of providing public services. There is thus a unique opportunity to require the sharing of the cost of providing public services and facilities for new development between developers and local governments in the area.
- Urban growth boundaries and the planned provision of water and sewer lines has a large impact upon where local development occurs. Yet, few local jurisdictions establish a growth boundary or limit public service provisions. Therefore, the local communities have a great opportunity to plan/guide growth via provision of water and sewer lines.
- Explore where impact fee requirements would facilitate expedited infrastructure improvements.

Economic Development

Problems

•Lack of Reuse for closed production facilities
•Low retention of educated workforce
•Perception of region as rural and undeveloped
•Lack of project funding for expanding businesses etc.
•Regionally underdeveloped in IT Business Sector
•Lack of higher income jobs , knowledge based jobs, and entry jobs for college grads
•Lack of small industries and /or incentives and tax credits to recruit small business/industry
•Lack of local vision and coordinated regional strategic plan for economic development
•Lack of skilled labor and work ethics
•Under utilization of rail system and local airports
•Insufficient tax revenue
•Strengths of the region as a whole not sufficiently marketed
•Region is divided into three to four separate economies
•Insufficient development and lack of incentives for agri-tech industries such as biofuel, research, alternative crop development, and ag-based businesses
•Local governments reducing budgets of local Chambers and Development Authorities.
•Lack of data about regional exporting

The Region covers 18 counties from the coastal region to west of I-75 and from the Florida border to north of Ashburn. While the Region has a strong agricultural foundation, four distinct regional economies exist grouped around the larger retail centers: Valdosta, county seat of Lowndes County, also part of the Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) in the region; Waycross with its ties to the coastal region; Douglas; and Tifton. Southern Georgia is also well known for its abundant and accessible natural resources including the Okefenokee Swamp for agro-tourism, timber and water supply. If prudently and conservatively managed, these resources will increasingly serve as economic attractors for many years to come, even as other regions experience declines in the quality and quantity of those resources. The Region as a whole should also invest in providing ample start-up opportunities for the graduates from the Region's universities and technical colleges. This would serve to retain this very skilled workforce in the area, thereby stimulating the economy further through secondary and tertiary effects.

Opportunities

• Every local community has the opportunity to combine resources.
• Every local community has the opportunity to promote regional idea sharing.
• Regionally, each community can work to match jobs and businesses to the best location.
• Local communities can help the local labor force develop the skills necessary to compete in today's marketplace.
• Marketing the region as a whole, and stressing its overall economic advantages, will help all local communities in the region. Each community and the Regional Commission have an opportunity to develop a regional strategic marketing group.
•Every local community can promote the region's local airports, major highways and interstates.
• Every local community can promote major institutions throughout the Region.

Problems

•Increasing Senior Population with distinct needs for housing, medical services, recreation and transportation

•Increase in Senior Population may require relative increase in public service expenses such as medical, EMS, recreation.

• Younger generation is leaving the area after college

•Young families require special services for housing and young children.

•Seasonal and permanent increases in the Hispanic population increases demand of services such as; health care, housing and education

Population

Understanding population/demographic trends in the region forms the basis for assessing and formulating policies and projects in economic development, land use, community facilities and services, infrastructure and housing.

Many of the communities in the Southern Georgia 18 county region are experiencing a rise in their senior population, which could be seen as both an issue and an opportunity. The rise in the Hispanic population throughout the region can also be seen as an issue, such as providing appropriate services, language barriers and as an opportunity such as taking advantage of a more diversified population with diverse skills.

Other areas such as Waycross, Douglas, Valdosta and Tifton experience the unique challenges that come with a larger student population including the efforts to provide sufficient job and cultural opportunities to inspire those students to stay in the area after they complete their college education.

Opportunities

• Attraction of senior population may enhance a community's economic base and provide a largely untapped knowledge and experience base for the labor market. Therefore, each community can work together with the Regional Commission to market the area to senior populations throughout the country.

• A greater diversity in population will contribute to a greater diversity in workforce skills and cultural backgrounds which can contribute to a more well-rounded society with a higher quality of life for all. Therefore, local jurisdictions and the Regional Commission can expand their marketing efforts for the region to appeal to all ages.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Problems

•Insufficient marketing of natural and cultural resources for tourism
•Lack of regional historic preservation guide
•Environmental pollution challenges especially with regard to water resources
•Alternative energy uses not a major topic of interest
•Lack of funding to preserve valuable historic and cultural resources
•Lack of knowledge/use of innovative funding techniques

The Regionally Important Resource Plan functions as a regional compilation of natural and cultural resources. It is designed to enhance the focus on coordinated protection and management of these resources in the Southern Georgia Region, including consideration of and planning for impacts of new development.

The Region is home to several State and National Parks and Forests as well as first rate historic and recreational areas including Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Banks Lake Wildlife Refuge, Reed Bingham State Park, General Coffee State Park, Laura S. Walker State Park, Jefferson Davis Memorial Park, and six rivers. These areas have the potential to attract many visitors into the Region if properly marketed and in conjunction with complementary hotel, restaurant and other tourist services.

Abundant and accessible natural and cultural resources are often seen as increasing the quality of life of the area's residents and should also be utilized to attract businesses and the corresponding labor force.

Opportunities

• The Regional Commission can encourage local communities to promote Best Management Practices .
• Where applicable and appropriate, opportunities exist to increase education, awareness and funding opportunities for alternative energy projects.
• There exists an opportunity for the local communities and the Regional Commission to develop a regional stormwater management plan to address this important issue.
• The abundant natural resources of the region give it one of its unique characteristics. As such, opportunities exist to regionally market these resources.
• The abundance of historical buildings and structures within the region have a unique cultural value, as well as often being sound structures with potential for future use. Local communities have an opportunity to explore converting these buildings into housing or commercial uses.
• Few of the historical structures in the area are on the National Register. There is an opportunity to educate the public on the many benefits of placing historical buildings and homes on National Register.

Economic Clusters

REGIONAL CLUSTER ANALYSIS

There are several regional employment clusters that are growing. These include the following:

- Agri-business
- Education
- Food Production
- Medical
- Tourism

Agri-business

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission covers an 18 county area that is predominantly rural in character, with large tracts of farmland. Consequently, businesses and industries that are connected with or support agri-business find fertile ground in the region. There are a multitude of companies operating within the region in such operations as: fruit and vegetable production; peanut, pecan and animal processing; cotton ginning; lumber production; and the sales and service of tractors and farm supplies. Within the region, employment in these fields is approximately 5,000 based upon Georgia Department of Labor estimates.

Education

The communities of the Southern Georgia region place a high priority on education, as is evident by the presence of several universities and local colleges. Within Lowndes County alone there are six (6) universities and colleges (Valdosta State University, Georgia Military College, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, Webster University, Park University, and Embry Riddle Aeronautical University). Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and satellite campuses of Troy University and the University of Georgia are located in Tifton. In addition, the City of Waycross is home to Waycross College and Okefenokee Technical College. South Georgia College is located in Douglas. (Note: Waycross College and South Georgia College will consolidate on January 1, 2013, becoming South Georgia State College.) There are also several local main and satellite campuses for Moultrie Technical College, Wiregrass Georgia Technical College, and Okefenokee Technical College. The presence of these colleges and universities draws education industry businesses and retail and service companies into the area to serve the needs of the student populations.

