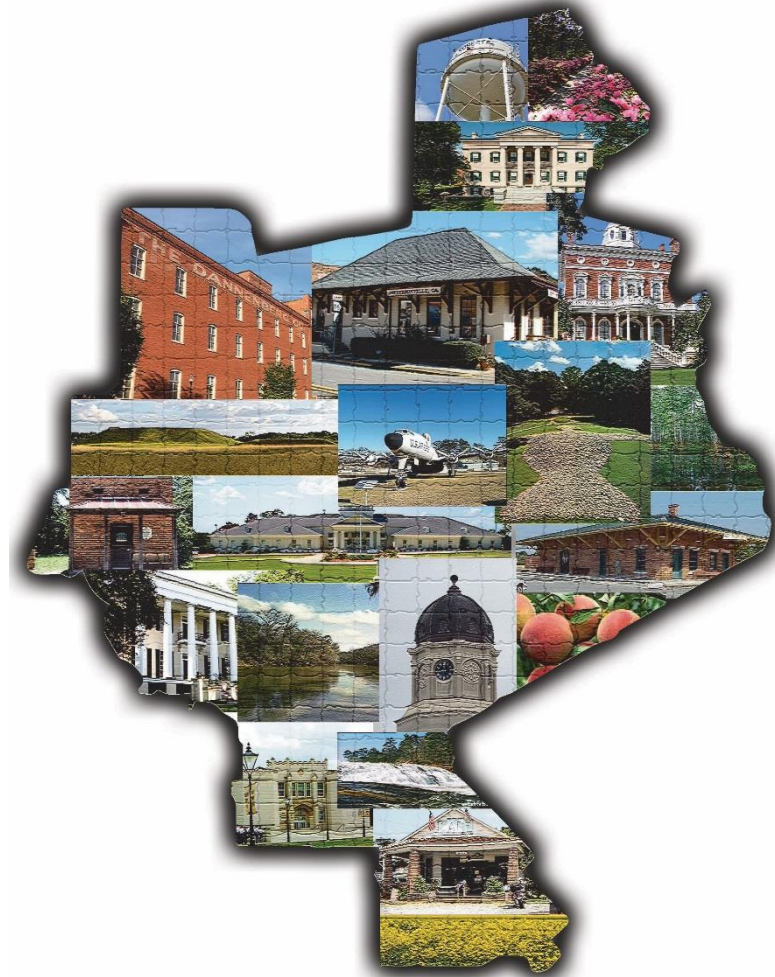


2016-2036

Plan for . . .

A THRIVING MIDDLE GEORGIA



REGIONAL AGENDA

 **M**iddle Georgia Regional Commission

May 12, 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Middle Georgia is an exceptionally diverse region. From the large cities to the small towns, significant opportunities are present, requiring only the fortitude to overcome equally significant challenges. The Regional Agenda is the third and final component of the broader Middle Georgia Regional Plan. While the Regional Assessment discussed these challenges and opportunities in a factual context, the Regional Agenda is informed by the Stakeholder Involvement Program and by thoughts and feelings about what Middle Georgians want their region to look like in the future. The Agenda should help provide a road map and a toolbox of resources to allow local and regional decision-makers the ability to improve the overall prosperity and quality of life within their communities and strive for the creation of a thriving Middle Georgia.



The 11 counties that compose the Middle Georgia Region.

One of the major themes heard from stakeholders across the region is the need for additional economic development within Middle Georgia. In many cases, this is tied closely to the themes of education and workforce development. Additional investment of time, resources, and collaborative learning experiences is necessary to keep the economy of the region moving in the right direction. Few stakeholders doubted that Middle Georgia had the potential to improve the quality of its workforce, but many stressed the need to build connections that can enhance the best practices already in place. Apprenticeship and mentorship programs can be particularly beneficial in teaching not only the hard skills necessary to succeed, but also the soft skills that many employers believe are becoming harder to find. There was also broad consensus that while opportunities to improve an individual's marketability in the labor force exist, additional work needs to occur in spreading the news of opportunities and effectively communicating the availability of regional resources.

Another commonly heard theme is that the region has great opportunities related to its natural resources. With several large lakes, three major rivers, and the Ocmulgee National Monument all present in Middle Georgia, the region is positioned to capitalize on these assets through ecotourism initiatives. Walking and bicycling trails are a simple upgrade that can rejuvenate an area and bring more visitors in, and aquatic recreation opportunities can even draw people from far away. For example, Columbus, Georgia used the Chattahoochee River to create artificial whitewater rapids that have become a major tourist draw for the



The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail in Macon is one example of Middle Georgia embracing the natural environment to help improve the community as a whole.

city. The Flint, Ocmulgee, and Oconee rivers can likewise be used as recreational opportunities if combined with infrastructure investments from local residents and government entities. In addition, the provision of new recreational opportunities can also help improve the overall health of the community.

Challenges also remain for many local governments in terms of ensuring adequate service provision. Many local governments have been encountering shrinking budgets and tax bases which strains their ability to keep infrastructure in acceptable shape. As a result, potholes sometimes go unrepaired,

water lines rupture more frequently than they should, and infiltration seeps into sanitary sewer systems. The fixes for these are often not simple or inexpensive. As a result, grant funding remains a prime opportunity for local governments to undertake much needed repairs to their critical infrastructure. It was also heard from stakeholders that the availability of infrastructure itself may also be lacking in some places. For example, some industries need more natural gas capacity than is currently available in the region. Transportation infrastructure can also be an issue, as some local governments seek opportunities to widen existing roads or construct new ones (especially East-West corridors across the Ocmulgee River). While grant funding will always be an important part of this equation, local governments may also need to find ways to set aside funds for regular maintenance activities, as well as large capital improvement projects.



Even seemingly simple repairs can be costly if happening at the wrong time or place. The City of Jeffersonville would spend nearly \$50,000 to repair this broken water main under U.S. 80.

In addition, stakeholders have identified a need to review current land use and development patterns. As Baby Boomers are increasingly left with “empty nests,” and as Millennials enter the real estate market, more and more Americans are becoming interested in returning to downtown or small town living as an alternative to the traditional suburbs that grew in the post-war era. This underscores a need for additional investment in the revitalization of town centers and the promotion of smart growth principles that allow for easy mobility of residents ages 8 to 80. If town centers are able to meet the needs of potential residents (particularly older Americans in many small towns), then not only will residents have an attractive place to live, but they will also aid in growing more commercial activity in town centers. These growth patterns will prove beneficial for many local governments, as new infill developments carry with them a lower cost of service provision for the local government.

Finally, it is worth noting that the protection of Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) and the missions it hosts are of the utmost importance. As the region’s largest employer, no other entity has as large an economic impact as RAFB, particularly in Houston County, one of the most populous counties in the region. However, it remains true that the entire region must prepare for the possibility that missions could be lost. While economically impactful, missions are frequently added, moved, and lost at military installations all across the country. This requires a commitment to economic diversification across the region to make the economy of Middle Georgia resilient in case the unfortunate were to occur.

These are only some of the major findings of the Regional Agenda which will be detailed in the pages that follow. The next section of this document will briefly detail the planning process, describing the ways in which the general public was involved in the creation of this plan. Afterward, the Regional Agenda will lay out a vision statement for the region, which will be expounded upon in the context of land use and development in the following narratives. Next this plan will discuss Issues and Opportunities that have been identified for the region, followed by an Implementation Program. This section includes the Regional Work Program of activities that will be undertaken by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission in the months ahead. Finally, we will note plans for ongoing evaluation and monitoring of plan implementation.

THE REGIONAL PLANNING PROCESS

Stakeholder Involvement Overview

The Middle Georgia Regional Plan was developed in close consultation with stakeholders from throughout the region. Following the minimum requirements set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) Council served as the steering committee for the development of the Regional Agenda. To ensure that this plan reflects the full range of regional values and desires, the steering committee commissioned staff to conduct meetings with other potential stakeholder groups throughout the region.



Local stakeholders participate in side discussion during a Regional Plan meeting in Crawford County.

Small Community Meetings

In order to satisfy the steering committee's request for substantial public input, staff scheduled one meeting in each county (and one additional meeting in both Houston and Macon-Bibb counties) to solicit input from stakeholders and the general public. These 13 meetings served to provide feedback on the Projected Development Map and the Areas Requiring Special Attention within each county. These meetings were announced through press releases, television interviews, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission and local government websites, and word-of-mouth. Substantial input was provided, with over 175 unique stakeholders attending the meetings. Attendees included local government staff, members of the Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions Class of 2015, media reporters, and members of the general public. The schedule for these meetings is shown in the table below.

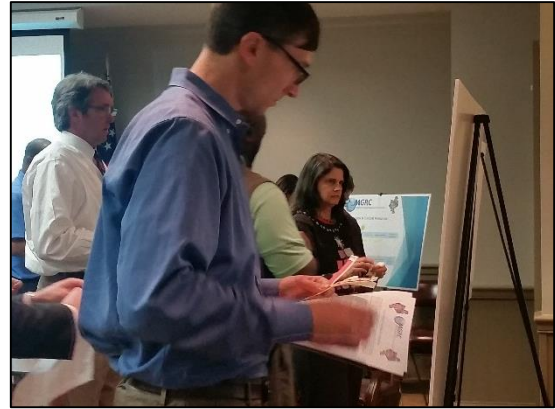


MGRC staff discusses future development patterns with stakeholders in Putnam County on January 25, 2016.

County Meeting	Date and Time	Location
Baldwin County	January 7 @ 3:00 pm	Development Authority Building
Crawford County	January 6 @ 3:00 pm	County Administration Building
Houston County #1	January 13 @ 3:30 pm	County Commission Annex
Houston County #2	January 27 @ 5:00 pm	Perry Arts Center
Jones County	January 12 @ 5:30 pm	County Administration Building
Macon-Bibb County #1	January 8 @ 1:30 pm	Terminal Station
Macon-Bibb County #2	February 2 @ 4:30 pm	Macon-Bibb Government Center
Monroe County	January 26 @ 2:00 pm	County Administration Building
Peach County	January 11 @ 3:30 pm	Byron City Hall
Pulaski County	January 19 @ 5:00 pm	County Courthouse Annex
Putnam County	January 25 @ 3:30 pm	County Administration Building
Twiggs County	January 28 @ 3:00 pm	County Courthouse
Wilkinson County	January 5 @ 10:00 am	County Courthouse

Large Stakeholder Group Meetings

In addition to the county-level meetings, five large stakeholder group meetings were held over the course of the planning process at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission office in Macon. The first meeting, held on September 3, 2015, consisted of an overview of the planning process, as well as input on the development of the Regional Assessment. At the second meeting in December 2015, stakeholders actively participated in discussion of the Regional Vision Statement and strategies for addressing the Areas Requiring Special Attention. Stakeholders reviewed the Regional Vision from 2011, considered a draft developed by the 2015 Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions group, and worked through the wording with Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff to develop the final vision presented in this plan. To end the meeting, stakeholders considered proposed Community Planning Goals and Development Patterns for the Areas Requiring Special Attention, and used dot-voting to indicate their preferred focus for each.



Stakeholders considering Community Planning Goals and Development Patterns at the second regional stakeholder meeting on December 17, 2015.

The third and fourth stakeholder meetings, held in January 2016, allowed stakeholders to discuss the Regional Issues and Opportunities and provide input into potential action items to be included with the Regional Work Program. At the first meeting, participants were divided into small groups to focus



Stakeholders listening to a presentation by Regional Commission staff in December 2015.

discussion on one of the Quality Community Objective areas. Natural & Cultural Resources, Land Use, Transportation, Community Facilities & Services, and Aging Services were discussed at length by each group, with all groups coming together at the end of the meeting to garner feedback from meeting attendees as a whole. The second meeting drew a smaller crowd that did not lend itself to breakout groups, and the meeting was conducted more as a dialogue

between MGRC staff and the stakeholder group. At this meeting, Economic Development, Education & Workforce Development, Housing, and Intergovernmental Coordination were discussed. The final regional meeting consisted of the Open House and Public Hearing on Thursday, February 4, 2016. The Open House allowed stakeholders to review sections of the Draft Agenda, as well as the Regional Development and Areas Requiring Special Attention maps. Attendees and staff discussed the draft documents, and public comments were taken. The Public Hearing, held directly following the Open House, consisted of a formal presentation on the contents of the Regional Agenda. Local elected officials, local government staff, general public, and the news media were some of the groups represented at these meetings.

General Interest Questionnaire

Over the course of the development of the Regional Agenda, regional stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in the 2016 Regional Community Survey. The survey consisted of 70 questions, both multiple choice and open-ended, which targeted specific issues to be addressed in the Regional Agenda. There were 120 individual responses. Input derived from the survey was used in drafting the Regional Agenda. The results of the survey can be found in Appendix B.

Website, Social, and Conventional Media

Stakeholders and members of the public were informed of all meetings through multiple forms of outreach. Local government websites were used to announce meetings held within each county, and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission website contained announcements for all meetings throughout the region. Participants were encouraged to engage with the Regional Commission on social media through the use of #ThrivingMiddleGeorgia. A number of tweets and Facebook posts were submitted by meeting attendees. Finally, members of the news media were kept informed through press releases and invitations to attend meetings. At least 12 stories or reports appeared in local papers discussing the Regional Plan, and three on-air reports were filed with on-air interviews of MGRC staff.



The MGRC social media board was prominently displayed at all public meetings throughout the Regional Plan public input process.

MGRC discusses 20-year strategic plan

On Wednesday, January 6, county leaders were given the opportunity provide information while disseminating regional development information to be included in an 11 county region 20 year -2016-2036 comprehensive plan. Crawford County is also involved in a process of a 20 year comprehensive plan. The group leading the discussion, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Greg Boike, Cam Yeary and Kimberly Lowe brought ideas to the table as well as listened to information from those in attendance.

County and Region 6 of which Crawford County is included are involved in a 2016 in a strategic comprehensive plan adhering to economic guidelines preparing a future look at what will or has been needed in the past to provide a more understandable, workable and concentrated information needed to develop Crawford County and its place in Region 6 Middle Georgia. A strategy to improve the outlook economically and considering the workforce population.

General topic concern focus for Crawford were: developed areas, developing areas, rural areas, conservation aiding, to sculpt a design of county by county work study by MGRC and each individual county benefit to provide data for workforce, economic development and positive population and economic development.

Developed area defined as sculpting a design of work study. Definition of developed areas are parts where businesses are established, government and or township or city with residential concentration where all are provided with water and

sewage. Roberts was the example for Crawford. Developing areas, described as those with move-in by residents, some business concentration or industry, or organized residential subdivisions and developing water and sewerage lines. These areas may develop to quickly in some cases.

Rural was described as area of low density population, agriculture and no water or sewerage. No industry, more often than not no place for industry because of land use designated farm land.

Conservation, described as cultural or historical sites as Benjamin Hawkins Burial site, Flint River areas, and now by state law the conservation of wooded areas. Over 70% of Crawford County according to some in the group is vested in conservation and may be defined as conservation for a period of 10 years. Land owner does not pay tax on this property as it is in conservation. This is also defined Conservation Use Valuation Easement (CUVA). Some individuals noted areas defined as conservation are being used by land owner as a tax break.

Boike pointed out a parcel of land laying dormant in Roberts he would consider to be something that needs development sighting a property on US 80 and US 341 a business or enhancement of parcels like that are necessary for redevelopment. Brenda Carroll, Crawford County Development Authority Chairman and Mayor Becky Smith noted buildings inside the city or vacant buildings in downtown district could be developed into lofts or assisted living facilities. Noted by several were need for four lane on

US 341 and at least passing lanes on US 80. Road construction and improvement emphasized by Commission Chair Paul Chapman would be an absolute necessity. He also noted one very large retail company downtown Roberts to service all smaller cities and residents west, south and north of Roberts. Conservation areas and law needed repealing according to some to provide necessary tax money. Special Local Option Sales Taxes, and extra penny for industry because of land use involved to provide funding as well as regional SPLOST funding for road construction. Abatement of vacant structures or revitalize those structures. Consolidation of City - Roberts and County was also one of many points brought to the table.

All in attendance, school board, city government, county government, chamber, development authority, housing authority and interested leaders in the community were offered a chance to reckon with five maps showing by colored dots where focusing funds, energy and assessed development might be worthwhile. All attendees had valid ideas MGRC personnel took with them as this was the beginning of the Region 6 Comprehensive Plan.

Everyone in the county is invited to go to www.middlegeorgiarc.org for additional information and take advantage finding scheduled meetings to hear this 20 year plan and provide your ideas to the plan. February 4, 2016 at 5 p.m. a public hearing will be conducted with the 11 county drafts offered for assessment.

Middle Georgia Regional Commission to Hold Open House and Public Hearing on Regional Plan

(Macon, Feb. 1, 2016) – The Middle Georgia Regional Commission is "near" completion of the first draft of the Regional Plan update, 2016-2036: Plan for ... A Thriving Middle Georgia. The Regional Commission will hold an open house and public hearing to review the Plan's contents and receive additional feedback from interested parties.

The open house will be held on Thursday, Feb. 4, 2016 at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, 175 Emory Highway, Suite C, Macon, GA 31217. The meeting will begin at 4 p.m. where Regional Commission staff will be available to discuss the details of the

Plan. An official public comment period will begin at 5 p.m. with a brief presentation and will conclude with comments from citizens and regional stakeholders.

Additional information about the Middle Georgia Regional Plan, including previous Plans, a general interest survey, and a schedule of upcoming meetings can be found on the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's website: www.middlegeorgiarc.org/regional-plan/. Residents of Middle Georgia are encouraged to share their opinions with the Regional Commission on this important effort.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission

12A • WEDNESDAY, FEB. 3, 2016

Perry ponders Middle Georgia regional planning ideas

BY JEFF JACOBS
Crawford County Commission Chair Perry said he is "excited" about the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's plan to update its regional plan, but he has some concerns about the plan's impact on the county's economy and infrastructure. Perry said he is "excited" about the plan's focus on economic development and infrastructure, but he is concerned about the plan's impact on the county's economy and infrastructure. Perry said he is "excited" about the plan's focus on economic development and infrastructure, but he is concerned about the plan's impact on the county's economy and infrastructure.



The Middle Georgia Regional Commission held their regional plan meeting in Perry Wednesday / TJ Stricker (MGCR)

MGRC staff frequently interacted with the news media throughout the regional planning process in an effort to keep the general public informed.

REGIONAL VISION

American businessman and investor Warren Buffett once said, “Someone is sitting in the shade today because someone else planted a tree long ago.” The imperative of regional planning is recognizing this connection between what we do in the present, and the outcomes we are likely to receive in the future. This first acknowledgement allows us to begin dreaming of our future, with the understanding that we can make that distant concept a reality.

The regional vision, which in this plan consists of a general vision statement, a map of future development patterns, and a narrative of strategies for areas requiring special attention, provides Middle Georgia with a concept of its future self. This vision is aspirational and not necessarily descriptive of the present, but is meant to be both desirable and achievable. The sincere hope of the plan’s stakeholders and steering committee is that this vision can be a uniting catalyst for regional work in the years to come.

VISION STATEMENT

***A thriving Middle Georgia, united by regional pride and mutual respect, where cooperation and collaboration expand the region’s economic prosperity, provide an exceptional education for all of its residents, and ensure that every Middle Georgian has a high quality of life through the provision of effective local government services and the preservation of natural and cultural assets.
In short, a diverse region of opportunity where people want to live, learn, work, and play.***

Middle Georgia is a unique and special place with a strength that it draws from its diversity. Located at the center of the state, the region is ideally located to draw upon advantages from every corner of Georgia. This rich diversity is something that residents of Middle Georgia hope to preserve, while also expanding opportunities for all. Middle Georgians want people to embrace the region by choosing to live, learn, work, and play in Middle Georgia—and to have these opportunities, no matter what their background may be.

To achieve this vision of a thriving Middle Georgia, the region must be united, and individuals from across the region must cooperate with one another in the pursuit of the vision. Specifically, if Middle Georgia is to become a region where people want to live, learn, work, and play, regional leaders and policymakers must focus on growing the region’s economic prosperity and improving its educational system. Local governments must also ensure that the services they provide help to keep residents safe and healthy. Finally, it is the responsibility of all residents to ensure that the unique physical environment and culture of Middle Georgia are protected as a testament to its diversity.

This vision is quite broad, but is certainly attainable. As a starting point for the region’s future and for this plan, the challenge for Middle Georgia will be bringing this vision to fruition. The remainder of this plan will aid this process by identifying more specific goals, principles, and action items to help create a thriving Middle Georgia.