Economic Clusters

Food Production

Raw products from the agri-business industry are utilized in the production of end product consumables for both human and animal consumption throughout the region. The American Blanching Company in Fitzgerald produces peanut butter and peanut paste from locally grown peanuts. Several regional businesses process and/or package pecans, peaches, blueberries, blackberries and vegetables from local farms. In Douglas, the Pilgrim's Pride facility processes locally raised chickens, and D. L. Lee and Sons in Alma processes local pigs for ham, bacon, and sausage products. The American Blanching Company, Pilgrim's Pride and D. L. Lee and Sons companies alone employ approximately 2,000 people.

Medical

There is a total of 13 hospitals within the Southern Georgia region, four (4) of which are regional hospitals. South Georgia Regional Medical Center is located in Valdosta, and has more than 200 physicians and 2,300 employees on staff. Tift Regional Medical Center is located in Tifton, and employs just under 2,000 people. Coffee Regional Medical Center is located in Douglas and has 88 inpatient beds. Mayo Clinic Health Systems in Waycross (formerly Satilla Regional Medical Center) has 310 physicians, nurse practitioners, and physicians assistants, and employs 1,400 people. Health industry businesses have gathered around these regional medical centers. In addition to these four regional medical centers, the region has 9 local and county hospitals in Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Cook, Irwin, and Lanier Counties.

Tourism

The 18 county region has a wide variety of attractions and tourist destinations reflecting its great natural and agricultural heritage, as well as the fun loving and adventurous spirit of the local residents. In addition to two National Wildlife Refuges (Okefenokee and Banks Lake), there are six state parks and natural preserves located within the region (Stephen C. Foster, General Coffee, Reed Bingham, Laura S. Walker, Jeff Davis Memorial and Broxton Rocks). Sporting and amusement adventures can be had at South Georgia Motorsports Park in Cook County, and Wild Adventures Theme Park in southern Lowndes County. Throughout the year, communities within the region hold annual fairs and festivals which draw people from far and wide. For example, Ben Hill County and the City of Fitzgerald hold the annual Wild Chicken Festival celebrating the wild chickens which have made the City famous, Waycross celebrates the heritage and culture of the Okefenokee Swamp during their Swampfest event, Lanier County and the City of Lakeland hold a Flatlanders Frolic Arts and Crafts show, and the City of Hahira in Lowndes County holds their annual Honeybee Festival. These resources and events have a profound impact on the economies of the local communities.

Section III

Goals and Objectives

Economic Development

Goal:
Coordinate economic development initiatives with a variety of economic development entities.

Objective:
Promote coordination among all economic development entities in the region.

Objective:
Promote region-wide export data study.

Goal:
Create a regional database of sites that are available for industrial development.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to inventory sites available for development.

Goal:
Improve/upgrade the educational levels and labor force skills within the region.

Objective:
Develop and support community based efforts to address improved educational levels and labor force skills.

Objective:
Support the continued improvement of the educational system in addressing educational/skills improvement and ensure WIA coordination.

Economic Development

Goal:
Coordinate local, state, and federal economic development planning and implementation.

Objective:
Ongoing economic development programs that result in improvements in the regional tax base and jobs.

Objective:
Adequate transportation systems to meet the needs of existing and new businesses and industries including a connection of all counties to interstate highways with four-lane roads.

Goal:
Promote a regional development authority for region.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to form a regional development authority that will work together for improved development within the region as a whole.

Population

Goal:
A well trained workforce, professional, technical and skilled, capable of accommodating new industry and maintaining existing industry.

Objective:
Improve educational attainment by reducing high school drop-out rates.

Goal:
Create and maintain long-term, meaningful employment opportunities sufficient to establish a sound and balanced economic base in which average per capita income and employment levels are consistently comparable to those of the State and Nation.

Objective:
Encourage public/private partnerships between counties, cities, local businesses and schools for the development of work programs and career education programs such as career academy for young adults.

Objective:
Support educational institutions to provide learning/skill development opportunities.

Community Facilities

Goal:
County and City management utilize a capital improvement planning process.

Objective:
Long-range public facility and infrastructure improvement plan with engineering and architectural cost estimates provide basic foundation for a growth management system.

Objective:
Preventive maintenance and improvement programs with identified and budgeted revenue sources within a prescribed timetable avert the crisis.

Objective:
Land use plans can be implemented by adhering to a CIP which identifies what, where and when a public facility is going to be completed.

Goal:
Public services and facilities adequate to accommodate existing and future growth.

Objective:
Industrial Parks/properties with all necessary infrastructure and transportation links, to attract new and expanding businesses and industries to the region.

Objective:
Availability of speculatively built and other buildings to attract new and expanding businesses and industries in the region.

Objective:
Availability of adequate financing and/or financial incentives to attract new and expanding businesses and industries to the region.

Land Use

Goal:
Promote the enactment of land development regulations at the local level.

Objective:
Encourage the region's governments to adopt local development regulations.

Goal:
Encourage the establishment of minimum housing codes by all local governments to ensure that mobile homes are maintained properly.

Objective:
Educate local governments on the benefits of enacting and enforcing minimum housing codes.

Goal:
Promote the use of level site plan reviews.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to enact a site plan review system.

Goal:
Promote the creation and updating of local level future land use maps and plans.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to prepare and update future land use maps and plans.

Transportation

Goal:
Ensure that the region's transportation systems are intact to facilitate growth.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to review their comprehensive plans, study growth patterns, and plan growth according to transportation attributes.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to establish public transportation systems.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to implement the Southern Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian plan.

Housing

Goal:
Maintenance and improvement of existing and future housing and the elimination of the region's substandard housing conditions.

Objective:
Assist local governments with the development of a Building Inspection Program.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to participate in CHIP, CDBG, and USDA housing programs.

Objective:
Work with local governments to develop ordinances for manufactured home usage and placement.

Goal:
Provide affordable housing options for low-to-moderate income persons.

Objective:
Develop homebuyer programs for low-to-moderate income persons.

Housing

Goal:
Conservation, maintenance and improvement of existing/future housing and neighborhoods, and the elimination of substandard housing conditions in the region.

Objective:
All cities and counties should be encouraged to establish and maintain an annual housing condition inventory; and adopt or revise and update building and housing codes, using applicable state or national models.

Objective:
All substandard housing units, which are inventoried and suited for rehabilitation should be scheduled for rehabilitation in a manner consistent with the local comprehensive plan.

Natural & Cultural Resources

Goal:
Promote the region's natural resources as opportunities for tourism and recreation.

Objective:
Create more opportunities for natural resource related recreation such as bike trails, access to waterways, fishing, hunting, and ecotourism, walking and hiking trails.

Goal:
Protect river corridors in developing areas of the region.

Objective:
Prepare and adopt appropriate codes and ordinances to protect river corridors.

Objective:
Encourage the consistent enforcement of state environmental regulations to protect the region's natural resources.

Goal:
Implement a regional historic and cultural resource inventory for the region.

Objective:
Encourage local governments to inventory their historic and cultural resources for their area. .

Goal:
To identify, preserve, protect, and manage the broad range of cultural and historic resources in the Southern Georgia Region.

Objective:
Areas, structures, and districts of significant architectural, archaeological, historic and/or cultural value should be identified and protected by appropriate local units of governments.
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Objective:
Ongoing public/private partnerships, education, and awareness are integral to the preservation of the regions heritage.

Objective:
Special management practices must be applied to those areas possessing significant natural, historic, archaeological, or cultural features.

Section IV

Community and Private Sector Participation

Introduction

The eighteen counties in this region include rural counties, urban areas, internationally renowned wildlife preserves, small villages, bigger cities, interstates, dirt roads, a nationally important military base, along with the diverse population living in and around these areas; all united by a down home love for South Georgia, and the desire to be the best it can be for its residents, businesses and visitors alike.

The CEDS has set out to capture this spirit and the diverse values through its community and private sector involvement program which consists of two elements:

1) The identification of the various stakeholders; and
2) The identification of participation techniques for the actual update and subsequent implementation.

A variety of outreach efforts have to be employed including face to face conversations, visits, workshops, e-mail campaigns, website updates, face book updates and newspaper updates for public meetings.

Identification of Community and Private Sector Partners

The following is a listing of initially identified Community and Private Sector Partners:

Local Governments:

Atkinson County
City of Pearson
City of Willacoochee
Bacon County
City of Alma
Ben Hill County
City of Fitzgerald
Berrien County
City of Alapaha
City of Enigma
City of Nashville
Ray City
Brantley County
City of Hoboken
City of Nahunta
Brooks County
City of Barwick
City of Morven
City of Pavo
City of Quitman
Charlton County
City of Folkston
City of Homeland
Clinch County
City of Argyle
City of Dupont
City of Fargo
City of Homerville
Coffee County
City of Ambrose
City of Broxton
City of Douglas
City of Nicholls
Cook County
City of Adel
City of Cecil
City of Lenox
City of Sparks
Echols County
Irwin County
City of Ocilla
Lanier County
City of Lakeland
Lowndes County
City of Dasher
City of Hahira
City of Lake Park
City of Remerton
City of Valdosta
Pierce County
City of Blackshear
City of Patterson
City of Offerman
Tift County
City of Omega
City of Tifton
City of Ty Ty
Turner County
City of Ashburn
City of Rebecca
City of Sycamore
Ware County
City of Waycross

Other Stakeholders:

Workforce Investment Boards
Airport Authorities
Better Hometown
Boards of Education
Business Owners
Chambers of Commerce
Private Citizens
Councils on Aging
Development Authorities
EMA/EMS
Fire Departments
Historic Preservation Boards
Hospitals/Medical Centers
Housing Authorities
Main Street Organizations
Moody Air Force Base
Police Departments
Southern Georgia Regional Commission
State and Federal Agencies
Universities/Colleges
Valdosta/Lowndes MPO

Identification of Participation Techniques – Part I

We will and/or have employed the following participation techniques to involve the communities and private sector partners in the CEDS in order to create awareness of the plan and to gather a broad range of input into the development of the plan, and then continue participation for the implementation and evaluation of the plan. Some of the participation techniques are more intended to disseminate information, others to solicit input and participation.

Informational Techniques:

CEDS Update & Implementation Webpage

This webpage will be part of the Regional Commission website where all the information regarding the CEDS update and subsequent implementation activities will be displayed. The webpage will provide information on all meetings, PDF draft documents and will also include contact information for staff to provide more information, clarifications or details upon request.

Facebook Information Sharing Page

The Facebook page "Southern Georgia Regional Commission Information Center" will serve as an information clearing house to distribute information on meetings, progress, and provide opportunity for comments, especially for those stakeholders that are not able to attend meetings.

E-mail

E-mails will be utilized to notify and invite stakeholders to workshops, meetings and other events.

Identification of Participation Techniques – Part II

Participation Techniques:

Work Sessions

Work sessions with stakeholders provide input and feedback on the identification and assessment of the economic development problems and opportunities, and the implementation program including the goals and objectives, plans of action, and the performance standards proposed by staff.

Surveys

A short survey solicited input from Stakeholders on issues and opportunities and performance standards. The survey was distributed by e-mail and made available during various stakeholder meetings.

Quarterly CEDS Implementation Meeting

A regularly scheduled quarterly meeting will be held to discuss the implementation of the CEDS with the stakeholders and partners and to evaluate the status of activities, initiatives and investment priorities.

Webpage and Facebook Page

Both the webpage and Facebook page will not only provide information but are also geared towards providing comments, engaging in discussion, and contacting staff.

Section V

Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities

A. Suggested Projects

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Promotion and expansion of technical capacities and resources throughout the 18 county region	Regional	$990,000	Federal/State/Local
Subtotal		**$990,000**	
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROGRAM			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Promotion and expansion of geospatial data holdings and consumption of this data throughout the 18 counties	Regional	$460,000	Regional & VALOR
Subtotal		**$460,000**	
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
Valdosta Office			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) ***Adult*** Funds Case Management and Individual Training Accounts (ITA's)	Regional	$947,293	USDOL
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) ***Dislocated Worker Funds*** Case Management and Individual Training Accounts (ITA's)	Regional	$849,169	USDOL
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) ***Youth*** Funds Year Round Training, Case Management, Competency Training & GED.	Regional	$1,816,790	USDOL
Subtotal		**$3,613,252**	

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT			
Waycross Office			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) ***Adult*** Funds Case Management and Individual Training Accounts (ITA's)	Regional	$693,636	USDOL
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) ***Dislocated Worker Funds*** Case Management and Individual Training Accounts (ITA's)	Regional	$402,051	USDOL
Workforce Investment Act (WIA) **Youth Funds** Case Management, Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) & Youth Year Round Training	Regional	$711,323	USDOL
Subtotal		**$1,807,010**	