FUTURE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Regional Development Map, found in Appendix B, shows the desired future land use patterns for the region. These areas were modified from the Regional Development Map found in the Regional Assessment through input from local stakeholders throughout the region. In travelling to each county to discuss development, MGRC staff discussed what was desired at the local levels in terms of growth, and identified areas that fit those local desires with the regional vision. The four general categories identified in the Regional Assessment were used in preparation of the Regional Agenda; these categories are outlined below.

Conservation Areas

The conservation areas include locations identified for preservation to protect important resources and environmentally-sensitive areas for the region. These areas were identified in the 2011 Regional Resources “Green Infrastructure” network map and carried over for the Regional Plan, per the requirements of the Department of Community Affairs. Numerous stakeholders commented on the conservation areas within their counties. It may be valuable for the region to reconsider this layer in future revisions to the Regional Resources Plan.

Rural Areas

Rural areas are defined as areas that are not expected to experience urbanization within the 20-year planning period. It is likely that these areas will not require additional urban services (such as public water/sewer infrastructure) in the near future. These areas are characterized by high levels of open space, passive use (such as agriculture and forestry), and an overall bucolic aesthetic that is quite common in the Middle Georgia region. The majority of the land area of the Middle Georgia region is considered to remain rural over the period covered by this plan.

Developed Areas

Developed areas within the Middle Georgia region are those areas which exhibit urban-type development and where service typically associated with urban areas (water, sewer, police protection, etc.) are currently provided. These places range from the smallest towns, such as Danville and Culloden, to the region’s largest cities, Warner Robins and Macon. These areas are not completely contained by municipal boundaries, and some areas that are incorporated may not be considered developed. Buildings and residences are more densely configured in developed portions of the region, but there is also room for additional infill development and redevelopment.

Developing Areas

The final category displayed on the Regional Development Patterns map is that of developing areas. These areas are in transition from rural to developed, and may be experiencing growing pains that come with that transition. While some public infrastructure may already be in place (water is typically the first service provided by communities in Middle Georgia), other, more cost-intensive services such as sewer may be needed going forward. Developing areas are usually found on the fringe of the developed areas, where the cost-efficiencies of greenfield development attract construction away from the older town centers. Transportation corridors, particularly those between centers of activity (e.g. the US Hwy 441 corridor between Eatonton and Milledgeville), are expected to drive development in the next 20 years as in the past. As in the 2011 Regional Plan, many of the areas along the Interstate 75 corridor are expected to continue developing as it runs the length of the region.

DEFINING NARRATIVE – AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

The defining narrative of the Regional Plan is a continuation of the broader Regional Vision that this plan intends to promulgate. Using both text and illustrations, this section seeks to give a more in depth description of what regional stakeholders have identified as possibilities for a future Middle Georgia.

This description is accomplished in the context of Areas Requiring Special Attention. Through the stakeholder meetings that were held, individuals in each county gave input on the challenges that exist in particular parts of their communities. These delineated areas are highlighted in the Areas Requiring Special Attention Map in Appendix B. Many common themes appeared from these discussions, affording the opportunity to discuss strategies to address conditions for these areas. The intent of this section is not to set forth specific policies for these communities (each city and county will have an opportunity to do that in the near future during their Local Comprehensive Planning process). Instead, at the level of strategic visioning, these recommendations are provided to help communities that wish to use them reach the shared goal of a thriving Middle Georgia—that diverse region of opportunity where people want to live, learn, work, and play.

Regionally Important Resources

The Regional Resource Plan (RRP) for Middle Georgia, adopted by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council in 2010, identified special places and resources throughout the region. The places included in the plan were gathered through a nomination process which was open to the public, as well as by consultation with regional stakeholders. Organized into three broad categories (Parks and Forestry Resources, Water Resources, and Heritage Resources), the plan describes in detail the value and vulnerability associated with each resource. Also, each resource is identified on a regional map.

The locations listed in the Middle Georgia RRP form an area requiring special attention due to their importance to the region’s identity. Additionally, as the region continues to develop, differing views may arise as to the appropriate level of development in the areas of and surrounding these resources. In the stakeholder involvement process for the development of the Regional Plan, members of the general public identified a number of areas throughout the region where future development is desired but is potentially in conflict with the RRP. These areas are identified later in the map portion of the Regional Agenda. These identifications allow local officials and communities to develop strategies in their individual comprehensive plans to address these differing views.

Parks and Forestry Resources

Federal and state-owned lands comprise the Parks and Forestry resources listed within the RRP. From the Oconee National Forest in the northern portion of the region, to Balls Ferry State Park in eastern Wilkinson County, these areas are mostly large



The Oconee National Forest covers nearly 100,000 acres within Jones and Putnam Counties. Established in 1959 to reclaim farmland ruined by erosion.

tracts of land that are currently under passive use. In total, there are 140,000 acres of protected land within the region. These resources serve the community in numerous ways, including wildlife habitat for species such as black bear, white-tailed deer, and bald eagles, hiking and camping opportunities for residents and passers-through alike, and timber resources which may be harvested on a sustainable schedule. Continued conservation is vital to the region's economic success and rural identity.

Water Resources



The Flint River, when combined with the Ocmulgee and Oconee Rivers, contributes to the more than 328 miles of river within Middle Georgia.

Middle Georgia's water resources serve the region in numerous capacities, including recreation, drinking water, sewage treatment, industrial development, and irrigation. The region has been blessed with a large quantity of these resources in the form of lakes, rivers, streams, groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands. They provide environmental functions, such as flood prevention, water purification, and storm water drainage. The larger lakes and rivers draw tourists and recreation-seekers to the region and provide a large economic impact.

Development pressures, particularly in the areas surrounding Lakes Sinclair and Oconee, have the potential to impact the water resources of the region in a negative manner. The rapid growth experienced in these areas over the past 20 years brought many new buildings, particularly single-family residences, to the area. As the septic tank systems that serve these homes age, water quality will remain an issue worthy of monitoring. It may become necessary for local governments to consider providing sewer service to existing and new development in the future.

Heritage Resources

The Middle Georgia region has an abundance of heritage resources which are significant to the history and identity of local communities and the region as a whole. These resources link the current members of the community to their common past, and inform visitors to the region of the diversity that has always been present here. Specific categories of heritage resources which were identified in the RRP include, early settlements, county courthouses, buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, local historic districts, African-American historic sites, and sites inhabited by pre-colonial Native Americans.

The inclusion of these heritage resources in the RRP gives them a special prominence to serve as a symbolic representation of communal history. These locations are the best-preserved examples of specific types of architecture and historical events.



The Johnston-Felton-Hay House, completed as a private residence in 1860, now serves as an event space and museum in Macon.

As such, it is imperative that they continue to be well-preserved and, where possible, open to public access and viewing. These locations bring much-needed attention to the overall historic character of the Middle Georgia region. They also hold potential as tourism draws for outsiders and visitors in order to attract them to some of the lesser-known resources that the region has to offer.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Sense of Place
- Regional Cooperation
- Resource Management
- Efficient Land use
- Educational Opportunities
- Community Health
- Local Preparedness

Recommended Development Patterns

- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails, and/or greenbelts.
- Link new developments to existing residential areas via trail systems.
- Site plans and building design should be sensitive to the natural features of the site, including woodlands, steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains.
- Enlist significant site features, including view shed corridors, trees, and existing heritage resources, as amenities that shape the identity and character of new, infill, and redevelopment.
- Limit the portion of sites that can be covered by impervious surfaces, such as roofs and pavement.
- Utilize cluster development to preserve open space and natural features on the development site.
- Use infrastructure availability to steer future development away from areas of natural, cultural, historic, and environmentally sensitive resources.
- Establish aquatic buffers beyond the state-required minimum distances to serve as natural boundaries between local waterways and new development.
- For new agricultural and forestry operations, consult with representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission, County Extension Service, and Georgia Forestry Commission to initiate appropriate best management practices.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Natural, Cultural, and Historic Parks and Sites
- Parks and Nature Preserves
- Passive Recreation
- Trails, Greenways, and Blueways
- Wildlife Management Areas

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Coordinate regional efforts between appropriate organizations, including local governments, land trusts, historic preservation societies and commissions, conservation advocacy groups neighboring regional commissions, and state agencies.
- Local governments adopt protection measures, including historic preservation ordinance, waterway buffers, and appropriate development regulations.
- Include Regional Resources as conservation areas for local comprehensive plans.

- Develop green infrastructure networks between Regional Resources to facilitate non-automotive transportation.
- Review and revise, as necessary, the current list of best practices in a future RRP update.
- Continue considering Regional Resources in Development of Regional Impact (DRI) reviews.

Potential Impacts to Natural or Cultural Resources

Due to the largely rural nature of the region, Middle Georgia contains many natural and cultural resources in addition to those listed in the Regional Resource Plan, which lend a unique character to the region and provide places that cannot be found anywhere else. A conversation of any significant length with residents of the region will invariably lead to discussion of relevant topics, such as where to fish on a given day, how the peach crop is doing, and which local church has been active the longest. The people of Middle Georgia take pride in these matters, because the subjects are a part of their identity. As such, the region is presented with numerous opportunities to take advantage of these resources to develop economic activity and tell the story of the region's rich cultural heritage.

Historic Sites

The diverse range of historic resources present within the region speaks to the potential difficulty in preserving and promoting these special places. Many historic buildings are privately-owned, and thus do not regularly interact with local regulatory mechanisms (i.e., historic preservation commissions) except in the case of alterations or potential demolition. Many historic buildings are in disrepair or in need of improvements that may not be financially feasible to undertake with private funding alone. Historic building rehabilitation tax credits offer one potential avenue for making necessary repairs and renovations. Since the 2011 adoption of the previous Regional Plan, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission has documented over 200 State Rehabilitation Tax Incentive Certifications issued by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division. Most of the buildings which have been assisted by the tax incentives are located in Baldwin or Macon-Bibb counties; this may represent a need to inform owners in other portions of the region about the opportunities presented by these incentives and assist with the use of them.



The Sidney Lanier Cottage serves as the office of Historic Macon, Foundation which serves as the region's historic society and assists with the revitalization of historic buildings, also providing assistance with tax incentive applications.



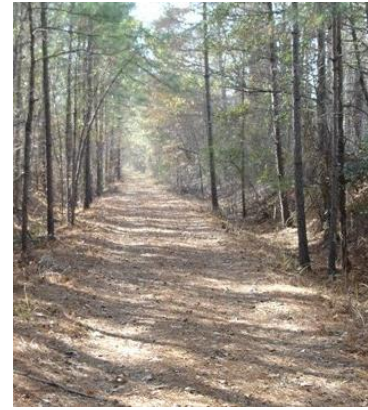
Salem Methodist Church, located south of Toombsboro, has functioned since 1812, and holds one service per month.

Another barrier to preserving and promoting historic sites is the fact that not all of them are easily identified. Many of those residents who are familiar with the significance of older buildings, tracts of land, or other locations are aging themselves. With the passing of each year and the loss of community elders, this local knowledge becomes more and more scarce; with the very real potential for its loss altogether. Many communities need to have a better understanding of their historic resources, and the region as a whole would be well-served to assist with this process. Local,

comprehensive surveys of historic sites, conducted through personal interviews and archive research could provide great insight into the resources which are present as well as those which are in danger of being lost.

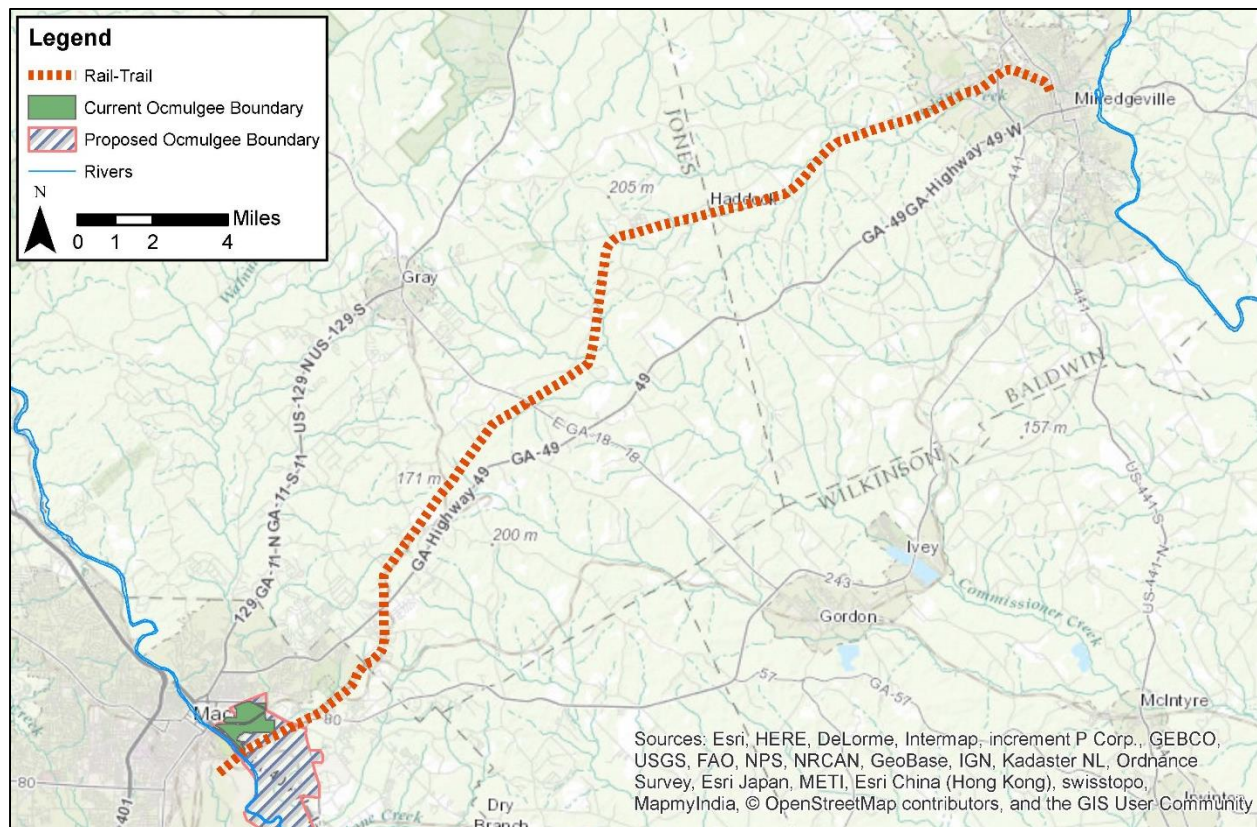
Central Georgia Rails-to-Trails

Another topic which came up repeatedly during the stakeholder involvement process was the need to be able to travel between natural resource areas without having to use an automobile. A commonly-discussed solution to this need was the development of the Central Georgia Rail-to-Trail project. Initially outlined in a 2007 feasibility study conducted by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Central Georgia Rail to Trail Association (CGRTA) advocates for the procurement and build-out of a shared-use trail along the 33-mile abandoned CSX railway that runs between Macon and Milledgeville. The proposed project would connect numerous Regional Resources, including the Ocmulgee National Monument, the Ocmulgee River, the Milledgeville Historic District, and the Oconee River.



Existing condition of the abandoned CSX railway near the James community in Jones County.

The trail would provide access to the small communities located between the two large cities, including Lakeside, James, Haddock, and Brown's Crossing. These historic communities have seen decreased population since the majority of the rail ceased operation in the corridor during the early 1980's. Rails-to-Trails projects in other parts of the state, including the Silver Comet Trail in northwestern Georgia, have seen positive economic impacts occur after



Path of the future Central Georgia Rail Trail, connecting the cities of Macon and Milledgeville, along with the Ocmulgee River and Ocmulgee National Monument to the Oconee River and Oconee River Greenway.

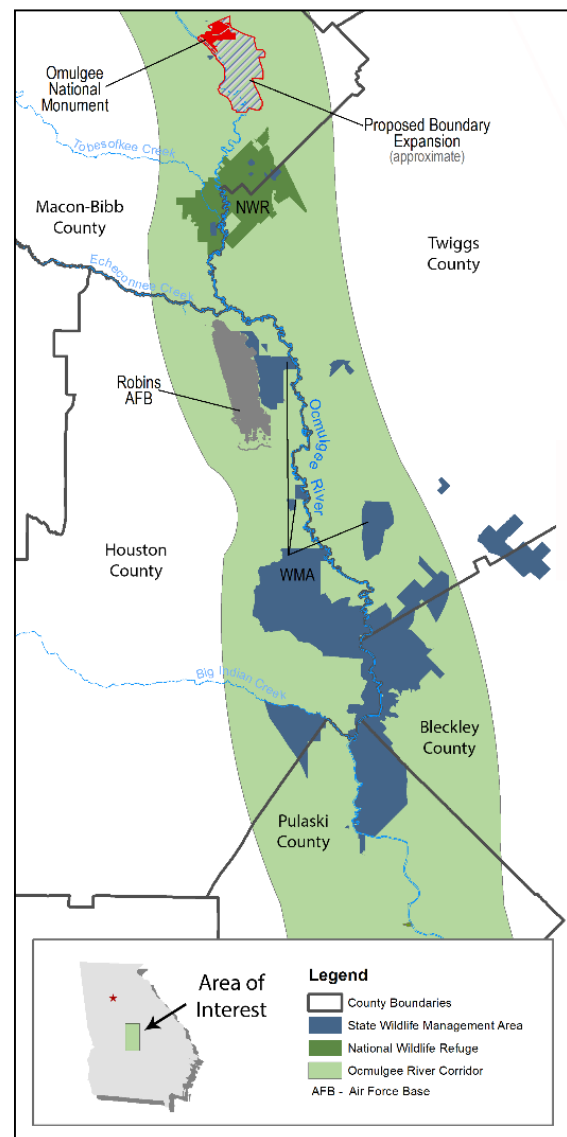
the trail construction. Advancing the CGRTA project would provide regional connectivity of small towns, large recreation areas, and two major population centers totaling approximately 200,000 people.

Ocmulgee River Corridor

The Ocmulgee River corridor between Macon and Hawkinsville provides a unique opportunity for the Middle Georgia Region. The river itself is identified as a Regional Resource, as are some of the surrounding areas at either end, namely the Ocmulgee National Monument and Bond Swamp in Macon-Bibb and Twiggs counties. This corridor is home to the Ocmulgee Old Fields Traditional Cultural Property, which was designated by the National Register in 1999, containing approximately 14,000 acres significant to the Creek people. There is evidence of continuous habitation of these areas for the past 17,000 years.

The history and significance of these lands, which span four counties within the region (Macon-Bibb, Houston, Twiggs, and Pulaski), contribute to the valuable resource that is the Ocmulgee River Corridor. Currently, large portions of the land on the east side of the river are either held by various federal agencies or managed by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in the form of Wildlife Management Areas. However, significant portions of the corridor remain privately owned and used for mining, timber, and agriculture. The Ocmulgee Mounds National Historic Park Boundary Revision Act is currently being considered by Congress that would allow expansion of the Ocmulgee National Monument to approximately 2,000 acres contiguous to the existing property and designate the expanded area as a National Historic Park. The result would be a park of nearly 2,800 acres connected to the Lamar Mound site east of Interstate 16, which is currently not accessible by the general public on a regular basis. Additionally, this legislation would allow the National Park Service to conduct a boundary study for the entire length of the corridor between Macon and Hawkinsville, potentially encompassing more than 30,000 acres. The goals of the study will be to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the historical significance of the lands along the river, document land ownership, and identify barriers to long-term protection of these resources. The study would potentially lead to the area's designation as a National Park and Preserve, the State of Georgia's first National Park.