TRANSPORTATION			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Access Road to Industrial Park	Willacoochee	$3,858,032	Local, GDOT, EDA
Widen US441 Homerville to Pearson	Atkinson/Clinch	72,000,000	Federal, GDOT
Bacon County Airport Terminal	Bacon County	868,058	Federal, Local
Widen SR 107 Fitzgerald Perimeter	Ben Hill County	46,903,136	Federal, GDOT
Industrial Park Rail Spur	Brooks County	635,876	Local, EDA
Widen SR 133 Valdosta to Albany	Brooks County	113,009,522	Federal, GDOT
Widen SR 40 in Charlton County	Charlton County	10,823,000	Federal, GDOT
Widen US 84, Homerville to Waycross	Clinch/Ware	114,000,000	Federal, GDOT
Widen US 441, Douglas through Broxton	Coffee County	39,740,924	Federal, GDOT
Widen SR 135 SE Perimeter (RR separation also)	Coffee County	26,969,304	Federal, GDOT
Widen SR 31 Douglas to CR 296	Coffee County	13,010,517	Federal, GDOT
Widen Alabama Road	Cook County	9,000,000	Federal, GDOT, Local
St. Augustine Road Overpass	Valdosta	13,652,460	Federal, Local, GDOT
Five Points Intersection Improvements	Valdosta	5,771,525	Federal, Local, GDOT
Georgia and Florida Railway Rehab	Lowndes, Lanier, Berrien, Atkinson Counties	6,835,560	GDOT, EDA
I-75 Exit 2	Lowndes County	39,745,000	Federal, GDOT
Lake Park-Bellville Road Widening	Lowndes County	17,588,676	Federal, GDOT, Local
I-75 Exit 11	Lowndes County	23,263,000	Federal, GDOT
Old Clyattville Road Widening	Lowndes County	19,302,734	Federal, GDOT, Local
Southwest Central Avenue Extension	Blackshear	1,356,839	Local
Construct South Tifton Bypass	Tift County	39,749,159	Federal, GDOT
Turner County Airport Improvements	Turner County	1,272,564	Federal, EDA, Local
US 1 Grade Separation	Waycross	11,022,315	Federal, GDOT
Waycross East Bypass	Ware/Pierce Counties	23,451,568	Federal, GDOT
Other projects from Valdosta-Lowndes County Metropolitan Planning Organization can be reviewed in the 2035 Transportation Plan at www.sgrc.us/transportation	**Subtotal**	**$653,829,769**	

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Water Improvements	Argyle	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Water Improvements	Ambrose	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Coffee County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Brooks County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Berrien County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Cook County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Cook County	$481,143	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Berrien County	$560,030	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Lanier County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Turner County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Homeland	$475,211	CDBG/Local
Sewer Improvements	Homerville	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Sewer Improvements	Nashville	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Sewer Improvements	Adel	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Echols County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street Paving and Drainage	Irwin County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Community Food Bank	Lowndes County	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Water & Sewer Improvements	Ocilla	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Street, Drainage, Water & Sewer Improvements	Quitman	$500,000	CDBG/Local
Subtotal		**$9,516,384**	

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Road, Water, & Sewer Improvements	Adel	$1,311,500	EDA/State/Local
Continue development of Industrial Corridor	Cook	$11,000,000	EDA/State/Local/ Private
Redevelop Downtown Property	Nashville	$200,000	State/Local/Private
Assist New Commercial Business	Turner	$3,880,000	State/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Ben Hill	$2,210,000	State/Local/Private
Continue Development of new Industrial Park	Irwin	$4,000,000	EDA/State/Local/ Private
Construction Industrial Facility	Cook	$6,000,000	State/Local/Private
Continue Development of new Industrial Park Phase II	Brooks	$1,000,000	EDA/State/Local
Construct new Industrial Park	Lowndes	$4,000,000	EDA/State/Local/ Private
Locate Industrial Business	Ben Hill	$2,700,000	State/Local/Private
Assist Retiree Attraction Marketing Program	Regional	$180,000	State/Local/Private
Extend Airport Runways	Ben Hill, Turner	$4,000,000	State/Local
Streetscape Enhancements	Cook, Lowndes, Charlton, Berrien, Irwin, Tift, Atkinson	$2,000,000	State
Infrastructure for Manufacturing Company	Cook	$50,000,000	State/Local/Private
Redevelop old Buildings	Lowndes, Turner	$2,400,000	State/Local/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Brooks	$2,500,000	State/Local/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Brooks	$30,000,000	State/Local/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Brooks	$60,000,000	State/Local/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Brooks	$45,000,000	State/Local/Private
Locate Industrial Business	Brooks	$120,000,000	State/Local/Private
Water Tank & Well, Line Work	Brantley	$1,500,000	USDA/EIP/OGA/Local
Industrial Park Div. (Water/Sewer)	Bacon	$3,500,000	EDA/CDBG/EIP/OGA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Water Tank & Well	Coffee	$2,500,000	EDA/USDA/CDBG/EIP/OGA
Water Tank & Well, Line Work	Berrien	$2,500,000	EDA/USDA/CDBG/OGA/Local
Road Paving	Berrien	$678,000	State/Local
Street Paving/Drainage	Clinch (Homerville)	$1,000,000	EIP/OGA/Local
Sewer Improvements	Folkston	$1,000,000	EIP/OGA/Local
Waste Water Treatment Plant	Folkston	$8,000,000	USDA/EIP/OGA/Local
Begin development of new Industrial Park	Tift	$6,000,000	State/Local/Private
Workforce Training	Ware	$1,500,000	State/Local
Road Resurfacing	Lanier, Bacon, Clinch, Charlton	$2,270,000	State/Local
Highway Widening Project	Ware, Tift	$66,500,000	State/Local
Bridge Restoration/Reconstruction	Coffee, Tift	$8,875,000	State/Local
Road Improvements	Ben Hill	$2,000,000	Local
Subtotal		**$460,204,500**	

AGING DIVISION			
Description	Location	Estimated Costs	Funding Source(s)
Nutrition Services	Regional	$1,445,279	Federal/State/Match
Health Promotion & Disease Prevention	Regional	$75,508	Federal/State/Match
In-Home Services (Homemaker/Personal Care/Respite)	Regional	$553,515	Federal/State/Match
Information & Assistance Services	Regional	$900,221	Federal/State/Match
Care Coordination & Case Management Services	Regional	$2,046,987	Federal/State/Match
Long-Term Care Ombudsman	Regional	$192,479	Federal/State/Match
Advocacy & Coordination	Regional	$23,569	Federal/State/Match
Administration	Regional	$583,361	Federal/State/Match
Transportation Services	Regional	$82,628	Federal/State/Match
Senior Employment Services	Berrien, Brooks, Lanier, and Lowndes	$153,212	Federal/Match
Elderly Legal Assistance Services	Regional	$75,363	Federal/State/Match
GeorgiaCares Services	Regional	$89,603	Federal/State/Match
Kinship Care Services	Regional	$14,216	Federal/State
Telephone Reassurance Services	Regional	$36,000	Federal/Match
Home Modification Services	Regional	$64,168	Federal/State/Match
Adult Day Care Services	Lowndes	$78,250	Federal/State/Match
Money Follows the Person (MFP)	Regional	$207,655	Federal/Match
Care Transitions (Special Project)	Bacon, Coffee, Ware	$30,000	Federal/Match
Coordinated Transportation Services for Aging, DBHDD, DFCS, TANF/SA	Regional	$1,811,526	Federal/State
Subtotal		**$8,463,540**	
	TOTAL	**$1,138,884,455**	