An expanded boundary and designation as the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve would provide a major draw for those outside of the region to visit, as well as a great expansion of recreation opportunities for those who live within the region. Economic development opportunities arising from the need to serve those visitors to the park would provide possibilities for employment in the



The Ocmulgee River Corridor, from Macon to Hawkinsville. In red is the initial proposed boundary expansion, with the proposed study to consider the area in green for future expansion to approximately 30,000 acres in total.

underdeveloped areas surrounding the river corridor. The park expansion to a size roughly similar to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Northeast Ohio will be a boon to the region and bring with it amenities and attention to the many resources that Middle Georgia has to offer.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Sense of Place
- Regional Cooperation
- Resource Management
- Transportation Options

Recommended Development Patterns

- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails, and/or greenbelts.
- Connect large, existing greenspaces by preserving adjacent undeveloped land.
- Activate greenspaces and undeveloped areas through the location of large, regional park areas.
- Link new developments to existing residential areas via trail systems.
- Traditional downtown areas maintained as the focal point of the community.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Preserving significant historic or cultural features, structures, or character, and adaptively reusing or incorporating them into modern uses
- Develop design standards for historic areas based on existing historic buildings

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Natural, Cultural, and Historic Parks and Sites
- Parks and Nature Preserves
- Passive Recreation
- Trails, Greenways, and Blueways
- Wildlife Management Areas

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Identify cultural and historic assets across the region through local historic inventories.
- Coordinate regional efforts between appropriate organizations, including local governments, land trusts, historic preservation societies and commissions, conservation advocacy groups neighboring regional commissions, and state agencies.
- Local governments adopt protection measures, including historic preservation ordinance, waterway buffers, and appropriate development regulations.
- Maintain rural character when practical, using the local comprehensive plan as a guide.
- Control the aesthetic impact of signage through the regulation of sign and billboard size and design.
- Expand the Ocmulgee National Monument into a National Park and Preserve spanning 30,000 acres from Macon to Hawkinsville along the Ocmulgee River corridor.
- Procure abandoned CSX Rail line, or the rights to the line through “railbanking,” between Macon and Milledgeville for the future development of the Central Georgia Rail-to-Trail route.

Areas of Rapid Growth

The Middle Georgia region has experienced rapid growth in numerous areas since the early 1990's. Much of the area expanding from the city centers of Macon and Warner Robins grew at a rapid pace, with subdivisions and shopping centers popping-up seemingly overnight. These areas were occasionally annexed

by surrounding municipalities when services, such as water or sewer, were provided. However, a number of the areas currently experiencing rapid growth are not being provided municipal services. This growth without service provision, or with only partial service provision (i.e., water without sewer, or vice-versa), may lead to challenges in the future. Of particular concern is rapid growth around environmentally-sensitive areas, such as the lake areas in Putnam County. In these instances, current and future growth can outpace planning.

Areas around the Lakes

In Putnam County, the areas surrounding Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair were identified in the 2011 Middle Georgia Regional Plan as unique areas experiencing rapid growth. Growth in these areas have primarily been residential, although a dip in activity did take place due to the housing crisis. With the recovering economy and housing markets, stakeholders believe that the pace of growth is likely to pick back up over the next few years. The topography of the lake areas offers challenges to service delivery, particularly sewer. Most homes built on the lakes are served by septic systems, which are privately owned. The proximity of these systems to the lakes, a source of water and recreation, makes relevant the dangers of failure associated with aging septic systems. In the future, investment may be needed to provide public sewer access to residents of this rapidly-growing area.

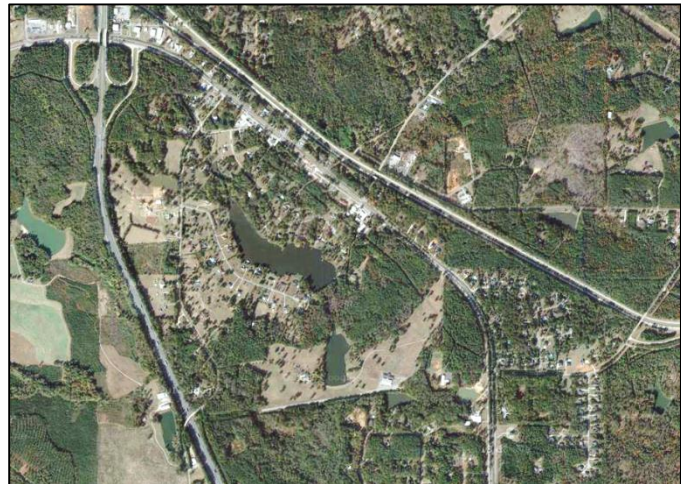


The Ritz Carlton at Reynolds Plantation, and surrounding residential developments, are typical of the type of growth that the Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair areas have seen over the past twenty years and are expected to see in the future.

North Macon-Bibb/South Monroe Counties



The Shoppes at River Crossing were one of the first developments in this area. Development has expanded along Riverside Drive, and numerous projects have been announced in nearby areas.



The Bolingbroke community, located between the junction of Interstates 75 and 475, has seen residential growth in recent years.

Another area that has seen, and is continuing to experience, rapid growth is the area in north Macon-Bibb County and southern Monroe County. Currently, three separate areas of growth are occurring along the Zebulon Road corridor and Bass Road corridors in Macon-Bibb County and the Bolingbroke

community in Monroe County. In the Macon-Bibb County areas, the growth is primarily commercial, with shopping centers having been constructed over the past decade. A number of “Developments of Regional Impact” applications have been submitted over the past year for these areas, and other developments that are just under the scale required for a DRI have been announced. Growth in these areas is expected to be similar in scope, with some additional residential developments occurring sporadically. In Monroe County, most of the growth has been residential subdivision-oriented, and is expected to continue to be so. Larger lots, typically in the 3 to 7-acre range, are typical of the type of growth this area has experienced.

In the future, it is possible that these areas of rapid growth will expand to a degree that they become unified. Numerous parcels of more than 100 acres are currently undeveloped between the three areas, though topographical and transportation access issues continue to provide a natural barrier to this conjoined growth. As development pressures for this area continue to mount, however, it is of particular importance that both county governments (along with the Macon Area Transportation Study, which serves as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the area) pay attention to the infrastructure needs that will face this portion of the region.

Houston County

The area between the cities of Perry and Warner Robins continues to see large amounts of development occur in previously unincorporated portions of Houston County. Land that is serviceable for water and sewer, located in close proximity to major employers, such as Robins Air Force Base, has been seen as very desirable for residential growth. These factors, in conjunction with access to a quality public school system, indicate that the trend of growth is likely to continue.



Robins Air Force Base, the largest employer in the Middle Georgia region, continues to drive development pressures in Houston County. The Museum of Aviation, shown above, sits adjacent to the base on Georgia Highway 247.

Both municipal governments are entered into a Service Delivery Strategy that clearly outlines which cities are allowed to serve the various portions of unincorporated Houston County, and both governments have a policy of required annexation for properties that are served in those areas. In addition to the area between the two cities, some growth is expected to occur in southern Houston County, between Perry and the unincorporated community of Elko, where water is provided to serve a future fire station. Finally, growth is expected to be contained in the northern portion of the county, along the Echeconnee Creek floodplain, where low land and difficulty providing sewer service limit development options.

Transportation Corridors and Other Areas

Rapid growth is also occurring in areas of Middle Georgia that do not fit easily into a general category. Transportation corridors, such as US Highway 441 between Milledgeville and Lake Sinclair, continue to see a mix of residential and commercial growth, primarily limited to one or two parcels away from the road itself. Transportation-driven growth is also occurring around interstate exits, such as those off of Interstate 75 in southern Macon-Bibb County, Byron, and Forsyth. Undeveloped areas around the Houston County Airport, much of which is located in Peach County, are also expected to see growth associated with the airport and other industries. Finally, spotty areas of rapid growth in Pulaski County, near the Middle Georgia State University Campus in western Macon-Bibb County, and the Georgia Public Safety Training Center in Monroe County, are expected to develop in the near future. The local governments of these areas

should take action early to ensure that growth occurs in a manner which makes it possible to provide necessary public services and not alter the identity of these places in a negative way.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Local Preparedness
- Efficient Land Use
- Transportation Options
- Community Health
- Sense of Place

Recommended Development Patterns

- Adding neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhoods.
- Utilizing Complete Streets concepts to enhance connectivity, i.e. providing a balance between vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections between residential and retail/commercial services.
- Incorporating traffic-calming measures to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Accommodation of “big box” retail in a way that complements surrounding uses, such as breaking up the façade to look like a collection of smaller stores.
- Creating neighborhood focal points through the location of schools, community centers, and small-scale commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
- Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas; eliminating highways as barriers to access.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Variety of housing types (single-family, multi-family)
- Range of housing types and price points
- Small-scale neighborhood commercial (corner stores, restaurants, etc.)
- Light commercial business and retail
- Mix of housing and commercial uses
- Parks and open spaces

Proposed Implementation Measures

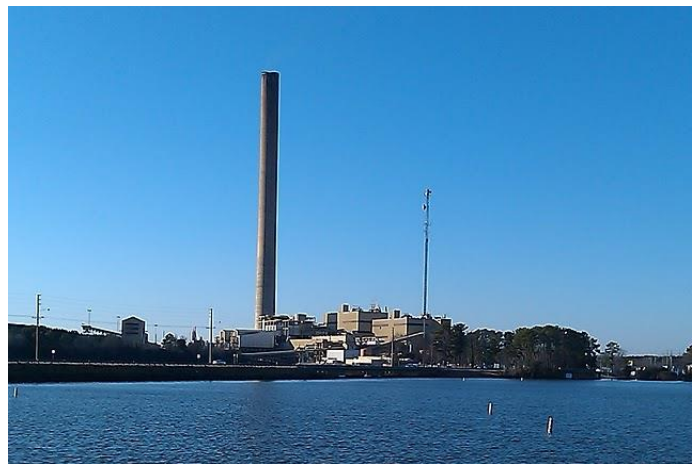
- Promote creative design for higher density and ensure zoning codes allow for mixed-use development (this lowers the cost of service delivery and preserves open space).
- Allow neo-traditional (also called New Urbanist) development “by right” to ease the process to encourage this type of development.
- Balance bicycle and pedestrian needs and safety with automobile convenience through the use of Complete Streets policies and accompanying private development design standards and guidelines
- Utilize context-sensitive design for roadways that take into account compatibility, livability, sense of place, urban design, cost, and environmental impacts while meeting the transportation goals of safety, efficiency, capacity, and future maintenance costs
- Establish traffic-calming, where applicable, in residential neighborhoods and at connectivity points between residential and commercial areas to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety
- Create mid-block pedestrian crossings of major highways so that these thoroughfares do not serve as *de facto* barriers to access between neighborhoods and commercial centers

Areas in Need of Redevelopment

The Middle Georgia Region also includes a significant number of various sites and neighborhoods that are areas in need of redevelopment. These locations are many in number and each come with unique needs and challenges. The overarching theme that ties each of these locations together is the need for investment in local improvements that will transform the appearance and nature of these areas. The different varieties of areas in need of redevelopment can be categorized based on similarities seen across the region. At the most local level are former industrial or institutional sites and unfinished subdivisions. This plan also discusses redevelopment in the context of historic rural communities, small town centers, and major urban corridors. Each of these are found across the region, which allows for their inclusion in the Regional Plan. It is also worth noting that while many of these locations may have challenges that need to be addressed, few suffer from systemic trends of disinvestment that span years and decades. These locations are set aside in a different category to be discussed later.

Former Industrial/Institutional Sites

The first subcategory of areas in need of redevelopment are major industrial or institutional sites that are no longer in operation. Nearly every county in Middle Georgia is or was, at some point, home to one of these sites. They present major opportunities for the community because of their scale. New developers have large plots of land to potentially redevelop, and in some cases can demolish the old site and start with a blank slate. In other cases, the existing structures provide a suitable location for new investment. Local economic developers must aggressively market these sites to potential investors, because the high potential of reward is coupled with a significant loss of jobs and investment in the meantime between the closure of a site and its redevelopment.



Plant Branch, a Georgia Power facility located on the Putnam County shore of Lake Sinclair, closed its doors in 2015. While the future use of the site is uncertain, it remains a prime opportunity for redevelopment in Georgia's Lake Country.

In many instances, these industrial sites may be brownfields that have issues with soil or groundwater contamination. Remediation can be a costly and time-consuming process for individuals looking to develop these sites. However, funding is available for local governments to assist with environmental assessment and cleanup of these brownfield sites. Governmental investment in these sites can speed up eventual redevelopment by clearing administrative hurdles and reducing costs for the private sector. Some cases also exist where the profits of redevelopment for the private sector may not be worth the investment in brownfield remediation without outside assistance.



An example of redevelopment by public entities, the State of Georgia took over ownership of the old Tift College campus in Monroe County to host the State Offices South.

Another potential solution that ensures redevelopment is government purchase of a site for new community facilities. Whether it is office spaces, public safety buildings, or parks, when public ownership is an option, it can speed this redevelopment. However, not every situation will be advantageous for public redevelopment, especially considering potential loss of ad valorem tax revenue.

Unfinished Subdivisions

The financial crisis of 2008 has had significant and lasting impacts on the development of communities all across the United States. In fact, many families are still suffering from underemployment and diminished wages. Perhaps the most recognizable visual impact of these changes are the unfinished subdivisions that dot the suburbs and countryside of Middle Georgia. The housing bubble that continued to grow through the mid-2000s drove significant amounts of investment into residential development by the private sector. As a result, new suburbs were being built at a rapid pace. While the largest metro areas like Atlanta saw this trend extensively, Middle Georgia also saw this trend, particularly in suburban areas like unincorporated Houston County and Peach County. Local stakeholders identified a number of these subdivisions for the Regional Plan, although many more locations still exist in need of redevelopment.



An example of an unfinished subdivision with protruding pipes.

Fortunately for some communities, these subdivisions will fill up on their own in due time because of population growth and migration to these communities. Good school systems can help drive this redevelopment organically. However, in communities that are not growing as rapidly, other solutions may need to be pursued. Mixed-use infill development can be allowed in some of these locations as a way to create attractive walkable neighborhoods. These local commercial centers can prosper in close proximity to residents who would utilize their services. An alternative to the development of new homes or businesses is to reclaim some of these lands for conservation or recreation purposes. Depending on the amount of infrastructure already located here, this may be more difficult and less cost-effective. However, particularly in areas where few urban services are currently being provided, returning these lands to a more natural use can be a significant cost avoidance for local governments.

Historic Rural Communities



Although the original structure was burned during the Battle of Sunshine Church in 1864, the current Sunshine Methodist Church in Round Oak dates back to 1880.

There are a number of historic communities throughout Middle Georgia that are in various states of disrepair and disinvestment. In many cases, these communities were formed along railroads or major transportation corridors in a time when they would have been logical stops on a long commute. Nowadays, many of these communities, almost always unincorporated, are barely noticeable on the map but still possess abundant cultural assets and much historic charm.

In some of these cases, redevelopment can be stimulated by focusing on these historic assets, especially by focusing on heritage tourism. Scenic byway designations can be part of this strategy,

combined with effective marketing strategies, such as wayfinding signs to direct travelers to these interesting communities. In these areas, redevelopment should be carefully directed to ensure that it conforms to the existing patterns of residential development. This is even more important for small communities that are on the verge of being overtaken by development from surrounding cities that are expanding into formerly rural areas. Zoning codes should also be examined to ensure that commercial development in these communities is not being restricted to enhance economic development prospects.

Where these strategies do not succeed in bringing additional visitors or investment into historic communities, local governments can consider the implementation of traffic calming measures to force motorists to slow down while travelling through these areas. While this may be more difficult to implement than other suggestions, particularly along state-controlled highways that pass through these towns, even simple changes like reducing the speed limit can pay dividends. For example, among four historic communities in Jones County, the Haddock Community is the most conspicuous, as the speed limit in town drops from 55 miles per hour to 45 miles per hour. Coupled with effective signage, this can spur potential development.

Small Town Centers

Small towns throughout rural Middle Georgia are often locations of blighted and dilapidated structures, both commercial and residential, just like their urban counterparts. As populations left small towns for the larger cities, many vacant buildings and lots were left behind, often without the demand to bring these structures back to life. These communities have a variety of options to pursue, many of which can be coordinated in more detail through the development of an urban redevelopment plan in consultation with citizens.



Like many small towns in Middle Georgia, the City of Hawkinsville had an abandoned cotton mill. With assistance from private investors, this unused structure was converted into loft apartments near downtown.

One strategy for redevelopment is to bring housing options back into the downtown areas, often in formerly commercial spaces. While large cities have begun to embrace this trend, particularly as young millennials and seniors move into these urban environments, many small towns have not. A variety of research indicates that small cities are not without hope in attracting new residents into their town centers. Some younger people actually enjoy the slower pace of small cities, and many retiring Baby Boomers are looking to downsize from their existing homes. Stakeholders in our region, noted that senior citizens may be an ideal group to begin the settlement of downtown areas in these rural communities. Retirees are also beneficial to a community because they have more time to dedicate to civic activities, provided that they have programming available to them that suits their desires.

A common theme among many individuals has also been the desire for walkability in these communities. While rural areas are generally not well-suited for walkability, a walkable town center can be very attractive and can show the first signs of reinvestment into the community, especially when many private business owners and residents have left over the years. State and federal funding may be available for these projects, especially along state-controlled highways or near community schools.

Another option for additional investment back into small towns is through the public sector by adding community facilities into downtown. Sometimes, historic buildings may not have an interested buyer, but rather than allowing the facility to sit empty, the local government can use that building to house various

government services or staff. The addition of greenspace to these downtown areas can also have positive impacts on the community by creating a gathering place for individuals. Many suburban communities that have begun the process of creating downtowns after developing without them now have a large greenspace near the town center which is ideal for festivals or other city events. Overall, small towns still have a great deal of potential, provided that they are able to capture citizen involvement in improving aspects of the community, particularly when funding opportunities may be limited.

Major Urban Corridors

Just as the smaller communities struggle with blighted and neglected properties, urban communities also have these issues. Quite frequently, these occur along major urban corridors and at a very large scale. They can present a difficult challenge for redevelopment that will typically require significant investments from public and private sector entities alike. The creation of self-taxing districts may also be necessary to ensure the success of these redevelopment efforts. However, an urban corridor revitalization has the potential to drastically change patterns of development—possibly even improving traffic, service provision, and aesthetics, all while saving the local government money over time.



Both Forsyth (left) and Roberta (right) turned vacant historic structures (a former city hall and train depot, respectively) in their town centers into new Welcome Centers.



Watson Boulevard in Warner Robins is an example of an urban corridor that grew outward very rapidly. The features of this picture are almost all focused on automotive transportation.

Many of the major urban corridors developed rapidly without a sense of place, and occasionally without the proper infrastructure to support such growth. The side effects of this are numerous. First, the community becomes dependent on automobiles to effectively move people through the community. Even public transportation has a difficult time succeeding because possible destinations are very far away from logical transit stops. This, in turn, fuels traffic gridlock as many people from far away drive up and down commercial strips to perform their daily activities. These corridors may be particularly susceptible to disinvestment in future years as commercial activity moves further out along the commercial corridor. Most

buildings in these areas of rapid growth are constructed quickly using existing patterns of franchise architecture. Many of these structures are not designed for long periods of use, and it can be cheaper for a company to abandon these stores when demand decreases rather than to retrofit them. As a result, many older suburbs have already begun to see disinvestment along these corridors. For example, the Eisenhower Parkway Corridor in Macon shows extremely high rates of vacancy near Pio Nono Avenue, closer to downtown, with newer development further out near Interstate 475. If not checked, this can lead to larger swaths of disinvestment that harm whole communities. While issues to this severity have not yet occurred extensively in Middle Georgia, many of these patterns have already been seen in the inner suburbs of Atlanta, serving as a cautionary tale to Middle Georgia.

There are a number of strategies that can be taken on these major corridors to undertake redevelopment activities and hopefully defend against future disinvestment. One of the relatively simple improvements is upgrades to the existing streetscape. The addition of sidewalks, wayfinding signage, and greenery can go a significant way toward signaling investment in the community. Further, these improvements have the potential side effect of encouraging motorists to stop and patronize a store rather than passing through. Modest façade improvements to structures along a corridor can also have this impact.

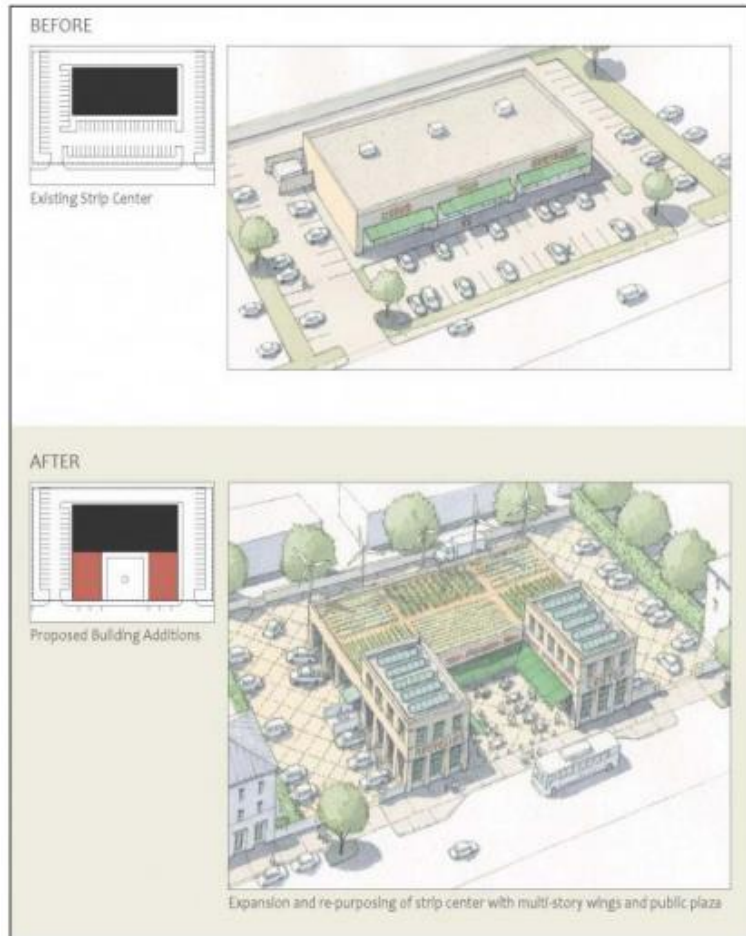
However, sidewalks and streetscape improvements will not solve all of the structural problems along these corridors. In many cases, complete redevelopment of these sites into newly planned town centers can drastically transform a community. This is a particularly attractive strategy for suburban communities that developed into incorporated municipalities, but never organically developed a downtown area. The post-World War II boom in suburbia captured several Middle Georgia communities in this way, by encouraging rapid growth that outpaced the abilities for downtown development to occur. The cities of Warner Robins and Centerville (incorporated in 1942 and 1958, respectively) are two of the most notable examples in Middle Georgia. For these communities, the establishment of a downtown area along an existing commercial corridor (potentially Watson Blvd. in both cases) could greatly benefit these communities. Not only would this create an attractive, mixed-use, and walkable town center, it would hopefully also reduce traffic congestion and allow for smart growth that will put less additional tax municipal infrastructure.



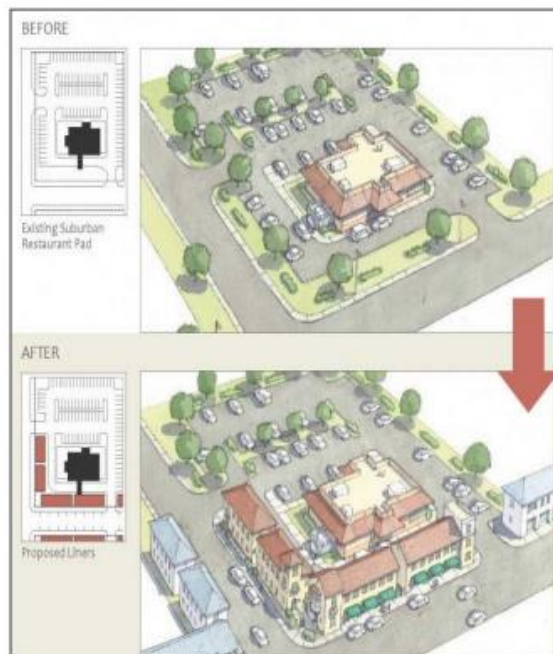
Centerville has already explored potential options for the creation of a new town center. The above proposal was created by University of Georgia students in 2007.

The addition of outparcels and extensions to existing buildings can create a more dense, urban feel without completely eliminating existing structures. This would likely be combined with adjustments in parking requirements to create more shared parking arrangements. Driveways could be consolidated, and most parking would be relocated to the sides and rear

Another option for these urban corridors is the middle road between modest streetscape improvements and full-scale redevelopment of a new town center. This option is the suburban retrofit. In these instances, infill development is used as a part of the broader redevelopment strategy. The addition of outparcels and extensions to existing



Above and at right: common examples of suburban strip retrofits. The shops above are improved with additions to the building and a new plaza. The fast food restaurant at right is enhanced with new outparcel development that fits traditional city design forms.



of existing buildings and setbacks could be reduced. Some of these retrofits could also include residential spaces for individuals who would prefer enhanced walkability to and from their residences. Similarly, institutional spaces could be added to increase the overall mixture of uses within the area.

The goals with any retrofit of existing structures would be similar to other redevelopment initiatives. Housing and transportation options would both be increased in new spaces that are meant to be more easily walkable than their previous forms. The increased density would also lead to more efficient land use, potentially saving costs for local governments. Finally, retrofits of sprawling corridors could help restore a sense of place to the community, which can be lost by an abundance of monolithic big box stores.

The solution for many corridors will likely be multi-faceted. In some areas, the full-scale redevelopment may not only be needed but are also possible and practical. In other cases, only more modest changes will be feasible. However, this combination should help ensure a more prosperous future for these areas.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Sense of Place
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options

Recommended Development Patterns

- Reuse of existing vacant buildings or underutilized structures such as commercial centers and warehouses to accommodate new community facilities.

- New housing opportunities created out of former, underutilized commercial, warehouse, or industrial sites.
- Redevelopment of brownfield and greyfield sites, particularly into new mixed-use developments.
- Redevelopment of older commercial strip shopping centers, as opposed to new development further out along the strip.
- Revitalization of neighborhood commercial centers to serve as a focal point for the community while capturing market activity.
- Addition of facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.
- Integration of mixed-use and housing developments to increase walkability and reduce trip generation, particularly to schools and other public facilities.
- Traffic calming measures such as narrower street widths, raised pedestrian crossings, or textured paving materials.
- Location of higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads.
- Location of buildings near the street front with parking in the rear of buildings to maintain corridor attractiveness and improve pedestrian accessibility.
- Reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential developments, including shared parking arrangements to reduce overall parking needs.
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Residential
- Industrial
- Public/Institutional

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Identify financing options and undertake brownfield remediation programs.
- Use a land bank authority to acquire, manage, and redevelop tax-foreclosed properties.
- Consider establishment of a Community Improvement District, Business Improvement District, or Tax Allocation District.
- Use public incentives or urban redevelopment powers to target corridors for urban renewal.
- Conduct environmental site assessments on potentially contaminated sites.
- Perform an assessment of community housing availability, condition, and status.
- Consider participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing.
- Design mixed-income housing communities to integrate the poor into the community.
- Redevelop suburbs to make them more livable and sustainable.
- Consider establishment of an Urban Redevelopment Area.
- Implement standards for manufactured homes and manufactured home communities.
- Consider adaptive reuse of vacant buildings.
- Adopt nuisance and building safety codes and enforce them consistently.
- Use local government resources to acquire key land parcels for redevelopment.
- Consider implementing maximum setback requirements instead of minimum setbacks.
- Rezone to permit and encourage mixed-use developments.
- Study transportation corridors for traffic flow and potential redevelopment.
- Assess walkability of communities, and develop plans for walkways and bikeways.
- Redesign off-street parking to create linkages between storefronts.
- Host community design charrettes to determine preferred redevelopment patterns.

Areas with Infill Development Opportunities

Another common focus area seen across communities was the need and opportunity for infill development to occur. Infill development refers specifically to the concept of new development occurring in locations where infrastructure is already present to support the needs of the new structure, but nothing currently inhabits that location. This definition of infrastructure is broad—including water, sewer, power, and transportation infrastructure, each at a high enough capacity to support development. For this reason, infill development typically only happens on a parcel-based level, although opportunities may be present through a broader area.

It is also worth noting that the connotation of infill development very often includes a degree of mid-to-high density development. While a rural highway on the outskirts of a town may have the existing infrastructure present to be considered “infill,” the construction of a few new, detached single-family homes is less analogous to infill development than it is to new construction. For this reason, those possibilities are not discussed in this section. Rather, four distinct subcategories of infill development are described in additional detail. These include infill opportunities in urban downtowns, in small towns or rural communities, as outparcels in large developments, and in combination with corridor redevelopment efforts.

Urban Downtowns

Perhaps the most common and recognizable forms of infill development are those that occur within traditional cities and large urban areas. Within the Middle Georgia region, Macon-Bibb County and the City of Milledgeville have the largest number of these types of opportunities. Both of these communities have already seen steps taken in this direction, with more possibilities remaining.



The proposed Lofts at Capricorn in Macon-Bibb County is a good example of infill development in an urban environment. The light brown building would sit on what is currently a vacant lot next to the historic Capricorn Records building (at left in white).

These areas are ripe for a number of different strategies, most notably, new mixed-use developments. Stakeholders in Middle Georgia frequently mentioned a mixture of uses as something they would like to see, both in new developments and in redevelopments. Urban areas are particularly well-suited for this type of development as it ensures that eyes are kept on the street throughout all hours of the day—both increasing safety for residents and shoppers alike and helping to build community vitality. Mixed-use developments also work particularly well as infill development because they reduce automobile dependency, which is essential whenever more people are brought into an urban environment.

Infill development also works well with the preservation of traditional downtowns. Typically, the central business district of a city was the heart of activity, especially during the day as businesspeople came into work in downtown. Many older downtowns preserved this activity through the nighttime hours not only through restaurants and theaters, but also through residences. Following the decline of downtowns in the post-WWII era, activity fell off in these areas with stores closing and people moving. Demographic shifts now present the opportunity for broad-scale strategies that promote traditional downtowns. Events, community initiatives, and favorable zoning regulations can all work to preserve aspects of downtown that appeal to people, which will in turn make infill development even more desirable.

Small Towns and Rural Communities

The concepts of infill development that apply in large downtowns can also be applied to many smaller towns throughout the region, particularly in regard to the benefits reaped from infill development. Perhaps most notable for rural communities that may face financial constraints, infill development drastically reduces the cost of service provision on a per capita basis. This allows the dollars spent by local governments on water, sewer, police, and fire services to go further—saving taxpayers money.



Downtown Roberta is an example of a small community with significant infill development potential. The above 14.76 acre site lies on the corner of the busiest intersection in town, where two US Highways meet.

Small towns have also struggled in recent years, but many of the demographic changes that are presenting opportunities for large downtowns can benefit smaller towns as well. In fact, some older residents suggested that senior citizens could serve as an effective pioneer group to move in and help revitalize these towns. Naturally, this would result in someone different needs to be emphasized for potential infill developments.

First is the need for the development of new neighborhood commercial centers. In many areas, both small towns as well as large cities, single-use (Euclidean) zoning patterns have led to large areas with only one type of land use. The result is an automobile-dependent area with difficulty in moving from one area to another to reach common destinations in daily life. Long commutes are born out of this style of planning as an individual must drive a lengthy period to leave their residential zone

before moving onward to a commercial or industrial zone where they may work. This may be even more egregious in typical suburban environments. The creation of neighborhood commercial centers near residences borrows from the concept of mixed-use developments in traditional downtowns. While multi-story buildings with ground floor retail and dwelling units above may be impractical for many small towns and suburban areas, small commercial shopping districts can at least mimic the results of a traditional downtown by locating shops and amenities in a convenient location for many residents. This also leads to the creation of employment opportunities near where people live, benefitting those who may not be able to drive to locations of employment. Open lots in these typically residential areas present prime opportunities for infill development in the style of these neighborhood commercial centers.

Small towns can also benefit from higher densities of housing, particularly near the commercial centers. Throughout many small towns, single-family detached homes and manufactured homes are often the only housing stock available. Not only can this provide a concern for individuals with restricted incomes, or who are looking to rent, the lack of density also becomes an artificial limit the total population of these town centers. Small businesses are particularly hurt by this, as it limits their potential customer base within convenient walking or driving distance. New infill developments that are higher density can assist with this issue by bringing in a larger number of people into a small town that were previously there. They can also attract pioneer groups into small towns like “empty nesters” who no longer need or want a large home. Of course, the challenge for each of these first two strategies is that they will logically feed off one another, but it will be difficult to draw new commerce without residents, as well as difficult to draw new residents without shopping opportunities.

An immediate strategy that can be taken on infill sites is the promotion of greater walkability. A major attraction to infill development is the possibility that services can be found in close proximity to one another and to where people are living. However, this is of limited benefit if the infrastructure to aid walkability is not also in place. Many small towns in Middle Georgia have limited sidewalk access, often combined with narrow and/or poorly maintained roadways. In these areas, walking may be unsafe, particularly for children and the elderly. Sidewalk improvements will not only benefit existing downtowns, but will also help to pave the way for new infill development to occur at a later time.



The downtown area of Hawkinsville has a well-connected network of sidewalks, making it possible to safely walk between businesses and residences in the area.

Before



A hypothetical case study from outside the region of how some new outparcel developments add to an existing mall.

After



Outparcels in Large Developments

Another unique type of infill development is the construction of new outparcel units in existing centers of commercial activity. Overall, the development of large monolithic shopping centers may be less than desirable, but infill development can at least improve and enhance these areas. The main improvements in this style of infill development would be to the transportation network of the community. By clustering commercial development together in these centers, it reduces or even eliminates the need for vehicular traffic between various shops.

Many new developments in this style have made walkability of their shopping centers a prime focus, sometimes mimicking the appearance of a downtown in some areas. Not only does this increase aesthetic appeal, it also promotes physical activity in the form of walking.

Obvious concerns for this type of development include the transportation infrastructure to get people to these large commercial centers. The addition of new outparcels does eliminate parking spaces (though often unnecessary ones) while drawing more people to a location. As such, local governments need to ensure that road capacity around these sites is sufficient before changing zoning regulations to permit additional outparcel development. Public transportation would be one potential solution to this problem.

In Combination with Corridor Redevelopment

Finally, as discussed in the previous section on areas in need of redevelopment, many locations throughout the region are in need of broad redevelopment that includes not only the physical condition of structures, but also the overall character of a particular area. Specifically, this includes areas where sprawling commercial development has happened rapidly at the expense of an area's sense of place. Sometimes this

development in its current form can lead to systemic problems disinvestment, highlighted by inefficient infrastructure. As such, these areas need more redevelopment than just infill development can provide. However, infill should be one of many strategies applied in these areas, as mentioned previously.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Sense of Place
- Housing Options

Recommended Development Patterns

- Addition of new uses to existing single-use sites.
- Integration of mixed-use and housing developments to increase walkability and reduce trip generation, particularly to schools and other public facilities.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types, densities, and prices.
- Addition of neighborhood commercial centers to serve the surrounding neighborhood.
- Location of higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads.
- Traditional downtown areas maintained as the focal point of the community.
- Location of buildings near the street front with parking in the rear of buildings to maintain corridor attractiveness and improve pedestrian accessibility.
- Reduced parking requirements for commercial and residential developments, including shared parking arrangements to reduce overall parking needs.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Mixed Use
- Commercial
- Residential
- Public/Institutional

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Develop strategies and pursue financing for brownfield redevelopment.
- Explore strategies for re-use of greyfields.
- Adopt and implement urban redevelopment codes.
- Pursue development of “pocket parks” on potential infill lots.
- Adopt Georgia Historic Preservation Division design standards for new infill developments.
- Analyze fiscal impact on a local level of various development patterns.
- Enact residential infill development codes.
- Perform a smart growth audit of the community.
- Promote creative design for higher density projects.
- Launch a comprehensive infill development strategy.
- Rezone to permit and encourage mixed-use developments.
- Adopt flexible and shared parking standards.

Areas of Underdevelopment

The inclusion of areas of underdevelopment is a new addition to the list of Areas Requiring Special Attention, as originally developed in the 2011 Regional Plan. Following stakeholder input in the planning process, it was determined that some sites within the region required additional attention from the Regional

Plan but did not fit into a neatly established category. Many of these areas shared the common theme of underdevelopment—areas with significant potential for economic development, but are hindered due to a lack of critical infrastructure that can make that development possible. In addition, many stakeholders expressed their desire to see more development in general throughout their communities. Within this section of the narrative, we will look at these two categories, including the major differences between them, and the different strategies that can be pursued in each type of location to help stimulate additional investment into these communities.

Corridors Lacking Infrastructure

In many rural parts of the region, significant transportation corridors pose an opportunity for new growth and investment in communities that may otherwise be on the verge of decline. In these places, necessary investments in infrastructure (often from the State of Georgia or other outside sources) could pay significant dividends with increased development and prosperity. Frequently, the cause for these underdeveloped corridors is a lack of transportation infrastructure that is efficient in the movement of people and goods. While dirt roads are obvious examples of this, not many of them see enough traffic to justify them as true

opportunities for development waiting to happen. However, many major US Highway and Georgia State Route corridors form important transportation linkages, but remain narrow, two-lane corridors. Investment in upgrading some of these roads to four lanes would benefit several rural communities by increasing the overall traffic through their communities. Improving these roads and adding signage to assist with wayfinding of traditional downtowns when bypassed would be a boon to many small towns.



US Highway 80 is a major east-west corridor between Columbus and Macon, but only has two lanes throughout almost all of Crawford County.

When adequate transportation corridors do exist, other issues may prevent development from successfully occurring. The most common of these is a lack of water or sewer infrastructure. The best example of this in Middle Georgia is the Interstate 16 Corridor through Twiggs County. Despite plentiful traffic along the interstate, most of Twiggs County's four interstate exits, over 14 miles, lack the infrastructure necessary to support development. This is no doubt perpetuated due to distance from municipalities with water and sewer service, as well as the attraction of development in Macon-Bibb and Dublin. However, additional investments made in this corridor would be particularly beneficial to Twiggs County. Similar challenges could also soon exist along the Fall Line Freeway as its final stretches are completed in Baldwin County.

Regional Industrial Parks

Another common concern, voiced in many county stakeholder meetings, was the prevalence of available land within county-owned industrial parks. This is not necessarily an uncommon issue among counties in the region or regions in the state. In fact, in many locations, these somewhat-empty industrial parks are signs of preparedness for future development. As such, not all of the region's industrial parks with vacant land are shown on the underdevelopment layer of the Areas Requiring Special Attention map.

Some industrial parks, however, do appear on this map due to infrastructure challenges that currently exist on those sites. The most common of these problems is lack of sewer access or capacity. New industrial sites can require significant amounts of land that may not be available near existing service provision areas.

Similarly, those sites may have other strategic advantages that encourage their development away from existing utility lines. Among these county-owned sites are the Griswoldville Industrial Park in southern Jones County, the Hwy 247 site in Kathleen and the Houston County Rail Site near Perry. Similar to the corridors mentioned before, regional cooperation may be required to secure service delivery to some of these sites, and potential funding opportunities can be pursued for their development.

With that said, many industrial sites have tremendous opportunities and are very well prepared for growth. The issue for these is not underdevelopment, but the ability to market themselves and all of Middle Georgia to attract greater interest from outside investors. This is yet another opportunity for increased regional cooperation to lead these efforts. The table below lists industrial sites within the region that have at least 40 acres of land still developable.

County	Site	Water	Sewer	Gas	Rail
Baldwin County	Milledgeville-Baldwin Co. Industrial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y
Houston County	Houston County GA 247 Site	Y	N	?	N
Houston County	Houston County Rail Site	N	Y	Y	Y
Houston County	Mid-Georgia Corporate Center	Y	Y	Y	N
Houston County	Middle Georgia Corporate Center West	Y	Y	Y	N
Jones County	Griswoldville Industrial Park	Y	N	Y	Y
Macon-Bibb County	Airport East Industrial Park	Y	Y	Y	N
Macon-Bibb County	Fulton Mill Road Site	Y	Y	N	N
Macon-Bibb County	Industrial Highway Site	Y	Y	Y	Y
Macon-Bibb County	Interstate Park West	Y	Y	Y	N
Macon-Bibb County	Interstate 75 Business Park	Y	Y	Y	N
Macon-Bibb County	Oatland Park	Y	Y	Y	N
Macon-Bibb County	Ocmulgee East Industrial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y
Macon-Bibb County	Sofkee Industrial Sites	Y	Y	Y	Y
Macon-Bibb County	Walden & Grace Road Site	Y	N	N	Y
Macon-Bibb County	400 Mecca Drive	Y	Y	?	N
Monroe County	Meridian 75 Logistics Center	Y	Y	N	N
Monroe County	Newton Industrial Tract	Y	Y	Y	N
Monroe County	Smith-Zellner Tract	N	N	Y	Y
Peach County	Sod Farm Site	Y	Y	Y	N
Pulaski County	Hawkinsville Technology Park	Y	Y	Y	N
Putnam County	Rock Eagle Science and Technology Park	Y	Y	Y	N
Putnam County	South Eatonton Putnam County Industrial Park	Y	Y	Y	Y
Twiggs County	Interstate 16 Frontage Site	Y	Y	N	N
Wilkinson County	Beasley Site	Y	Y	Y	Y
Wilkinson County	Wilkinson Nitrogen Site	Y	N	Y	Y

Source: Georgia Power, Select Georgia website, January 2016

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Economic Prosperity
- Local Preparedness & Resiliency
- Regional Cooperation

Recommended Development Patterns

- Nodal or village developments with buildings clustered at center.
- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities for commercial centers.
- Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.
- Use of common area drain fields and/or neighborhood-scale sewerage treatment systems.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Industrial
- Commercial

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Create process for identifying suitable businesses to recruit and support.
- Gather information on the composition of the local workforce.
- Consider implementing landscaping guidelines or ordinances.
- Develop capital infrastructure improvement programs for new infrastructure.
- Promote creative design for higher density projects.
- Make right-of-way improvements along major corridors.
- Establish processes for joint decision making in regards to facilities and infrastructure.
- Establish a service delivery strategy for provision of future services.