B. Vital Projects

Natural and Cultural Resources

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Renovate the old Sowega Building	City of Adel	$1,000,000	Private and Public funding
Conduct a citywide historic resources survey	City of Adel	$10,000	General Funds, Grants
Maintain canoe route on Satilla River from Jamestown landing to Waycross/Blackshear Bridge with a raised boat ramp at bridge area.	Ware County	$20,000	LWCF grants, (TEA 21) Grants, DNR
Continue the regular maintenance/beautification of highway corridors and gateways, (Gateway signage/berms are needed at county line US 1, US 82 and US 84)	Ware County	$50,000 annually	Federal and State grants
Natural resource conservation, education for citizens, developers, and local officials	Brantley County	$25,000	County/CIG grants, volunteers
Enforce the part V Ordinances that are in place in Brantley County and preserve scenic areas and corridors within the conservation area	Brantley County	$10,000	County and available grants
Identify appropriate areas and funding sources for fee simple acquisition of environmentally sensitive lands.	Pierce County	$5,000	General Funds
Seek grants and provide technical assistance to Echols County Historical Society with the development of the museum of local history	Echols County	$500 annually	General Funds and available grants

Natural and Cultural Resources

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Construct an overnight Campsite	City of Folkston	$70,000	General Funds
Complete the renovation of the Elementary School to serve as a Community Center	City of Ocilla	$400,000	CDBG and General Funds
Adopt, implement, and update provisions of the Greenspace Initiative Plan to include land acquisition and resource enhancement/protection.	Lowndes County	$500,000	SPLOST and General Funds
Develop an effective Stormwater Management Program	City of Remerton and City of Dasher	$50,000 annually	Federal and State grants
Promote heritage tourism opportunities and seek grant funding opportunities	City of Valdosta	Staff time	General Funds
Continue funding and support of the St. Marys River Management Committee	Charlton County	$2,500	General Funds
Maintain and restore city parks and canals	City of Waycross	$200,000	State and Federal Grants

Housing

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Continue to foster and support the rehabilitation/reconstruction of affordable housing	Ben Hill County	$750,000	CHIP grant
Continue to clear derelict property and reestablish housing in the City's redevelopment area	City of Fitzgerald	Cash & In-Kind	General Funds
Develop and maintain an inventory of housing conditions	Irwin County	$4,500	General Funds
Renovate homes for elderly, low and/or fixed income who did not qualify for CHIP Program	Charlton County	$150,000	General Funds, Grants, CDBG
Develop a plan to attract more middle to high-end housing units to attract the workforce commuters in this area and also retirees looking for a slower pace	City of Folkston	$100,000	DCA Housing grants
Continue to fund the building and code enforcement program	City of Homeland	$25,000	Fees and General Funds
Conduct a low income housing needs inventory and assessment	Cook County	$17,500	General Funds
Continue to eliminate blight areas throughout county and city through condemnation and rehabilitation projects	City of Alma and Bacon County	$50,000	FHA, DCA, CDBG and General Funds
Continue to explore and support methods for renters of public housing and other properties to purchase their units through affordable housing projects	City of Alma	$500,000	FHA, DCA, CDBG, USDA and General Funds
Modernization of existing public housing	City of Douglas	$1,250,000	City and County General Funds

Housing

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Recruit and check for qualification ability to establish need for CHIP	Lanier County	Staff Time	DCA/CHIP
Implement the HOME/CHIP rehab programs	City of Nashville	$250,000	DCA/CHIP
Participate in the state's Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program	City of Blackshear City of Patterson Pierce County	N/A	Local and DCA
Provide appropriate and affordable living accommodations for the working population including affordable rental housing in the form of single family homes and loft/apartment living	City of Waycross and Ware County	TBD	Private partnerships DWDA State and Federal grants
Develop and implement a plan to reduce the density and/or decentralize housing at the Bailey and Garlington Heights Housing Projects	City of Waycross	$60,000	General Funds, State and Federal Grants
Develop new housing duplexes on vacant sites to increase housing diversity	City of Waycross	$500,000	General Funds, State and Federal Grants
Credit Counseling Program	Coffee County	$60,000 annually	Private Funds
Develop and adopt a manufactured housing ordinance	Coffee County	$5,000	General Funds
Complete feasibility study to redevelop school as senior housing	City of Ambrose	$40,000	General Funds
Develop local loan pool from banks for housing assistance/repair/ or demolition	SGRC Region	TBD	General Funds

Economic Development

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Continue to market use of Trembling Earth Recreation Complex for hosting regional, state and national tournaments	City of Waycross and Ware County	$500,000	City of Waycross and Ware County General Funds and Chamber of Commerce
Encourage and assist local entrepreneurs to increase homegrown small businesses e.g. with an incubator program	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants and General Funds
Develop a program to market the proximity to the three major ports of Brunswick, Jacksonville, and Savannah	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants and General Funds
Develop strategies to increase the awareness of the fact that Waycross/Ware County has 5 direct rail lines including the location of rail in the industrial park	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants and General Funds
Acquire property for expansion of the Industrial Park	City of Waycross	TBD	State and Federal Grants and General Funds
Develop Downtown Public-Private Partnership	City of Waycross	$75,000	State and Federal Grants and General Funds
Support the RLF Small Business Fund	City of Waycross	$350,000	General Funds
Main Street Organization and Promotions committee continue coordinating a variety of events such as First Fridays After Dark, Holiday Open House, Brown Bag Concert Series and more	City of Valdosta	$61,000	Various

Economic Development

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Promote development of entrepreneurial small businesses	City of Remerton	$50,000	Various
Advertise services available through and promote continued utilization of skills centers through the Workforce Investment Program and the Labor Department	Lowndes County	Varies	Varies
Study for potential of industrial site in City	City of Broxton	$25,000	General Fund
Streetscape enhancements in downtown	City of Broxton	$600,000	GDOT (TE Funding)
Develop building codes for rehabilitation	City of Nicholls	$10,000 to $15,000	General Fund, DCA Grant
Acquire land for new industrial park	City of Douglas	TBD	One GA/EDA/DCCEDA
Promote sustainable eco-tourism, canoeing, hiking, nature trails, bird watching, hunting, fishing, swimming, environmental education as viable economic opportunities	Brantley County	$50,000	CIG, LDF, ETC, and General Funds
Support and work with Development Authority to attract new business and industry to our community	Brantley County	$400,000	Brantley County Development Authority, other agencies
Establish an Enterprise Zone or Opportunity Zone within the cities to encourage redevelopment and infill	City of Blackshear and City of Patterson	TBD	General funds
Create an Industrial Development Authority to serve as the public catalyst with taxing powers for economic development	Echols County	TBD	Echols BOCC

Economic Development

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Continue to enhance infrastructure for Industrial Park	City of Quitman, Brooks County	TBA	Local Funds
Seek ways to utilize Military Zone Status for tax credits	City of Lakeland Lanier County	Staff time	DCA, EDA, General Funds
Continue to support the Lakeland/Lanier County Chamber of Commerce	Lanier County	$10,000 annually	General Funds
Continue to encourage tourism by promoting Downtown Lakeland as the Historical City of Murals	City of Lakeland	Staff time	General Funds
Create a Youth Entrepreneurship program to train and encourage area youth to start new businesses as a career option	City of Alma Bacon County	$2,500	DOE, DCA, Local, Private
Promote niche marketing using local products grown or produced in Bacon County	City of Alma Bacon County	$1,500	Local Funds
Coordinate with the airport to develop additional hangars at the airport facility	Cook County	$1,000,000	Public/Private Funds
Market the Mega Industrial Corridor along US 41 to prospective industrial companies	City of Adel	$100,000	EDC, IDA
Pursue manufacture and/or process of native materials such as wood/fuel pellets	Charlton County	$150,000	General Funds, Available Grants
Develop and implement a marketing plan for the City of Folkston	City of Folkston	$15,000	General Funds, DCA Grants
Construct a driving range	City of Fargo	$45,000	State Funding, General Funds
Tear down Jonathan Able's old building for downtown development	City of Ocilla	$3,000	General Funds