Areas of Significant Disinvestment

Areas of significant disinvestment are those parts of the region with the steepest, most severe challenges that could prevent residents from living healthy and prosperous lives. In a sense, this can be considered a subcategory of areas in need of redevelopment, in the sense that many issues seen in redevelopment areas are also present in areas of significant disinvestment. However, it is the specific term “disinvestment” that characterizes the difference. In these communities, capital resources have frequently left the community, and leaving behind concentrations of poverty, high rates of unemployment, degraded infrastructure, and substandard housing stock.

In determining whether areas of the region would be considered as areas in need of redevelopment or areas of significant disinvestment, a number of factors were considered: county-wide statistics on unemployment and educational attainment, local rates of poverty, and known areas of failing infrastructure. The list of locations that were determined to be significant disinvestment include Twiggs County; the Macon-Bibb Urban Redevelopment Area; southwestern Jones County, near the former Macon City Limits; the Fort Valley Urban Redevelopment Area; the Milledgeville Redevelopment Area, including Central State Hospital; the Hardwick and Scottsboro communities in unincorporated Baldwin County; and neighborhoods within the cities of Irwinton, Ivey, and Toombsboro.

Many of the strategies suggested in the narrative on redevelopment can also be applied successfully within these communities that suffer from significant disinvestment. However, additional strategies can also be employed within these areas. Some of these techniques and considerations are detailed below.



Central State Hospital in Milledgeville anchors part of the city's URA and is a site of disinvestment, with large tracts of state-owned land sitting underutilized. The closure of the hospital was a major step in beginning disinvestment, as many workers lost their jobs

Land Use and Development Strategies

It was noted by stakeholders that discrepancies exist across the region in terms of the overall prosperity of an area. For example, within Macon-Bibb, the largest city within the region, areas of significant poverty are evident, as are areas of remarkable affluence. A land use consideration that accompanies these stark

geographic distinctions is ensuring that patterns of development do not place a particular group at a significant disadvantage compared to others. Research has shown that concentrated poverty at a spatial level has a high correlation with various other societal ills.

One method of addressing these issues is to explore housing options that allow individuals to move out of historically underprivileged areas and into more prosperous communities. While the most notable of these programs happened at the federal level, local programs have also been tried across the country, with some positive effects. The cities and counties of Middle Georgia could have the greatest impacts on this by decentralizing their public housing stock and incorporating small developments into more well established neighborhoods. However, this would likely only be a feasible option for local governments that cover a large area or could partner with other local governments.

The counter method to this is to bring people of high incomes into communities that had traditionally been occupied only by those in public housing programs. The HOPE VI program provided funds from the federal level for this initiative. The concept is that redeveloping older public housing units into mixed-income communities with concepts of private ownership will accomplish several goals, including generating more investment from local into their neighborhoods, improving the overall appearance of housing in the community, and reducing concentrated poverty. The designs of these homes are focused on these goals and reflect desires to reconnect individuals with the community. Homes are often located close to the street with sidewalks and porches to create more space for individuals to interact with one another while also improving the ability of residents to keep eyes on the street.



Tattnall Place, on the former site of Oglethorpe Homes in Macon-Bibb County is an example of replacing older public housing projects with new mixed-income neighborhoods. These projects not only improve neighborhood appearance, but also help to break up large concentrations of poverty.

In addition to these strategies, zoning for increased opportunities near these impoverished neighborhoods can also strategically target them for revitalization. Neighborhood commercial centers can be very beneficial in providing community gathering spaces, as well as places of employment for individuals living in the community. The close proximity also makes it possible for residents to walk for partaking in commerce and reaching places of employment. For individuals who do not own a car, this is very beneficial. The locations of industry can likewise be planned in very similar ways in zoning considerations. Similar to the older concept of mill housing, potential employees with limited mobility may greatly benefit from access to nearby industrial jobs. However, environmental justice concerns should be accounted for in these plans to ensure that industrial sites located near impoverished neighborhoods do not degrade the quality of the environment for people living nearby. Similarly, these communities can also receive investment by fostering home-grown economic growth through entrepreneurial investments. Small business incubators and makerspaces can help provide spaces for individuals to safely test ideas and strategies for new business ideas. If successful, some of these individuals may have the opportunities they need to help lift themselves out of poverty.

Community Service Strategies

In addition to the development patterns mentioned earlier, local governments must also take care to ensure the adequate provision of services within areas of significant disinvestment. The first of these goals can be accomplished by ensuring adequate access to community facilities. Libraries, parks, schools, senior centers,

and health departments should be located conveniently for residents who need to access them. Particularly, they should be reachable by foot where practical, and by public transportation when not, as some individuals may not have the ability or means with which to drive themselves to a particular location for services. Police stations and fire stations should likewise be located in similar areas. For police in particular, if their station is not located in or near a community of significant disinvestment, they should be diligent about patrolling the streets in those areas, not just to spot potential wrongdoing, but also to build effective trust-based relationships with the community. This improves the ability of law enforcement officials to respond effectively following an emergency situation.



In southwestern Jones County, old septic systems were causing leakage of sewage into homes and yards. The county is currently fixing the problem with new sewer lines.

The infrastructure should also be monitored and maintained in an area of significant disinvestment. First, street and sidewalk infrastructure can be enhanced to provide safety for individuals in these areas. As previously mentioned, with a lack of automotive transportation options, walkability becomes more important from an economic perspective. It can also help improve community health within the area. This can be done by repaving and improving sidewalks as well as instituting traffic calming devices for vehicles.

Water and sewer infrastructure is also important in areas of significant disinvestment. Private well and septic tank infrastructure can be costly to maintain, which leaves individuals within areas of significant disinvestment susceptible to failing systems that diminish their quality of life and reduce the health of the community. The additional challenge is that residents of these communities may not have the resources necessary to pay for sewer connections or water upgrades either, or for the increased taxes to fund system extensions. For this reason, grant funding is a prime opportunity to improve the status of these communities, most notably

through the CDBG program or other income-based grants. Disinvestment may also mean that individuals in the community fail to assess their own infrastructure and report problems to their government. As such, it would be beneficial for water and sewer system employees to spend more time inspecting infrastructure in these areas, as it improves the odds of catching system defects before they grow and become more serious.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Economic Prosperity
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options
- Educational Opportunities
- Community Health

Recommended Development Patterns

- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers.
- Revitalization of neighborhood commercial centers to serve as a focal point for the community, while capturing market activity.

- Distribution of affordable housing throughout the locality and region.
- Integration of mixed-use and housing developments to increase walkability and reduce trip generation, particularly to schools and other public facilities.
- Redevelopment of brownfield and greyfield sites, particularly into new mixed-use developments.
- Redevelopment of older commercial strip shopping centers, as opposed to new development further out along the strip.
- Location of new industry and other major employers close in to town, making jobs accessible by way of public transit, walking, or biking.
- Traffic-calming measures such as narrower street widths, raised pedestrian crossings, or textured paving materials.
- Limited residential setbacks with homes close to the street and with large porches to encourage interaction among neighbors.

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Public/Institutional
- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use

Proposed Implementation Measures

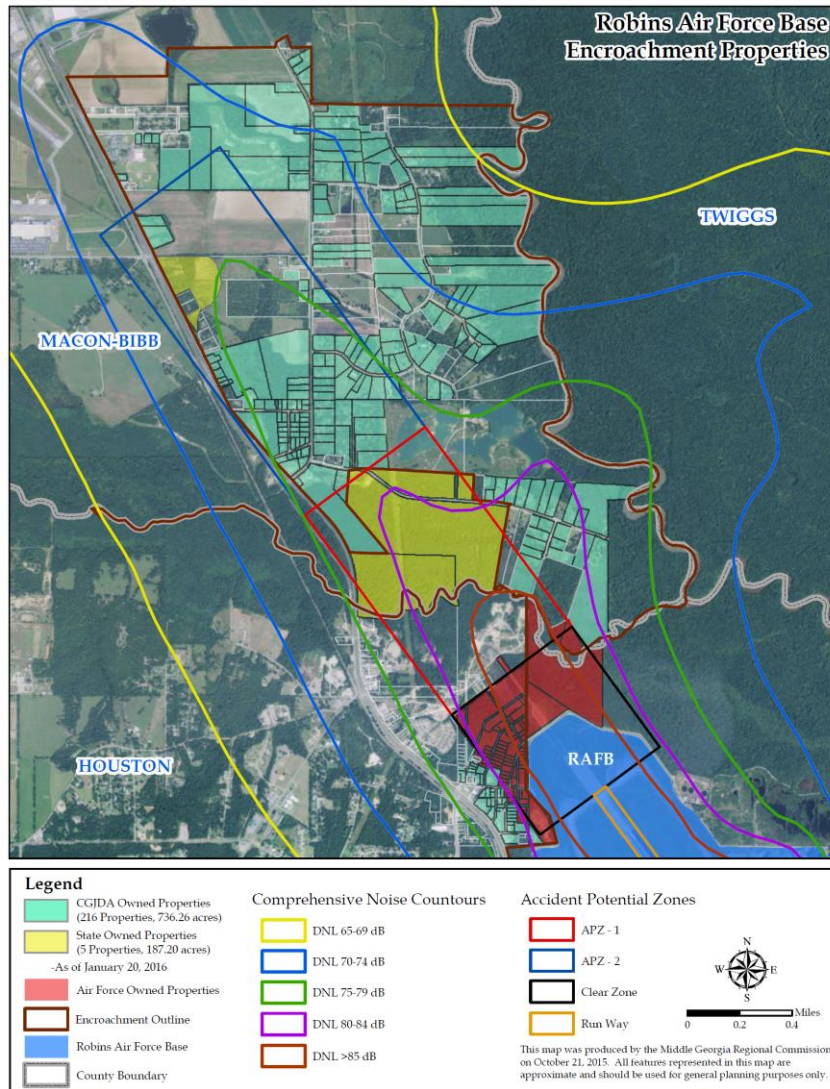
- Evaluate community businesses to analyze rates and causes of growth/decline.
- Identify workforce training opportunities to meet the needs of the local workforce.
- Identify and pursue federal assistance programs for economic development.
- Consider establishment of a Community Improvement District, Business Improvement District, or Tax Allocation District.
- Consider establishment of Opportunity Zones or Enterprise Zones.
- Develop capital infrastructure improvement programs for new infrastructure.
- Implement fix-it-first policies to prioritize rehabilitation of existing infrastructure in danger of failing over new system expansion.
- Perform an assessment of community housing availability, condition, and status.
- Provide housing assistance to low-to-moderate income and special needs populations.
- Consider participation in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing.
- Design mixed-income housing communities to integrate the poor into the community.
- Consider establishment of an Urban Redevelopment Area.
- Adopt nuisance and building safety codes and enforce them consistently.
- Institute crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) approaches in zoning codes.
- Implement traffic-calming mechanisms to decrease speed of traffic and enhance pedestrian safety.
- Hold community visioning sessions to create goals and aspirations.
- Use advanced visualization techniques to further enhance citizen involvement with community planning and improvement initiatives.

Robins Air Force Base and Surrounding Areas

Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) is a critical fixture in the Middle Georgia economy, culture, and way of life. RAFB employs more than 22,000 people and generates an economic impact of \$2.7 billion each year in the State of Georgia. Located just to the east of the City of Warner Robins in Houston County, RAFB draws hundreds, even thousands in some cases, of employees from each county in the region, every day. According to an economic multiplier model developed by Mercer University and the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, each job created or lost at RAFB creates or loses an additional 1.62 jobs in the regional

economy. Because of the vital role RAFB plays in the regional economy, it is crucial for regional leaders to give special attention to the base, its needs, and its unique contributions to the region.

Residential Encroachment



The encroachment areas north of the runway at Robins Air Force Base. The Accident Potential Zones and Noise Contours are shown on the map as well as properties owned by RAFB and the CGJDA.

Central Georgia Joint Development Authority (CGJDA). Using funds from three Middle Georgia counties, the State of Georgia, and the Federal Government, the CGJDA has purchased more than 200 properties totaling more than 700 acres in the encroachment area near RAFB in a great example of regional cooperation. These efforts have significantly reduced the residential density in the areas surrounding RAFB and will continue to improve the base’s standing for BRAC.

Future of the Encroachment Area

For the next few years, the CGJDA will continue its residential land purchasing efforts in the areas around RAFB, helping to safeguard the base and the region against BRAC. Eventually, the time will come for the CGJDA to determine what should be done with its substantial land holdings. Residential development is

The ever looming possibility of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) is a major concern for RAFB and the Middle Georgia region. Over the past several years, regional leaders have taken steps to better prepare RAFB for the next round of BRAC. In 2004, several Middle Georgia governments convened with RAFB leadership to discuss current land use and joint land use planning in the area around the base. They believed that a proactive approach would help to prepare RAFB for BRAC. In the resulting Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), residential encroachment in the area surrounding Robins AFB was identified as a potential problem for the future of the base.

Residential encroachment refers to development of residential properties in the Air Force designated Accident Potential Zones and high-decibel noise contours surrounding RAFB. In the years since the 2004 JLUS, regional leaders have addressed many of the concerns of the JLUS through coordinated zoning policies and the ongoing land acquisition efforts of the

not a possibility, but the JLUS does allow for low-density, non-residential development in the areas surrounding the base. In making decisions regarding the future of the encroachment area, the CGJDA has adopted three simple principles:

1. Do no harm to RAFB.
2. If a potential use of the land will help RAFB, pursue it.
3. If a potential use of the land will benefit the region, without harming RAFB, pursue it.

The CGJDA and the local governments of the region will need to work together over the life of this plan to ensure that JLUS compliant restrictive zoning is in place throughout the encroachment area. Compliant zoning would ensure that any future use of land in the encroachment area must follow the recommendations of the JLUS and the three principles of the CGJDA in perpetuity.

While the 2004 JLUS strongly recommends against residential development in the areas surrounding RAFB, it does not restrict all development. Thoughtful development of the encroachment area could lead to greater economic prosperity for the region. One potential permissible land use would be industrial development. Industrial development would meet the JLUS' density requirements, while potentially providing complementary industry to RAFB or helping to diversify the region's economy. Another possible use would be conservation. Much of the encroachment area lies in the Ocmulgee River Floodplain, just west of the river. Some of this land could be used for conservation. Over the past several years, there has been much discussion of significantly expanding the Ocmulgee National Monument into a National Park and Preserve. If this expansion occurs, it would likely include much of the floodplain and undeveloped land within the encroachment area. This would be a JLUS compatible use that could provide a great economic and cultural benefit to the region.

Surrounding Areas Outside of the Encroachment Area

The areas surrounding RAFB are not limited to the encroachment area. Outside of the encroachment area in the City of Warner Robins, there is the potential for mutually beneficial development in the years to come. There is enormous opportunity for local government and RAFB personnel to collaborate in JLUS compliant, efficient land use planning. As the region moves towards solving the residential encroachment problem, it is important for regional leaders to consider other challenges, both regarding potential BRAC and the vitality of the local community. Public-Public and Public-Private (P4) initiatives are becoming a greater point of emphasis for the Air Force nationwide. The Middle Georgia region could help to secure the future of RAFB while also promoting high-quality services and improved quality of life by engaging in P4 initiatives. P4 initiatives present an opportunity to RAFB and regional leaders to work together to provide the services and amenities that airmen and RAFB employees need and desire. Through P4 initiatives, the region could leverage the expertise and resources of local government, the federal government, and the private sector. These sorts of initiatives could help to improve dialogue between RAFB personnel and the surrounding communities.

With the recent emphasis on cost reduction in the Air Force, these P4 initiatives will likely be continuing into the future. This may eventually include shared access of sites on both sides of the RAFB gate for members of the military and the general public alike. Most immediately, this could exacerbate existing transportation challenges along the GA-247 corridor. Further, there is a need for attractive housing stock and entertainment opportunities near the base, particularly in Warner Robins (and naturally, outside of the encroachment area). If shrinking Department of Defense budgets continue, regional leaders could utilize P4 initiatives to create mixed-use, mixed-income, and walkable developments and neighborhoods outside of the encroachment area west of the base. This may also require collaborative planning between RAFB and the surrounding communities in a future JLUS. If successful, these efforts can help to foster a sense of place and regional pride, while continuing to nurture a symbiotic relationship into the future.

Quality Community Objectives to Pursue

- Economic Prosperity
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of Place
- Regional Cooperation
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options

Recommended Development Patterns

- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.
- Location of higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads and single family housing elsewhere in the neighborhood. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of commercial centers. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools, and other areas where residents travel daily. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Distribution of affordably-priced homes throughout locality/region. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types (single family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments), densities, and prices in the same neighborhood. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Residential development with healthy mix of uses (corner groceries, barber shops, drugstores) within easy walking distance of residences. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- New developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses, and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Clustering development to preserve open space within the development site. (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas. (Outside of Encroachment Area)

Recommended Specific Land Uses

- Industrial
- Park/Recreation/Conservation
- Public/Institutional
- Transportation/Communication/Utilities
- Residential (Outside of Encroachment Area)

Proposed Implementation Measures

- Federal Programs Supporting Economic Development
- Georgia Programs Supporting Economic Development
- Land Acquisition
- Low Impact Development
- Pocket Parks (Outside of Encroachment Area)

- Mixed-Income Housing (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Analyzing Impacts of Land Use Decisions
- Mixed-Use Zoning (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Sidewalk and Pedestrian Network Design
- Walkability (Outside of Encroachment Area)
- Identify Areas of Coordination with Other Programs, Jurisdictions, Agencies, and Organizations
- Identify Areas of Planning Coordination with Other Governments and Public Entities

REGIONAL ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Part of the foundation of a regional plan is the identification of key issues and challenges that may be facing an area, while taking advantage of the opportunities that they present. The following lists detail a number of areas of potential interest to citizens and policymakers throughout the Middle Georgia Region. Accompanying the lists of issues are lists of potential opportunities that the region has, some of which have a chance to improve the economic prosperity and quality of life within the region.

The following lists were first drafted by staff at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC). In a series of stakeholder meetings held at the MGRC and in each of the region's 11 counties, the preliminary list of issues and opportunities was revised to this final version. Later portions of the Regional Agenda that reference issues and opportunities refer to this finalized listing.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Issues

1. Persistent high unemployment and poverty exist throughout the region, consistently in excess of state and national averages.
2. The region lacks economic diversification, with a particular over-reliance on Robins Air Force Base and defense related spending.
3. Many counties, especially the rural and suburban counties, lack industrial development, and have tax bases that are heavily dependent on residential properties.
4. Rural counties are suffering economically from declines in the agricultural and mining sectors of the economy.
5. Major urban corridors experience high rates of commercial vacancies.
6. A number of former industrial sites are contaminated, which prevents their redevelopment.
7. A large number of blighted and dilapidated commercial structures exist throughout the region.
8. There are a limited number of GRAD and pad-ready sites throughout the region, particularly in rural counties without the resources to invest in economic development.
9. Limited capital resources increase the difficulty of investing in economic development.
10. An aging and sometimes declining populace, especially in rural communities, stresses the availability of labor, particularly as well-educated youth leave these communities.

Opportunities

1. Strategic plans offer an opportunity to pursue economic diversification within Middle Georgia, particularly as related to the identification of appropriate industries and sectors for the region.
2. Local incentives can be implemented to assist new and existing businesses.
3. State and federal assets exist that can be leveraged for economic development projects, specifically in areas that are eligible for additional need-based assistance.
4. The Middle Georgia Economic Alliance exists to support and market the whole region to potential economic investors.
5. The Central Georgia Joint Development Authority exists to assist regional development needs, particularly efforts to address encroachment around Robins Air Force Base.
6. Blighted and vacant commercial buildings, particularly in urban corridors and downtown areas, can be redeveloped to help strengthen local economies.
7. Brownfield sites and other areas that have experienced urban decay are available for reinvestment.
8. Many large regional economic stakeholders have an interest in engaging with, and participating in community revitalization efforts.

9. Investment opportunities exist to strengthen the region’s technological infrastructure in order to attract entrepreneurs, “makers,” and other young professionals.
10. The region’s assets can support and grow the warehouse and distribution industry.
11. The region’s existing aerospace assets can help to attract new development and expansion of current industries.
12. Natural and cultural resources of the region, especially the Ocmulgee National Monument, can serve as assets to help grow ecotourism and economic development in the region.
13. The region’s designation as an EB-5 center can encourage additional foreign investment.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN HOUSING

Issues

1. Many low-income individuals are significantly burdened by housing costs.
2. The regional housing stock lacks diversity, particularly outside of urban areas.
3. A significant number of substandard and dilapidated homes exist throughout the region.
4. Many communities lack knowledge of their housing stock and lack the enforcement powers or mechanisms to abate derelict properties.
5. Many small downtown areas lack housing opportunities in the urban core.
6. A large number of manufactured homes exist in the region, many of which bring challenges for property maintenance, causing a loss of aesthetic appeal and safety.
7. A significant number of homeless individuals are present in the region, with an insufficient number of shelters available to meet their needs.
8. A limited number of shelters exist outside of Macon-Bibb County for victims of domestic abuse.

Opportunities

1. Space is available for new mixed-income housing developments to be built and developed throughout the region, specifically projects with rent-controlled units for low-income individuals.
2. Zoning policies can be revised to allow affordable housing developments in close proximity to places of employment.
3. Infill development and small-lot development of single-family dwellings can be allowed, particularly in suburban and rural areas, as affordable alternatives to manufactured housing.
4. Numerous vacant storefronts exist in the downtown area that can be converted into loft developments.
5. Baby boomers seeking access to services, such as medical and shopping, and looking to reduce the need for daily driving, could serve as a “pioneer” population for downtown living and provide an initial market for shops and businesses to return to historic town centers.
6. Strengthened code enforcement activities can assist with alleviating blight.
7. The creation of urban redevelopment plans can provide guidelines for abating substandard housing and promulgating redevelopment efforts in blighted areas.
8. Housing assessments can be utilized as a method for understanding local housing stock.
9. Local governments can participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing and other programs designed to promote affordable and accessible housing options.
10. Additional homebuyer education services and other resources can be made available to provide information about affordable housing alternatives.
11. Local public and non-profit agencies can be supported in their missions to meet the housing needs of the disabled, chronically ill, and homeless.
12. Options for expanding housing alternatives for elderly residents can be considered.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Issues

1. The costs of providing public services typically exceed revenue gained from new development.
2. Shrinking local government budgets jeopardize public service provision, particularly in those communities with diminishing tax bases.
3. Many water and wastewater systems are in need of significant repair, but lack the financial capacity for those necessary improvements or repairs, and/or hold a significant amount of debt related to their water and sewer systems.
4. Water and wastewater capacity gaps are anticipated in some parts of the region over the next 20-30 years, particularly in growing communities, and those dependent on groundwater aquifers.
5. Many parts of the region are served by aging septic systems that could pose a threat to water and soil quality if not properly maintained.
6. Rural communities are not always adequately serviced by public facilities. Many areas lack access to fire protection and may have their water supply at risk in times of drought.
7. Some places in the region, particularly urban areas, suffer from high crime rates and perceptions that travel to or through those places is unsafe.
8. Rapid growth increases the difficulty of providing public safety services over large areas.
9. Continued growth and development is adding to stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation.
10. Many communities have limited recreational facilities and programs.
11. Local government services may be too centralized to serve all citizens, particularly in rural and less-populated communities.
12. Limited natural gas capacity limits opportunities for economic development activities.
13. Many local governments lack the technological or geographic information systems capabilities to improve efficiency of services.

Opportunities

1. State and federal grant and loan funding is available to be leveraged for improvements to community facilities throughout the region, specifically in areas of high need.
2. Local governments can set aside funds for the maintenance of existing facilities and for regular system improvements.
3. By encouraging infill developments and discouraging new greenfield developments, local governments can decrease the cost of service provision.
4. Potential cost-saving opportunities can be identified through the consolidation of community services and/or the establishment of mutual aid agreements between jurisdictions.
5. Areas with high crime rates present opportunities to encourage investment in local law enforcement services and the development of innovative policing techniques.
6. Ordinances, regulations, and public education efforts can help abate stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation in problem areas.
7. Opportunities exist for the development of public-private partnerships with community action groups to help facilitate service provision at a lower cost to local governments.
8. Local governments can consider the implementation of impact fees and related capital improvement elements as an alternative source of funding, especially in rapidly growing areas.
9. The region's stock of vacant and dilapidated structures can be rehabilitated into potential locations for new community facilities.

Issues

1. A significant number of bodies of water throughout the region are on the 303(d) list of impaired waters, or are not meeting their designated uses.
2. The region has a significant amount of wetlands, watersheds, and aquifers in need of protection.
3. A number of environmentally sensitive lands need to be preserved, particularly public hunting grounds and wildlife refuges along the Ocmulgee River.
4. Open space is being lost throughout the region, especially in areas of rapid, sprawling development.
5. Small farms are closing or being consolidated into corporate ownership.
6. The region has a number of historic structures that need to be protected and preserved, especially as part of redevelopment efforts in traditional neighborhoods.
7. Many communities have not comprehensively identified local historic resources.
8. Some communities lack the necessary codes and ordinances to help protect local resources.
9. Community stakeholders are unaware of available funding opportunities to preserve and restore historic resources.
10. The Regional Resources Plan needs to be updated and promulgated throughout Middle Georgia, and its culturally-important resources need continued preservation.
11. Air quality in Middle Georgia, while improving, is at risk of causing the region to enter non-attainment status.

Opportunities

1. The proposed expansion of the Ocmulgee National Monument to a National Park and Preserve, presents an opportunity to protect culturally important lands, environmentally sensitive areas, and potential hunting grounds.
2. Safe and secure river access, including campgrounds, parks, and boat ramps, can serve as economic drivers for rural communities, especially along the Flint, Ocmulgee, and Oconee rivers.
3. Funding, including grants and tax credits, can be pursued for historic revitalization.
4. Agritourism can promote the economy and the preservation of agricultural lands.
5. State programs, such as the Department of Agriculture's "Georgia Grown" and the Department of Community Affairs' "Celebrating Rural Georgia" programs, offer access to resources for the identification of specialty markets and the development of marketing strategies.
6. The region possesses several scenic byways and several more corridors where scenic byways could be established in the future.
7. The Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, the Lower Oconee Water Trail, and other land and water trails throughout Middle Georgia can be extended and enhanced.
8. The Central Georgia Rail Trail will improve green connectivity, recreation opportunities, and economic activity in Middle Georgia.
9. Local governments can promote water conservation and improve water quality throughout the region, specifically in areas where water supply gaps are anticipated, or where waterbodies are not supporting designated uses.
10. The regional water plans for the Middle Ocmulgee and Upper Oconee rivers can provide a valuable framework to ensure the long-term viability of the regional water system.
11. The work of the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition can be supported in an effort to improve air quality in the region, specifically in urban counties.
12. Design guidelines can be implemented to guide the appearance of new construction within the region and develop a sense of place that differentiates Middle Georgia from other areas.

13. Local governments can collaborate with historic preservation commissions throughout the region, and encourage their development in areas where culturally-important resources are at risk.
14. Updating and promulgating the Regional Resources Plan and encouraging heritage tourism and ecotourism can help to better preserve and utilize these resources.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TRANSPORTATION

Issues

1. A number of highways through the region will exceed acceptable levels of service by 2030.
2. Many roadways and bridges are in need of repair or upgrade.
3. Many areas still have a significant number of unpaved roads.
4. A number of counties lack consistent and convenient public transit service, and few resources are available for system expansions.
5. Rapid, sprawling development has placed a strain on the transportation system, leading to inefficiency and traffic.
6. The region lacks bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout most areas, even within some urbanized areas.
7. The region has major issues with east-west connectivity across the Ocmulgee River, which hinders the flow of goods and services and inhibits development.

Opportunities

1. The region's transportation assets present an opportunity for the development of an inland port, container yard, or multi-modal industrial park within the region to facilitate the movement of freight throughout the state and southeast.
2. The region can consider possible funding options for transportation projects throughout the region, including, but not limited to, grant funding, SPLOST, or a potential transportation sales tax, as authorized by the Transportation Funding Act of 2015.
3. Regional transportation infrastructure can benefit from investment in maintenance and improvement, particularly on unpaved roads.
4. The Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition can continue work to promote alternative fuels and transportation options, both to improve the region's air quality, as well as increase transportation efficiency.
5. The development and implementation of local bicycle and pedestrian plans have the potential to aid transportation in Middle Georgia, particularly in downtown areas and near educational facilities.
6. Local governments can utilize complete streets policies in conjunction with bicycle and pedestrian plans to build upon their work.
7. Mobility management programs for the elderly and disabled residents of Middle Georgia can assist with the transportation needs of the growing elderly population.
8. The development of a multi-modal transportation hub with passenger rail and bus service could enhance connections between Middle Georgia, Atlanta, and other parts of the state.
9. The beautification and enhancement of key transportation corridors can assist with wayfinding and place-making throughout the region.
10. The region can discuss the possibility of joint use of the runway at Robins Air Force Base for both military and civilian uses, including, but not limited to, passenger air transportation; freight transportation; and maintenance, repair, and overhaul activities on civilian and military aircraft.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN LAND USE

Issues

1. Rapid, sprawling growth continues to occur in several parts of the region, leading to unplanned changes in traditional land use.
2. Many corridors have developed without a sense of place and are now characterized by traffic, blight, and unsightly development.
3. Most growth has been welcomed wherever it organically occurs, and few planning and zoning regulations have been used to restrict development to certain areas.
4. Some communities lack any zoning ordinances.
5. No public land conservation programs have been aimed at preserving farmland or open space.
6. Uneven development has led to parts of the region that are very prosperous, while other areas are pockets of concentrated poverty and disinvestment.

Opportunities

1. The pursuit of infill development opportunities and adaptive reuse of existing structures throughout the region can assist in reducing sprawl, especially in traditional urban centers.
2. Local governments can consider the implementation of local farmland and open space protection ordinances in suburban areas and places of rapid growth.
3. Mixed-use developments and increased accessibility between residences, commercial services, and places of employment can reduce traffic and unsightly development.
4. Inter-jurisdictional land use planning can help ensure cohesive development patterns that promote the efficient movement of people, goods, and services, and organizations exist in the region that may be able to facilitate this planning.
5. Numerous historic districts exist that may be candidates for revitalization or redevelopment that follows traditional neighborhood design, particularly in conjunction with special tax districts.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Issues

1. Many industries are experiencing a skills gap where not enough workers are present in the region with the skills necessary to do the work of the company.
2. Youth unemployment is significantly higher than other age demographics due to a lack of skills among both younger workers, as well as older workers who cannot advance beyond entry-level jobs.
3. The impending retirement of many older workers poses another threat to the supply of skilled workers. In some industries as much as 40-55 percent of the workforce will be preparing to retire in the next three to five years.
4. Persistently high levels of poverty negatively impact student performance and increase the difficulty of receiving effective job skills training.
5. Many schools have graduation rates below the state average, and many counties fall below the state average in literacy.
6. It is difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals to assimilate back into the workforce.

Opportunities

1. Coordination with technical colleges and universities can help to provide job skills training to low-skill employees.

2. College and Career Academies can be established at local high schools to help assist students with transitions into higher education or the workforce.
3. Schools districts with low graduation rates present opportunities to target specific innovative programs for improvement.
4. The expansion of registered apprenticeship programs, as well as work-based learning and on-the-job training opportunities can help increase the skills of the local workforce.
5. Expanded job training and transitional support for members of the armed forces who are leaving military service can assist these individuals throughout the region.
6. Dialogue between regional businesses and industries and educational institutions, both K-12 and post-secondary, can help ensure that students are receiving the necessary skills for success.
7. Regional collaboration can be expanded between workforce development agencies.
8. Criminal justice reform could lead to new training opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals.
9. Older workers could be utilized to help train people entering the workforce or changing careers.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN AGING SERVICES

Issues

1. The senior population is expected to grow rapidly, which places more demands upon resources and other programs.
2. Many seniors lack access to transportation which would connect them to basic resources and vital social engagements.
3. Many facilities throughout Middle Georgia lack accessibility for the older adult community.
4. There are few affordable senior housing options throughout the region.
5. Scams are regularly directed towards the senior community.
6. Some senior caregivers are overburdened and do not have the proper resources to cope with their responsibilities.
7. Seniors need additional access to adequate reactive and preventative healthcare, proper nutrition, and exercise.
8. The senior community is changing and evolving at a more rapid rate than current programing.
9. It is difficult to communicate information to seniors regarding programs and resources.

Opportunities

1. The economic impact of the senior community can be considered in new development projects to better meet their needs.
2. Current resources geared toward aiding older adults can be expanded.
3. Regional and local work can be undertaken to increase the volume, accessibility, and availability of public transportation.
4. Policies can be developed and enforced to ensure that the design of public facilities conforms to the needs of the senior community.
5. The regional network of community-based services can be expanded with coordination between public, private, and non-profit organizations.
6. The provision of assistance tailored to the needs of older residents can help them age in place, while also benefitting the local economy.
7. Funding can be pursued for the development of senior housing.
8. Counseling and advocacy services available to seniors can be further publicized and promoted.
9. Local governments can innovate to meet the changing needs of the senior population.

Issues

1. The region has traditionally lacked an identity or vision that is widely known, accepted, and promulgated, due to differences in local interests.
2. Competition among local governments for industry prospects and grant funding fosters an adversarial spirit rather than a collaborative one among the cities and counties of the region—sometimes at risk of detriment to all.
3. Transportation and land development have generally not been coordinated throughout the region, leading to conflicting plans and agendas.

Opportunities

1. Increased cooperation for support of economic growth and prosperity at a regional level can benefit each community, regardless of the exact location where growth and development occur.
2. Local governments can consider expanding coordination of planning related to the region's shared natural and cultural resources and economic development activities.
3. The continued renewal and revision of service delivery strategies can help identify areas where significant cost savings, or increases in efficiency may be realized.
4. Using the region's shared bargaining power, particularly in terms of local government contracting, can help the financial situation of many local governments.
5. Facilitating communication and open dialogue among regional leaders can help create a regional approach to solving regional problems.
6. The Regional Commission can support the continuation of the Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions program to equip regional leaders with the skillsets necessary to engage in regionally important issues and promote the importance of collaboration across city and county lines.
7. Regional organizations like the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance, the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority, and the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition can be leveraged to build relationships and trust between regional leaders and policymakers.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

The previous sections of the Regional Agenda have provided an opportunity to envision the ideal future state of the region and have analyzed the pathways and potential obstacles for progress in Middle Georgia. This section, the Implementation Program, is perhaps the most important piece of the Regional Agenda, as it spells out concrete steps and action items that can be taken in pursuit of the Regional Vision. Within this section are found guiding principles for future development, standards by which achievement can be measured, and a Regional Work Program of strategies and actions that can be taken and developed by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission and its partners to implement regional goals.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding Principles are the first enumeration of specific policies and practices that are recommended for local governments to undertake to ensure their effectiveness and assist in attainment of the goals identified earlier through the Regional Vision. These statements remain somewhat general, but should be useful in providing direction in day-to-day decision making. These principles are not regulatory in nature, but do reflect best practices that should be considered by policy makers.

Economic Development

- Economic growth should be welcomed in Middle Georgia regardless of its exact location, and local governments should coordinate marketing strategies for tourism and industry recruitment.
- Local communities should work with state and federal partners in economic development to better meet their needs.
- Downtown revitalization plans should be promoted and encouraged as a means for promoting job creation and entrepreneurship.
- Appropriate businesses should be identified and targeted for industry recruitment and expansion efforts, based on the strategic assets of the community.
- Existing industry retention should be a focus for each community.
- Economic diversification opportunities should be pursued, particularly in counties that are heavily reliant on a single industry or sector.
- Long-term planning should be developed to ensure the availability of necessary resources for economic development.
- Appropriate funding opportunities should be pursued where possible to support economic development initiatives, both locally and regionally.

Housing

- Seek to eliminate substandard and dilapidated housing in all communities throughout the region.
- Promote and encourage development that provides a variety of residential options.
- Promote and encourage affordable housing opportunities.
- Plan for future housing needs, incorporating public infrastructure-related requirements, such as transportation, water, sewer, and emergency services.
- Plan for priority redevelopment areas through small area studies, such as a Livable Centers Initiative program.

Community Facilities and Services

- Local governments should continuously monitor water and wastewater infrastructure and make repairs, upgrades, or expand capacity as necessary. Water and sewer providers should also follow the best management practices of the Regional Water Plans.
- Natural gas service should be considered as an important asset for economic development, and communities should look to expand these services where possible.
- Patterns of growth, such as infill development, that create fewer demands on infrastructure expansion should be encouraged.
- Schools, police stations, fire stations, and other community buildings should be located near existing development, preferably within walking distance for urban and suburban communities.
- Recreational programs should be developed and preserved throughout Middle Georgia.
- Local communities should focus on lowering ISO ratings to the greatest extent feasible by investing in water system infrastructure and firefighting capabilities.
- Law enforcement agencies should be supported throughout the region with necessary funding, equipment, and training for officers.
- Local governments should evaluate options for lowering the cost of service delivery and improving its overall operational efficiency. This could include considering mutual aid agreements, consolidation of services, or review of Service Delivery Strategies to eliminate duplication of services.
- Funding sources should be pursued where possible to assist in the maintenance and new construction of community facilities.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Promote the protection and utilization of the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Promote development practices that do not negatively impact natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Encourage new development and redevelopment practices that incorporate parks and open space as quality-of-life amenities.
- Continue to protect and enhance the region's water quality and quantity.
- Promote additional avenues of access to natural, cultural, and historic resources for recreation, education, and tourism, as a driver of economic activity.
- Promote and support the region's existing Main Street communities and encourage additional communities to seek designation to enhance and promote downtown areas.
- Capitalize on the natural, cultural, and historic resources that are present within the region, utilizing their presence to tell the region's story to residents and outsiders alike.
- Enhance existing natural, cultural, and historic resources with appropriate development.

Transportation

- Encourage street connectivity and improved access and mobility for all forms of transportation.
- Promote alternative transportation choices, such as walking, biking, carpooling, and taking public transportation.
- Promote the logical connectivity of the region's road network.
- Promote the planning for, construction of, and movement on regional and inter-regional freight routes, such as the Fall Line Freeway and Import-Export Highway, to alleviate east-west connectivity issues across the Ocmulgee River.
- Coordinate transportation network improvements with land use planning activities.

- Improve the condition of the region’s road network, with attention to the condition of high-priority bridges, culverts, and unpaved roads.
- Promote the region’s airports for use as passenger hubs, air cargo, and aerospace industries, and advocate for the expansion and growth of airport capacity, including runway extensions.
- Communicate the importance and feasibility of passenger rail, particularly between Middle Georgia and Atlanta, looking at all options, including public-private partnerships.
- Coordinate with the Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Ports Authority, State Road and Tollway Authority, and other state agencies, as appropriate, on necessary improvements and to identify innovative funding opportunities for improving the transportation network.

Land Use

- Robins Air Force Base should be protected from encroachment concerns and other incompatible land uses that jeopardize current or potential future missions.
- Smart Growth principles should be promoted throughout the region, especially in urban and suburban communities. This includes promotion of infill development and greyfield or brownfield redevelopment as an alternative to new greenfield development.
- Infrastructure needs and challenges should be considered in zoning decisions.
- Walkability should be promoted for residents of all ages, particularly children and the elderly.
- Open space and farmland should be protected to slow the impacts of urban sprawl. Urban growth boundaries may also be considered.
- Local community character should be preserved where possible, particularly through the preservation of historic structures and the construction of new buildings that are compatible with existing architecture.
- Mixed-use developments should be promoted to improve access to services.
- Local governments should coordinate their land use planning across jurisdictional boundaries.