Economic Development

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Develop a marketing program to promote agricultural products from local farms	Irwin County	TBD	General Funds
Develop a guidebook for development that describes the local development process and provides useful information to potential new businesses regarding zoning, site plan approval, permitting and potential incentives	Ben Hill County	TBD	General Funds
Apply for expanded water pumping permit	City of Fitzgerald	TBD	W, L&B Funds
Develop county wide tourism plan	Atkinson County	TBD	General Funds, Dept. of Tourism and Trade
Obtain a Georgia Main Street designation	City of Pearson	TBD	General Funds
Reconstruct old city hall: (1) New roof; (2) Air conditioning/heating unit; (3) Develop offices for rent; (4) Maintain and renovate for Fire Department training	City of Pearson	$60,000	General Funds
Develop a regional export data study identifying who is exporting, where, similarities, and new exporting opportunities	SGRC Region	TBD	General Funds
Expand ag business and agri-tourism through value-added ag product businesses, locally made and locally grown	SGRC Region	TBD	USDA, General Funds
Continued improvements to local airports	SGRC Region	TBD	USDA, DCA, EDA, General Funds

Community Facilities

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Renovate County Courthouse	Atkinson County	$500,000	General Funds
Build a low income medical clinic that is served by volunteer doctors	City of Willacoochee	$75,000	City and county funds
Develop a multi-purpose sports facility at Paulk Park	Ben Hill County	TBD	SPLOST
Renovate A, B & A Depot for preservation and flexible space generation	City of Fitzgerald	$625,000	Private funds, grants, general funds
Sewer main repairs Alder Street	City of Ocilla	$500,000	CDBG, City
Primary pump station repairs Hwy 129 south	City of Ocilla	$20,000	ITAD, CDBG, City
Purchase 8 AED's for County facilities	Irwin County	$300 per AED	General Funds
Build a new Fire Station	Clinch County	$300,000	Fire Grant and County
Make the court house building handicap accessible	Clinch County	$50,000	County
Continue to upgrade the training and equipment in the Homerville-Clinch County Volunteer Fire Department	Clinch County	$20,000	County, LDF
Finishing the remaining 10% of addressing for 911 system	Charlton County	$6,500	General Funds
Construct new jail administration building	Charlton County	$2,000,000	SPLOST
Continue to maintain the Funnel as a platform for viewing trains	City of Folkston	$5,000	General Funds
Extend water service to Nature Trails Estates. System will have fire hydrants	City of Homeland	$200,000	USDA, DCA grants, General Funds

Community Facilities

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Investigate the feasibility of consolidating countywide fire protection services	Cook County	N/A	County/Grants
Annually update the gas, electric, and water system GIS database	City of Adel	$5,000 per system	Enterprise Fund
Construction of a new Senior Center	City of Cecil	TBD	SPLOST
Update all fire hydrants within the City	City of Lenox	$70,000	GEMA, Georgia Rural Water Grants
Conduct a complete Inflow and Infiltration Study	City of Sparks	$1,500,000	Grants
Build a MR Center	Clinch County	$600,000	Grants and County
Build a volunteer fire department and purchase additional fire fighting equipment, including breathing gear and turnout gear	City of Argyle	$40,000	City and Grants
Replace all street signs with new reflective lettering and breakaway brackets	City of Dupont	$20,000	CDBG and City
Employ a First Responders Unit	City of Fargo	$70,000	City of Fargo
Install a 12 inch water line for 2.5 miles from east of the Development Authority to the east side of Homerville	City of Homerville	$500,000	CDBG, City
Relocate the water tank to the Industrial Park where the proposed 12 inch water line will be located	City of Homerville	$250,000	CDBG, City

Community Facilities

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Continue to integrate parents, teachers, principals and the business community into school curriculum planning and school activities	Bacon County	$10,000	GA DOE
Conduct a study to analyze the impact of proposed development on public facilities	City of Alma Bacon County	$10,000	DCA, Local, Private
Construct softball field at recreation department	Lanier County	$300,000	Fire grants, local
Prepare engineering studies to upgrade the water and sewer distribution system	City of Lakeland	$50,000	General Funds
Apply to the AFG for a fire truck pumper and equipment	Echols County	$215,000	General Funds
Apply for CDBG assistance in obtaining a sewer system and develop and manage sewer system	City of Morven	$1,000,000	CDBG, General Funds
Rehabilitation of Walker Street School into a community center	Brooks County and Cities	$500,000	DCA, One Georgia
Develop an annual Capital Improvements Program	Brooks County and Cities	Staff time	General Funds
Pursue the development of a regional fire fighting academy in Ware County	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants, General Funds
Street and Drainage Improvements	City of Waycross	$5,000,000	GDOT, General Funds
Upgrade fire departments in Hoboken, Nahunta and throughout County	Brantley County	$500,000	General Funds, Grants
Development of new industrial park sites with adequate infrastructure including broadband	SGRC Region	TBD	CDBG, General Funds

Community Facilities

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Work with GDOT to establish a school zone at County Farm Road and Highway 84	Pierce County	Staff time	General Funds
Construction of new 911/emergency operations center	Tift County and Cities	$3,200,000	SPLOST IV
Brighton Road & Forest Lakes Subdivision; water services to rapidly developing residential area	Tift County and Cities	$1,788,900	TBD
Plans to upgrade all non-compliance ADA buildings will be prepared and budgeted	Berrien County	$5 – 10,000/y	General Funds
Upgrade the storm sewer system city-wide and add retention ponds	City of Nashville	$500,000	CDBG, General Funds
Purchase of building and land for the expansion of City Hall and Police Department Offices	City of Remerton	$880,000	SPLOST
Expand the existing water service area and transmission system	City of Valdosta	Varies	SPLOST, Bonds, loans
Continue implementation of Oak Park Redevelopment Plan	Coffee County	$1,000,000	SPLOST, General Fund, LARP, State and federal grants
Police car and equipment, fire equipment	City of Broxton	$167,000	SPLOST
Purchase backhoe for public utility department	City of Ambrose	$55,000	SPLOST
Water tank improvements	City of Nicholls	$100,000	SPLOST
Purchase on-board computers for police cars	City of Douglas	$5,000 per car	Drug funds/SPLOST
Increase broadband services throughout region	SGRC Region	TBD	CDBG, General Funds, grants