Education and Workforce Development

- Promote collaboration between school systems, private schools, technical colleges, colleges, and universities and local industry.
- Provide tools to develop the workforce for the region’s existing industries.
- Prepare the regional workforce for the region’s targeted industries.
- Promote policies that seek to reduce “brain drain”.
- Promote policies that seek to improve childhood literacy.
- Promote policies that seek to decrease high school dropout rates.
- Promote policies that seek to increase high school graduation rates.

Aging Services

- Promote and encourage more effective ways to communicate with the senior population.
- Provide resources to help seniors age in-place.
- Remain cognizant of the quickly growing senior population when engaging in planning efforts.
- Promote innovation in accessible healthcare services.
- Focus on long-term sustainability of aging services programs.
- Encourage person-centered approach to service provision.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between jurisdictions in developing solutions for shared regional issues.
- Encourage mutual aid and sharing of services and facilities between jurisdictions, where appropriate, for mutual benefit.
- Continue placing emphasis on collaboration in local and regional planning.
- Coordinate communication between affected jurisdictions and public entities on decisions likely to impact them.
- Promote and encourage ongoing relationship building between local and regional leaders.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission, through the Regional Agenda process, is given the responsibility and authority to set achievement levels for local governments of the region. In doing so, MGRC recognizes that all local governments of the region are different, and that some standards may be quite easily attainable for larger, well-funded governments, but more difficult to meet for other cities and counties. For this reason, MGRC has set Essential Standards, as well as Excellence Standards for the local governments of Middle Georgia. These standards are identical for large and small governments alike, and for this reason, Essential Standards are differentiated from Excellence Standards, which may require increased planning, coordination, and financial commitment.

While all local governments have the option to pursue Excellence Standards, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission expects Essential Standards to be met by any and all local governments in the region. These represent the minimum actions that must be taken by a local government in order to function. As stated in the Regional Vision, a thriving Middle Georgia should include “the provision of effective local government services.” These Essential Standards are a necessary precursor to ensuring that local governments of the region are able to provide services in an effective manner.

Under State of Georgia regulations, the Essential Standards that are articulated below as a minimum standard for each local government must be met within three years of the formal adoption of the Regional Agenda by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council. Annually, Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff will perform a review of each local government to determine adherence to these standards. Failure of a local government to attain the Essential Standards within the first three years of plan adoption may subject the government to sanctions from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, including the possible loss of Qualified Local Government status.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission is dedicated to ensuring that every local government is able to meet the Essential Standards of the Regional Agenda. Regional Commission staff will assist local governments with any tasks necessary to attain the Essential Standards at minimal or no cost.

Essential Standards

- Local Comprehensive Plans shall be updated with all required elements on their respective timelines, as approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- Local governments shall participate in biennial Plan Implementation Meetings facilitated by the Regional Commission to promulgate the Regional Plan and Local Comprehensive Plan.
- A Service Delivery Strategy shall be negotiated and agreed upon as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

- Local governments shall participate in the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Middle Georgia Region.
- Local governments shall comply with all Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria.
- A pre-disaster mitigation plan shall be approved by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and adopted by each local government in accordance with state guidelines.
- Local governments shall comply with Georgia Department of Community Affairs State Reporting Requirements, particularly the Government Management Indicators Survey, the Report of Local Government Finance, and (if applicable) the Hotel/Motel Tax Report.
- Each local government shall periodically review its expenses and revenues and adopt a budget that balances projected revenues and expenditures consistent with the timeframe required by its local Charter, Code of Ordinances, or other relevant regulations.
- Each city and county shall have a functioning, up-to-date website, which provides basic contact information for local government staff and elected officials.

Excellence Standards

In addition to the regular evaluation of Essential Standard attainment that will be completed by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the following Excellence Standards will also be evaluated. Local governments that meet 30 of the 66 Excellence Standards, including at least one of the excellence standards in each of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's nine categories below will be designated as a Middle Georgia Community of Excellence. All local governments are encouraged to implement as many of these best practices as possible, and Regional Commission staff will assist local governments with attainment of these standards upon request.

Economic Development

- Economic developers participate in the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance or Central Georgia Joint Development Authority.
- Support downtown revitalization programs such as Main Street, or establish a Downtown Development Authority.
- Develop a strategy for business retention and expansion programs within the community.
- Develop strategies for new industry recruitment that focus on targeted industry sectors.
- Establish an Urban Redevelopment Plan, Enterprise Zone, or Opportunity Zone for economically distressed areas.
- Apply for grant and loan funding opportunities to improve economic development.

Housing

- Establish or participate with a local housing authority, as appropriate, as an avenue for access to housing by low-income persons.
- Provide local incentives for housing alternatives at multiple income levels such as tax abatements or local housing grants.
- Utilize the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Comprehensive Housing Improvement Program (CHIP), or similar programs to address local housing needs.
- Demonstrate efforts to stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods through the relaxation of zoning or subdivision requirements for affordable housing projects.
- Routinely update housing assessments to identify existing conditions and housing stock needs.
- Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).

- Promote residential opportunities in downtown commercial areas, particularly for “pioneer” populations such as baby boomers or college students.

Community Facilities and Services

- Local development standards discourage the adoption of septic systems and require sewer system connections where service is available.
- Local officials and staff participate in the development of Regional Water Plans and adopt best practices related to water conservation and water supply management.
- Water quality management or stormwater management programs are adopted.
- Develop a recreation plan for the community.
- Implement community-oriented policing strategies to build community relationships.
- Apply for grant and loan funding opportunities to improve community facilities.
- The local government establishes a Capital Improvements Plan or similar document to plan for future community infrastructure needs.

Natural and Cultural Resources

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive inventory of cultural, archeological, and historic resources.
- Participate in regional and statewide heritage tourism programs.
- Identify locally designated historic districts and places, or districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places within the local comprehensive plan.
- Become a Certified Local Government by the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.
- Adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance consistent with the Georgia Historic Preservation Act, and have an active Historic Preservation Commission which meets at least quarterly.
- Participate in the appropriate Regional Water Planning Council and implement relevant portions of the Council’s plans related to water quality, wastewater management, and watershed protection.
- Adopt ordinances that encourage the protection of open space, natural resources, and wildlife habitat.
- Participate in regional organizations focused on environmental issues that cross county boundaries, such as the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition.

Transportation

- Establish a community-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee charged with the development and maintenance of a local bicycle and pedestrian plan consistent with the 2015 Middle Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.
- Coordinate with local school districts to develop or maintain a “Safe Routes to School” program.
- Adopt and implement a Complete Streets Policy.
- Implement a bike-share program.
- Participate in the routine updates to the county’s Transit Development Plan.
- Participate in regional transportation-related forums that focus on multi-modal transportation approaches, such as the Rural and Human Services Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Develop local design standards for private road development to prevent sub-standard roads from being taken-over by the local government.
- Identify high-priority bridges, culverts, and unpaved roads within the community and prioritize improvement projects.
- Assess existing codes and ordinances for deficiencies and pass policies that address them, such as thru-truck or sidewalk maintenance ordinances.
- Take advantage of opportunities, particularly grants and loans, for local or regional funding of transportation improvements.

Land Use

- Local governments adopt and enforce zoning codes to guide patterns of community development.
- Sidewalks are present in town centers to promote walkability.
- Zoning codes set aside land for conservation purposes to form an urban growth boundary.
- Incentives are provided for environmental efficiency in site planning and construction.
- Communities implement overlay district ordinances or design guidelines to encourage historical architectural forms.
- Zoning codes allow and encourage the development of mixed-use structures and centers.
- Impact fee ordinances are adopted in compliance with state law.
- Implement building codes, health and sanitation codes, or nuisance ordinances to improve the safety and appearance of the community.

Education and Workforce Development

- Demonstrate collaboration between school systems, private schools, technical colleges, colleges, or universities, and local industry.
- Undertake efforts to develop the regional workforce for existing industries.
- Undertake efforts to develop the regional workforce for targeted industries.
- Initiate actions to improve childhood literacy rates.
- Pursue action steps to decrease high school dropout rates.

Aging Services

- Demonstrate sustained funding for programming at senior centers.
- Incorporate universal design into local comprehensive plans.
- Incorporate universal design into local zoning policies.
- Undertake efforts to improve communication with the senior population.
- Undertake efforts to develop innovative or low-cost healthcare services or programs.
- Demonstrate effectiveness in helping seniors age in place.
- Demonstrate initiative in planning for growth in the senior population.
- Operate a local transit system that helps seniors age in place.

Intergovernmental Coordination

- Demonstrate sharing of services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Undertake efforts to work jointly with other jurisdictions within the region on developing solutions to shared regional issues.
- Provide input and feedback, as applicable, during the review process for Developments of Regional Impact.
- Demonstrate cross-jurisdictional collaboration in local and regional planning.

MIDDLE GEORGIA STRATEGIES & REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM

The Middle Georgia Regional Work Program is the final component of the Regional Agenda's Implementation Program. Its purpose is to identify regional strategies and action items that can be taken by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission and its regional partners for the purpose of promulgating the opportunities and vision developed by stakeholders for the Regional Plan. All statements identified previously in the Issues and Opportunities section of the plan are addressed by specific items within the Regional Work Program.

Planning and Coordination Activities

Economic Development (ED)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Provide technical assistance to local governments, authorities, and chambers for economic development and industrial recruitment.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, EDA, GDEcD	MGRC	ED: I-1, I-3, I-8, O-1, O-3
2	Pursue funding avenues to aid in providing infrastructure to industrial parks/sites.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, USDA, CGJDA	MGRC	ED: I-8, I-9, O-3 CF: I-3, O-1 T: O-2
3	Research, prepare and administer grants/loans to support economic development.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	ED: I-1, I-3, I-8, O-3 CF: O-1
4	Provide assistance to the 21 st Century Partnership and its efforts to support Robins Air Force Base activities, expansion efforts, and new missions.	2017-2021	\$30,000	21st Century Partnership, MGRC	MGRC	ED: I-2, O-8, O-11
5	Continue implementation of plans to remediate encroachment issues near RAFB.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DOD, CGJDA, Local Governments	MGRC, CGJDA, DNR	ED: I-2, O-5 LU: I-3, I-5 IC: O-7
6	Develop and aid in implementation of projects/activities identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the region.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, EDA	MGRC	ED: I-1, I-3, I-8, O-1, O-3 IC: I-1, I-2, O-2

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
7	Conduct economic impact analysis to determine cost-benefit for economic development projects.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	ED: I-1, O-2 CF: I-1
8	Provide technical assistance for the creation of local Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, and Redevelopment Plans.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC	ED: I-1, I-4, I-5, I-7, O-1, O-2, O-6 NR: I-6, O-3
9	Assist in a joint economic development initiative to market the region.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, MGEA	ED: I-1, I-3, I-4, O-4 IC: I-1, I-2, O-1, O-2, O-7
10	Promote, encourage and engage in economic development initiatives of joint development authorities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, CGJDA, FLRDA, MGRDA	ED: O-5 IC: I-2, O-1, O-7
11	Promote Middle Georgia tourism industry.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GDEcD, Local Governments	MGRC	ED: I-2, I-4, O-1, O-12 NR: O-4, O-5, O-6, O-12, O-13 IC: I-1, O-2
12	Promote and provide technical assistance with the Foreign Trade Zone and EB-5 Foreign Investor Program in eligible areas of Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	ED: O-13 IC: I-2, O-1
13	Implement the Digital Economy Plan for the Middle Georgia Region.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GTA, OEA, Local Governments	MGRC	ED: I-2, I-3, I-4, O-3, O-9 CF: I-13 IC: I-1, O-1, O-2, O-5
14	Facilitate the ongoing operation of Makerspaces in Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GTA, OEA, Local Governments	MGRC	ED: I-2, I-3, I-4, O-3, O-9 IC: I-1, O-1, O-2, O-5

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
15	Prepare grant applications for remediation of brownfield sites.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, EPA	MGRC, Local Governments	ED: I-6, O-7 LU: I-6
16	Assist with development of downtown development or redevelopment plans, and special tax districts.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	ED: I-5, I-7, O-6 NR: I-6, I-8, O-12, O-13 LU: I-6
17	Develop plans for retention of top talent within the region to prevent "brain drain."	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	ED: I-10, O-9 LU: O-3
18	Build on the findings of the Middle Georgia... Growing Strong project to identify new opportunities to grow regional economic diversification.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, OEA	MGRC, MGEA	ED: I-1, I-2, O-1, O-3, O-10 IC: I-1, O-1
19	Provide assistance with the promotion of the film industry in Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GDEcD	MGRC	ED: I-2, I-4, O-1, O-12 NR: O-4, O-5, O-6 IC: O-1

Housing (H)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Assist local governments with preparing Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) grant applications.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments, Housing Authorities	H: I-1, I-3, I-5
2	Perform Housing Assessments, focusing on both urban and rural areas, and data collection as requested.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments	H: I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, I-6, O-4, O-8, O-12

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
3	Promote, encourage, and participate in housing-related workshops, conferences, and symposiums.	2017-2012	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, Local Governments, Housing Authorities	H: O-10, O-11
4	Provide technical assistance to local Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) communities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC, DCA	H: I-4, O-9
5	Assist local governments with the preparation of housing-focused Urban Redevelopment Plans.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments	H: I-3, I-4, I-5, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7 LU: I-6, O-5
6	Assist local governments with the creation and management of Land Bank Authorities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments	H: I-3, I-4, O-1, O-4 LU: I-2, I-5
7	Provide technical assistance to local governments in reviewing and updating zoning codes to remove barriers to appropriate housing development.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments	H: O-1, O-2, O-3
8	Prioritize lending opportunities for housing developments focused on low- or mixed-income, elderly, or disabled residents.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GSBL	MGRC, GSBL	H: I-1, I-6, O-1, O-11, O-12 A: I-4

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
9	Partner with local governments, Housing Authorities, social service agencies, non-profits, etc. to promote housing options for those most in need.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	H: I-1, I-2, I-7, I-8, O-1, O-10, O-11, O-12 A: I-4, O-5
10	Consider town centers as housing destinations for potential "pioneer" populations, such as baby boomers and college students.	2017-2019	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC, Local Governments, Housing Authorities	H: I-4, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-12 NR: I-6, O-3, O-12, O-13 LU: O-1, O-3
11	Promote affordable housing options.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC, Local Governments	H: I-1 A: I-4
12	Promote and provide for safe, clean, and affordable housing choices.	2017-2021	TBD	Housing Authorities, Local Governments	Local Governments, Housing Authorities	H: I-1, I-2, I-7, I-8, O-1, O-10, O-11, O-12 A: I-4

Community Facilities & Services (CF)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Assist local efforts to upgrade or develop new public safety facilities and services.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, FEMA, DOJ, USDA, DCA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, I-6, I-7, I-8, I-11, O-1, O-2, O-4, O5
2	Assist local efforts to upgrade or develop new recreational facilities and services.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DNR, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, I-10, I-11, O-1, O-2, O-7 NR: O-1, O-2, O-7, O-8

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
3	Assist local efforts to upgrade or develop new community facilities, such as Senior Centers, Head Start, Workforce Development, Boys and Girls Clubs, Libraries, etc.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, USDA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, I-4, O-1, O-2, O-9 ED: O-6 LU: O-1 EW: I-4, O-1
4	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade or develop new government administration facilities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, USDA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, I-4, O-1, O-2, O-9 ED: O-6 LU: O-1
5	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade and/or extend water/sewer infrastructure.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, USDA, GEFA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, O-1, O-2 ED: I-8, O-3 NR: I-2, O-9, O-10, O-14 LU: O-4
6	Create, maintain, promote, and host web pages for local governments, development authorities, and other regional entities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-13 ED: O-4
7	Create, maintain, and promote internet based map services	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-13 ED: O-4 NR: I-7
8	Create road and structure point data layers to support E-911 mapping services.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GEMA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-6, I-7, I-13, O-5
9	Develop risk assessment reports and assist in the local hazard mitigation and pre-disaster mitigation planning processes.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, GEMA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-6, I-7 NR: I-11, O-9, O-10

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
10	Explore the feasibility of acquiring highly accurate elevation (LiDAR) data and region wide ortho-aerial photography.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, USGS, NOAA, FEMA, Local Governments	MGRC, GIO	CF: I-13
11	Provide tax parcel maintenance service.	2017-2021	TBD	Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-13 LU: I-1
12	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade and/or extend natural gas infrastructure.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, USDA, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-12 ED: I-8, O-3
13	Assist local governments with improvements to stormwater management and drainage infrastructure	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, USDA, EPD, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-9, O-6 NR: I-12, O-9, O-10
14	Assist with land development ordinances or implementation of impact fees to reduce potential losses from new service provision.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-1, I-2, I-8, I-9, O-3, O-8 LU: I-1, I-3, O-4
15	Assist local governments with development and preparation of Solid Waste Management Plans, as requested.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC	CF: I-2, O-2 LU: O-4
16	Develop strategies for enhancing social media and communications capabilities for MGRC and local governments.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	CF: I-11, I-13 ED: O-4

Natural & Cultural Resources (NR)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Prepare update to the Regional Resources Plan.	2018	\$25,000	MGRC, DCA	MGRC	NR: I-10, O-14 IC: I-1, O-2
2	Assist Local governments with preparing and administering Land and Water Conservation Fund grants.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DNR	MGRC, Local Governments	NR: I-9, O-2, O-4 CF: I-10 LU: I-5
3	Conduct and comment on Section 106 undertakings involving historic resources.	2017-2021	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC, HPD	MGRC	NR: I-6, I-7, I-10, O-13, O-14 LU: I-1 IC: I-3, O-2
4	Conduct historic resources inventories for local governments.	2017-2021	\$10,000 Annually	MGRC, HPD, Local Governments	MGRC	NR: I-6, I-7, O-13
5	Provide outreach, training, and technical assistance on Historic Preservation to local governments and interested parties within the region.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, HPD	MGRC	NR: I-5, I-6, I-7, I-8, O-3, O-12, O-13 LU: I-1, O-5 IC: O-2
6	Assist local governments with activities related to the Certified Local Government program; assist in the preparation and adoption of local preservation ordinances.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, HPD	MGRC	NR: I-6, I-7, I-8, O-3, O-12, O-13 LU: I-1

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
7	Provide technical assistance to local Historic Preservation Commission, Historical Societies, and other organizations.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, HPD	MGRC	NR: I-6, I-7, I-8, O-3, O-12, O-13 LU: I-1, O-5
8	Assist communities with state and federal historic preservation initiatives and programs including the Main Street Program and the Preserve America Institute.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, HPD, DCA	MGRC, Local Governments	NR: I-6, I-7, I-8, O-3, O-12, O-13 LU: I-1, O-5
9	Provide technical assistance to the Ocmulgee Water Trail Partnership, the Lower Oconee Water Trail group, and other blueway-focused organizations.	2017-2021	\$10,000 Annually	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC, OWTP, LOWT	NR: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, O-1, O-2, O-6, O-7, O-9, O-10, O-14 ED: O-12 CF: I-10 T: I-6, O-5, O-9 IC: I-3, O-2
10	Provide technical assistance to the Central Georgia Rail to Trail Association for the development of the rail trail between Macon and Milledgeville.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	NR: I-3, I-4, I-10, O-1, O-2, O-6, O-7, O-8 ED: O-12 CF: I-10 T: I-6, O-5, O-9 IC: I-3, O-2
11	Provide assistance to local governments and other community organizations in promoting small farms and small communities through the "Georgia Grown" and "Celebrating Rural Georgia" programs.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, Georgia Department of Agriculture	MGRC, Local Governments, Community Organizations, Community Gardens	NR: I-4, I-5, I-11, O-5, O-11 ED: I-3, O-12 LU: I-5

Transportation (T)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Provide assistance to local governments with Transit Development Plans.	2017-2021	\$20,000 Annually	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-1, I-4, I-5, O-6, O-7 LU: I-2, I-6, O-4
2	Serve on Macon Area Transportation Study Technical Coordinating and Policy Committees.	2017-2021	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC	MGRC, MATS	T: I-1, I-2, I-5, I-6, I-7, O-2, O-3, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9 LU: O-4
3	Serve on Warner Robins Area Transportation Study Technical Coordinating and Policy Committees.	2017-2021	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC	MGRC, WRATS	T: I-1, I-2, I-5, I-6, O-2, O-3, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9 LU: O-4
4	Assist in updates of the WRATS socio-economic database using a variety of data sources.	2017-2021	\$12,000 Annually	WRATS	MGRC	T: I-1, I-2, I-5, I-6, O-2, O-3, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9
5	Incorporate policies and strategies in local comprehensive plans that link land use and transportation improvements.	2017-2019	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-1, I-5 ED: I-5, O-6 LU: I-1, I-2, O-3, O-4 IC: I-3, O-2
6	Maintain and update the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian website.	2017-2021	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 CF: I-13
7	Facilitate annual meeting of Middle Georgia Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.	2017-2021	\$1,000 Annually	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 IC: I-3, O-2
8	Update WRATS Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.	2017	\$30,000	MGRC, GDOT, WRATS	MGRC, WRATS	T: I-6, O-5, O-6