Population

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Support collaboration between Triple Crown Hometown and the local development community to identify appropriate locations for future Active Adult Retirement Communities	City of Valdosta	Varies	Varies
Continue to promote area as retirement community	Bacon County	$100,000	DCA, General Funds
Certified retirement communities/senior housing	SGRC Region	TBD	CHIP, USDA, General Funds

Land Use

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Update Subdivision Ordinance	City of Douglas	$50,000	General Funds
Complete the site inventories and assessments for the Brownfields Grant, and seek additional grant funding	City of Valdosta	Varies	Grants
Amend or adopt codes and ordinances where applicable to address the environmentally sensitive resources identified in Part V Environmental Ordinances. Adopt protection measures for groundwater recharge areas	Berrien County	$2,500	General Funds
Conduct annexation studies to consolidate islands within the city	City of Nashville	$7,500	General Funds
Require developers to pave streets and provide sidewalks within all new development	Pierce County and Cities	N/A	General Funds
Develop land use development and/or zoning for county and cities	Brantley County	Staff time	General Funds
Develop incentives to encourage development of communities that are family friendly and provide diversity of uses and housing choices	City of Waycross	TBD	General Funds, State and Federal Grants
Map utilities with GIS	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants, General Funds
Provide for buffer areas between agricultural and non-agricultural	Ware County	TBD	State and Federal Grants, General Funds
Update the zoning ordinances to be consistent with the current comprehensive plan	Brooks County and Cities	$5,000	General Funds
Continue to amend the Land Development Ordinance as needed to assist the implementation of the Lanier County Future Land Use Plan	Lanier County	Staff Time	General Funds

Land Use

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Address the growing number of unregulated mobile homes moving into the County when adopting codes and/or zoning	Bacon County	$1,500	General Funds
Continue to operate a building inspections program that will involve condemnation, permitting of mobile homes, issuance of building permits, and other land development related activities and that will eliminate blighted areas	Clinch County	$20,000	General funds
Establish Firewise Community Programs/Plans for all communities within the county	Charlton County and Cities	TBD	Department of Forestry
Prepare annual reports of building permits, new subdivisions, zoning ordinance amendments, special exceptions and variances	City of Ocilla	N/A	General Funds
Encourage designation of agricultural and industrial land uses to protect such uses from incompatible land uses	Irwin County	N/A	General Funds
Create a GIS Parcel Map that will allow viewers the capability to see each parcel and make tax assessment efforts less difficult	Atkinson County	N/A	General Funds
Develop a Unified Land Use Plan/Ordinance	Cook County / Cities	TBD	General Funds
Coordinate planning by public and private parties so they provide the communities needs without negative impact	Tift County and Cities	TBD	General Funds

Transportation

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
New airport terminal	Bacon County and City of Alma	$900,000	TIA SPLOST County
Promote the widening of SR 319 through Ben Hill County	Ben Hill County	TBD	General Funds
Promote the widening of SR 107 to Interstate 75	Ben Hill County	TBD	General Funds
Repave County Roads using $2.0 million of SPLOST funds	Ben Hill County	$2,000,000	SPLOST
Complete Paving of Spring Lake Drive	Charlton County	$300,000	Grants, SPLOST, General Funds, DOT
Implement continuous bike trails along the Okefenokee Trail and GA Hwy 40 from Kingsland to Folkston	Charlton County	TBD	Grants, SPLOST, General Funds, DOT
Construct a new airport terminal	Cook County	$1,000,000	Grants
Pursue funding for the upgrading of the intersection at GA 94 and US Highway 129	Echols County	$50,000	GDOT, General Funds
Pave a mile of Smith Dairy Road	Lanier County	$220,000	GDOT, County
Develop a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Coffee County	Coffee County	$250,000	General Funds, GDOT
Signals, SR 158 @ 7 locations	Coffee County	$900,000	GDOT, General Funds

Transportation

Project	County/City	Projected Cost	Funding Source
Bike and Pedestrian path at SR 135 at 17 Mile River Bridge	Coffee County	$188,000	GDOT, General Funds
Complete Greenway Trail to State Route 206	City of Douglas	$900,000	GDOT
Develop strong pedestrian/bicycle connections to encourage residents to walk/bike to work, shop and other designations in the community	Pierce County and cities	$60,000	GDOT, General Funds
Improve county airport by resurfacing runway, extending runway, and improvements to hangers and building	Brantley County	$400,000	Available Grants, General Funds
Improve George Street with a turning lane	City of Waycross	$500,000	GDOT, General Funds, State and Federal Grants
Site prep and paving apron and taxiways for T-Hangars, construct 24 T-Hangars and two corporate hangars for airport	Ware County	$194,003	General Funds
Paving of Mill Street and Kendrick Streets	City of Morven	$145,000	GDOT, General Funds
Railroad repairs for Georgia owned railroads	Atkinson County Berrien County Lanier County Lowndes County	$20,000,000	GDOT, Available grants, General Funds
Establish Turn-A-Around in lieu of parallel taxiways at Alma/Bacon Airport	Bacon County	$200,000	DCA, GDOT

Section VI

CEDS Plan of Action

The following implementation strategies discuss the various methods that will be undertaken to implement the Goals and Objectives. These methods will promote economic development and opportunity, foster effective transportation services, enhance and protect the environment, maximize effective development of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy, promote the use of technology in economic development including access to high-speed telecommunications, balance resources through sound managements of physical development, and obtain and utilize adequate funds and other resources.

Economic Development

Implementation Strategies:

- *Encourage cooperation among public and private organizations to ensure that business and industry continue to consider the region.*
- *Facilitate and encourage coordination between the local government and the area Chamber of Commerce to develop a list of target industries for each community and/or county that will provide year round employment opportunities.*
- *Focus on regional tourism. Many good recreation/tourism opportunities in this region; hunting and fishing, etc... This could be a major contributor to the economic development of this region.*
- *Assist local governments in inventorying availability of sites for industrial development.*
- *Support, coordinate, and develop implementation of WIA programs to improve the labor force.*
- *Assist in establishing leadership development programs for all counties and include training on educational level/labor force skills improvement.*
- *Encourage local and regional industries/businesses to perform on the job training for potential employees.*
- *Promote coordination between the local government and the area businesses and agencies to identify ways to attract and retain more young, workforce age population to the region.*

Economic Development

Implementation Strategies:

- *Support continued expansion of facilities and programs of state's technical colleges in the region.*
- *Develop and maintain a web-based clearinghouse of information on available and upcoming grant and loan opportunities, as well as technical assistance opportunities through the regional commission's website.*
- *Continue to monitor grant opportunities and inform local communities about upcoming deadlines and assist local communities in the grant preparation and application.*
- *Study existing industries, special or unique economic activities and recent trends in small businesses to attempt to identify potential satellite industries or other economic development ideas or potential projects (research and market studies).*
- *Support region-wide export data study to identify businesses/industries that are exporting and where they are exporting. Also work to identify similarities in the exports and determine new exporting opportunities.*

Population

Implementation Strategies:

- *SGRC will provide support staff for all Workforce Investment Board objectives including; continuing development of youth education/employment programs and occupational skills development programs for adults and dislocated workers, and comprehensive multi-agency one-stop workforce network and systems.*

- *Continue to support funding and expansion of all forms of education.*

- *Dissemination of census data as it becomes available.*

Community Facilities

Implementation Strategies:

- *The SGRC will act as a catalyst and partner with interested cities and counties to prepare a capital improvement program by annually assisting in the update to their short-term work program.*

- *As requested, coordinate interest and support from small cities to provide an urban level of services, i.e., add sanitary sewer collection and treatment systems.*

- *Working with qualified engineering consultants, assist cities and counties to prepare system-wide water and sanitary sewer system assessments, which include future line extension needs and capital improvement programs consistent with their adopted Comprehensive Plan.*

- *Assist local and regional industrial development organizations with development of grants-in-aid applications for industrial/business development consistent with local and regional objectives. Assist with project implementation as requested.*

- *Research and make available various state and federal grants and loan programs that can be utilized for local or regional infrastructure development.*

- *Maintain regional web-enabled economic development database.*

Land Use

Implementation Strategies:

- *Provide technical assistance and encourage local governments to adopt LDR's.*
- *Assist local governments in writing mobile home ordinances.*
- *Assist local governments with the development of site plan review system.*

Transportation

Implementation Strategies:

- *Assist all local governments wishing to update and amend comprehensive plans, future land use maps, provide GIS studies to facilitate transportation studies and growth patterns.*

- *Support all local governments wishing to establish public transportation systems. Provide GIS studies, cost-to-benefit studies, and work with other agencies to facilitate development of public transportation systems.*

- *Continue to promote and implement the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan through special events, education and sharing of information such as sponsored bike rodeos and through development of Bicycle and Pedestrian facility assessments.*

Housing

Implementation Strategies:

- *Assist all local governments wishing to participate in any housing programs, by providing technical assistance, grant writing, and/or administration.*
- *Work with local governments to develop strategies to address the placement and usage of manufactured housing.*
- *Work with local, state and federal agencies to publicize existing homebuyer programs.*
- *As requested, SGRC will provide assistance to cities/counties for housing conditions surveys as related to state and federal planning.*
- *SGRC will provide technical assistance to countywide planning advisory commissions and local elected officials to adopt, revise, or update housing, building and property maintenance codes.*

Natural & Cultural Resources

Implementation Strategies:

- *Assist local governments in conducting an inventory of their available natural resource assets.*
- *Provide model ordinances to local governments to assist in the protection of river corridors.*
- *Encourage local governments to enforce state ordinances protecting groundwater, recharge areas, wetlands, and river corridors.*
- *Provide technical assistance to local governments that are inventorying their historic and cultural resources.*
- *SGRC will encourage and assist counties and cities to conduct countywide surveys of historic resources to identify significant historic areas, structures and districts. Survey data will be incorporated in the regional/statewide geographic information system.*
- *Assist local units of government in preparation of Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) Projects to assist in historic downtown revitalization projects.*
- *SGRC will provide technical assistance for cities and counties that have or are interested in creating, historic preservation ordinances, commissions, historic district zoning ordinances, and aesthetic zoning overlay districts.*

Section VII

Performance Measures

The following are the performance measures that will be used to evaluate the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's successful development and implementation of the CEDS. These performance measures are: the number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS, the number and types of investments that will be undertaken in the region, the number of jobs retained in the region, the amount of private sector investments in the region after the implementation of the CEDS, and the changes in the economic environment of the region.

1. Number of jobs created/retained and private investment made after implementation of the CEDS.
   - Quarterly reporting from regional ED Pros (Chamber of Commerce's, Better Hometown and MainStreet Programs, and Development Authorities) on jobs creation/retention and private investment in their local communities.
   - Quarterly updates from the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Loan Program division on new private investment in the region and state.
   - Local businesses/industries in region advertise successful growth and job retention through PSA's, newspaper, local television and radio.
   - Compare Census statistics
   - Evaluate tax digest ; increase/decrease
   - Evaluate sales tax; increase/decrease
   - Increase/decrease in business licenses
   - Governors listing of imminent business/industry closures

2. Number and types of public investment undertaken in the region.
   - Semi-annual reporting from the Regional Commission, Local Governments, and the Workforce Investment Board on new investments in region.

3. Changes in the economic environment of the region.
   - Local governments, ED Pros, and the Workforce Investment Board report major changes to the region's economic environment to the Regional Commission.

Section VIII

Georgia Dept. of Economic Development Letter

Georgia
USA

July 10, 2012

TO: Georgia's Regional Commission Executive Directors

FROM: Gretchen Corbin, Deputy Commissioner Gretchen Corbin

SUBJECT: Economic Development Priorities in Georgia

It is our pleasure to assist your Regional Commission as you complete your Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Economic Development Administration under the U.S. Department of Commerce. Continued funding from EDA is critical to our economic development efforts and projects in Georgia.

Georgia is home to world-renowned research centers, top ranked universities and Fortune 500 companies. Georgia combines a talented workforce and high quality of living with abundant resources and a thriving economy to create a fertile environment for economic development. The Georgia Department of Economic Development helps drive Georgia's economic growth.

The Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) is the state's sales and marketing arm, the lead agency for attracting new business investment, encouraging the expansion of existing industry and small businesses, locating new markets for Georgia products, attracting tourists to Georgia, and promoting the state as a location for film, video and music projects, as well as planning and mobilizing state resources for economic development. GDEcD is a global agency and one-stop-shop for accessing Georgia's assets and finding the right components for success. We accomplish these goals through the combined efforts of our Global Commerce Team, Tourism Team, Film, Video & Music Team and our Marketing & Communications Team.

Activities identified in the CEDS that do not conflict with the goals stated above would be deemed consistent with the efforts of GDEcD. Efforts by your RC, coupled with the efforts of all other entities involved in creating lasting jobs and investment within our state are essential to ensure the continued economic vitality within the state of Georgia.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 404-962-4029.

Georgia Department of Economic Development • 75 Fifth Street, NW • Suite 1200 • Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Section IX

Adoption Resolution

RESOLUTION
OF THE SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

TO APPROVE THE 2013-2018 COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)

WHEREAS, the eighteen counties of Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware make up the Southern Georgia Economic Development District as identified by the Economic Development Administration, and;

WHEREAS, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission has prepared an economic development plan known as the *Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)* which outlines the problems and opportunities, goals and objectives, strategic projects, plans of action, and performance measures important to the economic development of the "District", and;

WHEREAS, implementation of the CEDS vital to the economic development future of the "District", and;

WHEREAS, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission utilized community and private sector participation in the development of the CEDS, and recognizes the importance of public and private sector partnerships in the implementation of the CEDS.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Council approve the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for 2013-2018, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Southern Georgia Regional Commission continue to strive to meet the needs and attain the goals of the CEDS in order to ensure economic prosperity for the region.

Adopted by the governing Council of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission on the 23rd day of August, 2012.

Clarence F. Billups, Chairman

John L. Leonard, Executive Director