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
9	Prepare Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans for interested communities.	2017-2021	\$15,000 Annually	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC, Local Governments, Bike-Ped Advisory Committees	T: I-6, O-5, O-6
10	Continue phased construction of Oconee River Greenway and the Fishing Creek Community Trail in Milledgeville and Baldwin County.	2017-2021	\$5 Million	FHWA, DNR, Local Governments	Oconee River Greenway Authority, Local Governments	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 IC: I-3, O-2
11	Continue phased construction of the Wellston Trail in Warner Robins.	2018-2019	\$500,000	FHWA, DNR, Local Governments	Warner Robins, GDOT	T: I-6, O-5, O-6
12	Perform Safe Routes to School walk safety audits or travel plans for elementary and middle schools.	2017-2021	\$12,000 Annually	GDOT, MGRC	MGRC, Local School Systems	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 CF: I-11
13	Provide technical assistance to bicycle and pedestrian stakeholder groups, including CGRTA, OWTP, LOWT, Wilkinson County Bike Friendly Committee, etc.	2017-2021	\$10,000 Annually	GDOT, MGRC	MGRC, Local Stakeholders	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 NR: O-3, O-10, I-1, I-2, I-6, I-7, I-8 LU: O-4
14	Facilitate Complete Streets and other trainings for local communities.	2017-2021	\$5,000 Annually	GDOT, MGRC	MGRC, Local Stakeholders	T: I-6, O-5, O-6 ED: I-7
15	Facilitate the Middle Georgia Regional Mobility Manager program.	2017-2021	\$100,000 Annually	GDOT, MGRC	MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-4, O-2, O-7, O-8 A: I-2, O-3

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
16	Pursue expanded transit service and options for special population groups, including senior citizens (through 5311 programs), veterans, adult students, and workforce program participants.	2017-2021	TBD	GDOT, MGRC	GDOT, MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-4, O-2, O-7, O-8 A: I-2, I-3, O-2, O-3
17	Promote passenger rail and bus service between Macon and Atlanta; inclusion as a priority in the State of Georgia Rail Plan.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments, Georgians for Passenger Rail	T: I-5, O-8 ED: I-1
18	Assist local governments with efforts to beautify transportation corridors, particularly community gateway entrances, including wayfinding and placemaking.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	T: I-5, O-9 ED: I-7, O-6 NR: I-4, I-10, O-6 LU: I-2
19	Support local governments in finding innovative solutions for transportation investments.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	T: O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
20	Provide assistance to local governments, MPOs, and other entities in understanding funding opportunities presented by passage of the FAST Act and the Transportation Funding Act of 2015.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, Local Governments, MATS, WRATS	T: O-1, O-2, O-3
21	Assist local governments with identifying and prioritizing bridges, culverts, and unimproved roads for future investment.	2017-2021	\$25,000 Annually	GDOT, MGRC	MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-1, I-2, I-3, O-2, O-3
22	Administer Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transportation Program in the Middle Georgia Region.	2017-2021	\$70,000 Annually	MGRC, DHS	MGRC, Third-Party Operators	T: I-4, I-5, O-2, O-7 A: I-2, O-3 IC: I-3, O-4
23	Promulgate the Middle Georgia Freight and Logistics Study, and provide technical assistance for the creation of an inland port, container yard, or multi-modal industrial park in Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, OEA, Local Governments	MGRC, MGEA, GPA	T: I-7, O-1 ED: I-1, I-2, O-10 IC: O-1

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
24	Identify opportunities for improving the east-west connectivity across the Ocmulgee River for more efficient flow of goods, services, and people.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, Local Governments	MGRC, Local Governments	T: I-7, O-2 ED: O-10 IC: I-3, O-2
25	Explore opportunities to take advantage of the region's existing airfields, such as public-private partnerships and expansion needs.	2017-2021	TBD	OEA, MGRC	MGRC, Airport Authorities, RAFB	T: O-10 ED: O-10, O-11

Land Use (LU)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Assist local governments with development and preparation of Comprehensive Plans.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC	LU: I-2, O-4 ED: O-1 H: I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5 CF: I-2, I-6, I-8 NR: I-2, I-4, I-6, I-7, O-2, O-4, O-6, O-7, O-8 T: I-1, I-3, I-5, I-6, O-3, O-5, O-6, O-9
2	Assist local governments in the preparation/modification and adoption of local land use ordinances, zoning ordinances, and/or development regulations.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA	MGRC	LU: I-3, I-4, I-5, O-2, O-5 CF: I-5, I-9, O-6, O-8 NR: I-8, O-12, O-13

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
3	Administer and manage the Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) program in the Middle Georgia region.	2017-2021	\$40,000	MGRC, DCA	MGRC	LU: I-1, O-4 T: I-1, I-5
4	Promote growth and development in areas that can be efficiently served by existing infrastructure.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	LU: I-1, I-6, O-1, O-3, O-5 ED: O-6 H: O-1, O-3, O-4, O-5 CF: I-1, O-8 NR: I-4 T: I-5
5	Encourage the placement of new schools near existing infrastructure.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	LU: I-3, I-6, O-1 CF: O-9 T: O-5, O-6
6	Provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) digital mapping and Global Positioning System (GPS) data collection services to local governments.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, GIO	LU: I-1, O-4 CF: I-13

Education & Workforce Development (EW)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Undertake and support workforce development and implementation initiatives.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-6, O-1, O-2, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9 ED: I-1, I-10
2	Coordinate and promote on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-5 O-1, O-4, O-5, O-8, O-9 ED: I-1, I-10
3	Provide technical assistance to job seekers.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-2, I-5 I-6, O-5 ED: I-1, I-10 T: I-4, O-7

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
4	Provide employer specialized recruiting services to regional industries.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-1 ED: I-1, I-10
5	Coordinate applicant certification services for job seekers.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-1, I-2, I-3, I-4, I-5, O-1 ED: I-1, I-10
6	Promote awareness of state-level criminal justice reform among job seekers.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-6, O-8 ED: I-1, I-10
7	Promote collaboration between workforce development agencies throughout the region.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: O-7 ED: I-1, I-10 IC: O-1
8	Encourage the development of targeted, innovative workforce development programs in public K-12 schools.	2017-2021	TBD	Local School Districts	Local School Districts, MGRC, MGC	EW: I-4, I-5, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-6 ED: I-1, I-10
9	Promote awareness of transitional support, on-the-job training, and veterans' preference opportunities for veterans seeking employment.	2017-2021	TBD	GDEcD	MGRC, MGC	EW: I-1, O-5 ED: I-1, I-10

Aging Services (A)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Operate as fully functioning Aging and Disability Resource Connection and Gateway Access System.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-2, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7, I-9, O-5, O-6, O-8
2	Administer Community Care Services Program, a Medicaid Waiver Service that helps elderly and/or disabled individuals remain in their homes and communities and prevents seniors from being prematurely institutionalized.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-4, O-6 H: I-5, O-5, O-12
3	Operate GeorgiaCares Program, which assists disabled and older Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers with health insurance information, benefits counseling, education recognition, and reporting of health insurance-related fraud.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-5, I-6, O-8
4	Provide assistance to seniors in need through Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act grant funds.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-7, I-9, O-6, O-8

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
5	Administer the National Family Caregiver Support Program.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-6, I-8, O-5, O-6
6	Maintain, update, and secure new resources for inclusion in the statewide Enhanced Services Program (ESP) database.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-5, I-7, I-8, I-9, O-2, O-5, O-6, O-8
7	Conduct wellness-related activities through the Wellness Program, providing education, health screenings, nutrition information, exercise, disease management and prevention, and safe usage of medication to seniors and disabled persons.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-6, I-7, I-8, I-9, O-2, O-6, O-8
8	Administer Chronic Disease Self-Management Education (CDSME) program.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-6, I-7, I-9, O-5, O-6
9	Implement the Tomando Control de su Salud program (CDSME program in Spanish) in Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-6, I-7, I-9, O-2, O-5, O-6, O-9
10	Administer the Matter of Balance fall prevention program.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-7, O-6
11	Administer in-home case management program for non-Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services clients.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-2, I-6, I-7, I-9, O-6

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
12	Market the Area Agency on Aging in all counties in the Middle Georgia Region through community education programs and health fairs.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-9, O-8
13	Plan, sponsor, and conduct a region-wide annual event in support and recognition of the U.S. Administration on Aging's Older American month activities.	2017-2021	TBD	Donations, Vendor Support	MGRC	A: I-9, O-8
14	Update the Area Agency on Aging Plan for the Middle Georgia region.	2017	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-8, O-2, O-5
15	Provide programmatic and fiscal training, technical assistance, and monitoring to Area Agency on Aging subcontractors.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: O-5

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
16	Create and maintain an Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan and serve as lead when notified by Department of Human Services, Division of Aging Services, or by a localized emergency team in the Middle Georgia counties, to assist seniors and/or persons with disabilities during an actual emergency.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-8, O-5
17	Administer the Elder Abuse Prevention Program by providing public education and outreach to identify and prevent elder abuse, neglect, and exploitation.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-5
18	Conduct Reverse Mortgage Counseling activities in accordance with AAA's contract with the National Council on Aging, based on the availability of funding.	2017-2021	TBD	National Council on Aging, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-5 H: O-12
19	Function as Local Contact Agency for nursing home residents seeking to transition to the community. Offer Options Counseling to assist residents in locating community resources.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-8, O-5, O-6 H: O-12 T: O-7

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
20	Administer the Money Follows the Person (MFP) funds for the Department of Community Health. These funds enable funding to follow a person from a nursing home back to their home and/or community.	2017-2021	TBD	DCH, DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, I-8, O-8 H: O-12 T: O-7
21	Encourage local governments to incorporate universal design concepts and account for their aging populations in their local comprehensive plans.	2017-2021	TBD	DCA, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-3, O-1, O-3, O-4, O-9 H: O-12 T: O-7 LU: I-3, O-3
22	Provide local governments with information regarding grant funding opportunities for senior housing.	2017-2021	TBD	DCA, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-4, O-7 H: O-9, O-11, O-12
23	Develop and implement the AAA Sustainability Business Plan, a private-pay service within the Area Agency on Aging.	2017-2021	TBD	DHS, MGRC	MGRC	A: I-1, O-1, O-6

Intergovernmental Coordination (IC)

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Provide technical assistance and training opportunities for the Middle Georgia Economic Alliance.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, MGEA	IC: O-1, O-7 ED: I-1, O-4

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
2	Provide technical assistance and staff support to the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, CGJDA	IC: O-1, O-5, O-7 ED: O-5
3	Provide technical assistance and staff support to the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition and take actions to improve air quality.	2017-2021	TBD	EPA, GDOT, EPD, MGCAC, MGRC	MGRC, MGCAC, Local Governments	IC: O-2, O-5, O-7 NR: I-11, O-11 T: I-1, I-4, O-4
4	Facilitate the Middle Georgia Regional Leadership Champions program.	2017-2021	\$66,000	MGRC, OEA	MGRC, UGA	IC: I-1, I-2, O-6 ED: I-1, I-2, O-1, O-8
5	Assist local governments with coordinating TMDL and Watershed Improvement Plans.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	IC: O-2 CF: I-4, I-5, I-9, O-6, O-8 NR: I-1, I-2, O-9, O-10
6	Support the activities of the Middle Ocmulgee and Upper Oconee Water Planning Councils.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, EPD	MGRC, Local Governments	IC: O-2 CF: I-4, I-5, I-9, O-6, O-8 NR: I-1, I-2, O-9, O-10
7	Assist local governments in supporting the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve Initiative.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DCA, DNR, Local Governments	MGRC	IC: I-3, O-2 ED: O-12 NR: I-3, I-10, O-1, O-2, O-7, O-8, O-14
8	Coordinate with other Regional Commissions and local governments in determining US Bike Routes through Middle Georgia.	2017-2019	\$30,000	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC	IC: I-3, O-2 ED: O-12 T: I-6, O-5, O-6

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
9	Assist GDOT in implementing the state's Complete Streets Policy throughout the region.	2017-2021	\$20,000	MGRC, GDOT	MGRC	IC: I-1, I-3, O-2 ED: O-6 T: I-6, O-5, O-6 LU: I-2, O-4
10	Coordinate implementation of action items from 2004 Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) and update and revise JLUS as needed.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC, DOD	MGRC, Local Governments	IC: I-3, O-2, O-5 LU: I-3, O-4
11	Encourage local governments to regularly update Service Delivery Strategy agreements and provide technical assistance.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, Local Governments	IC: O-3, O-4 CF: I-6, I-8, I-11, O-4
12	Promote and provide technical assistance for P4 partnerships between Robins Air Force Base and the surrounding communities.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	IC: O-2, O-5 ED: O-11 CF: I-10, O-4, O-7 T: O-10
13	Support efforts to enhance and develop the I-75 Corridor through the Middle Georgia Region.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC, I-75 Corridor Council, Local Governments	IC: O-1, O-2 ED: I-3, I-5 T: I-5, O-9 LU: I-2, O-4

Review Activities

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
1	Conduct Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs (Executive Order 12372) to ensure consistency of proposed projects with regional and local planning documents.	2017-2021	\$12,000	MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-1, I-3, O-1, O-2 LU: O-4

#	Activity	Project Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties	Issues & Opportunities
2	Review and comment on long-range transportation plans for consistency with the Regional Plan.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-1, I-3, O-2
3	Review and comment on developments in close proximity to resources identified in the Regional Resource Plan.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-1, I-3, O-2 LU: I-1, I-3, O-4
4	Review all Developments of Regional Impact submitted by Regional Commissions that adjoin Middle Georgia.	2017-2021	\$40,000 annually	MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-3, O-2, O-5 LU: I-1, I-3, O-4
5	Review statewide plans and programs for local and regional application.	2017-2021	TBD	MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-2, O-1, O-5
6	Review local comprehensive plans and service delivery strategies.	2017-2021	TBD	DCA, MGRC	MGRC	IC: I-3, O-2, O-3 CF: I-2, I-4, I-5, I-6, I-8, I-11, O-4, O-7, O-8 LU: I-1, I-3, I-5, O-2, O-4, O-5

Key of Abbreviations	
AAA	Middle Georgia Area Agency on Aging
CGJDA	Central Georgia Joint Development Authority
CGRTA	Central Georgia Rail to Trail Association
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DCH	Georgia Department of Community Health
DHS	Georgia Department of Human Services
DNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
DOD	US Department of Defense
DOJ	US Department of Justice
DOL	Georgia Department of Labor
EDA	US Economic Development Administration
EPA	US Environmental Protection Agency
EPD	Environmental Protection Division, DNR
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FLRDA	Fall Line Regional Development Authority
GDEcD	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEFA	Georgia Environmental Finance Authority
GEMA	Georgia Emergency Management Agency
GIO	Georgia Geospatial Information Office
GPA	Georgia Ports Authority
GSBL	Georgia Small Business Lender
GTA	Georgia Technology Authority
HPD	Historic Preservation Division, DNR
LOWT	Lower Oconee Water Trail
MATS	Macon Area Transportation Study
MGC	Middle Georgia Consortium
MGCAC	Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition
MGEA	Middle Georgia Economic Alliance
MGRC	Middle Georgia Regional Commission
MGRDA	Middle Georgia Regional Development Authority
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OEA	Office of Economic Adjustment, DOD
OWTP	Ocmulgee Water Trail Partnership
RAFB	Robins Air Force Base
UGA	University of Georgia
USDA	US Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WRATS	Warner Robins Area Transportation Study

ONGOING PLAN EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Over the next five years, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will evaluate and monitor the Regional Plan to ensure that the Plan is being successfully implemented and is achieving intended results. Specific activities include:

- Perform Annual Performance Standard Reviews in conjunction with the Annual Regional Work Program update. These reviews are used primarily to determine if local governments have achieved the essential (minimum) standard, but will also be used to assess each local government's progress toward Plan implementation. Local governments who achieve the excellence standard will be formally recognized.
- Hold annual open house meeting to discuss and review Regional Work Program.
- Conduct Plan Implementation Meetings with all local governments to evaluate successes in local work programs and consistency with the Regional Plan.
- Complete annual Middle Georgia Regional Commission internal analysis and assessment of Plan effectiveness. Annually, in conjunction with the Regional Work Program update, Regional Commission staff will develop a Report of Accomplishments, whereby each activity is examined to determine current status (e.g. completed, underway, postponed, or cancelled).
- Continue to evaluate the regional plan on an annual basis to determine if changes and developments are consistent with the Regional Plan and strategies promoted therein. If necessary, identify solutions to common plan implementation impediments or amend the plan.
- Evaluate local comprehensive plans and regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies for consistency with the Regional Plan.
- Share Regional Work Program accomplishments with Regional Commission Council.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will provide the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an annual Evaluation and Monitoring Report that includes: a description of the monitoring activities and evaluation procedures undertaken over the course of the previous year, a synopsis of the results of the monitoring and evaluation process, and identification of any modifications or amendments needed to enhance the Plan's effectiveness resulting from the evaluation and monitoring findings.

Appendix A

Survey Results

The Middle Georgia Regional Survey was available on the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Website through December 2015 and January 2016. A total of 120 responses were received. The charts below detail the questions that were asked and answers that were received.

Section I – General Value Statements

1. It is important for Middle Georgia to have a unique character and a unique sense-of-place.		
Strongly Agree	75	62.5%
Agree	38	31.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

2. It is important to preserve green space and limit development that could harm the region's natural resources.		
Strongly Agree	68	56.7%
Agree	43	35.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

3. It is important to promote compact, mixed-use developments, including those that mirror traditional downtown areas.		
Strongly Agree	55	45.8%
Agree	43	35.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	18	15.0%
Disagree	2	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

4. It is important to regulate growth and development to help reduce traffic.		
Strongly Agree	48	40.0%
Agree	44	36.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	15	12.5%
Disagree	9	7.5%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3%

5. It is important to redevelop and improve blighted and vacant buildings.

Strongly Agree	93	77.5%
Agree	25	20.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	1	0.8%
Disagree	1	0.8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

6. It is important to have a variety of transportation alternatives, including walking, biking, and public transportation.

Strongly Agree	82	68.3%
Agree	27	22.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	10	8.3%
Disagree	1	0.8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

7. It is important to invest funding in workforce and job skills training throughout Middle Georgia.

Strongly Agree	83	69.2%
Agree	28	23.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	2	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

8. It is important to invest funding in public education within Middle Georgia.

Strongly Agree	81	67.5%
Agree	31	25.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	4	3.3%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

9. It is important to have a variety of housing types and options for people of all different incomes.

Strongly Agree	59	49.2%
Agree	49	40.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	5	4.2%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

10. It is important for community leaders to work together across city and county lines for the good of the region.

Strongly Agree	100	83.3%
Agree	18	15.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	1	0.8%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

Section II – Current Views

11. The quality of the economy in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	1	0.8%
Satisfied	38	31.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	21	17.5%
Dissatisfied	58	48.3%
Highly Dissatisfied	2	1.7%

12. The quality of housing in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	3	2.5%
Satisfied	51	42.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	30	25.0%
Dissatisfied	34	28.3%
Highly Dissatisfied	2	1.7%

13. The quality of the environment in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	5	4.2%
Satisfied	69	57.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	20	16.7%
Dissatisfied	23	19.2%
Highly Dissatisfied	3	2.5%

14. The quality of historic buildings and cultural sites in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	10	8.3%
Satisfied	66	55.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	24	20.0%
Dissatisfied	19	15.8%
Highly Dissatisfied	1	0.8%

15. The quality of public safety services (police, fire) in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	16	13.3%
Satisfied	84	70.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	7	5.8%
Dissatisfied	12	10.0%
Highly Dissatisfied	1	0.8%

16. The quality of public infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	3	2.5%
Satisfied	35	29.2%
No Opinion/Neutral	14	11.7%
Dissatisfied	61	50.8%
Highly Dissatisfied	7	5.8%

17. The quality of public transportation in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	3	2.5%
Satisfied	18	15.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	31	25.8%
Dissatisfied	46	38.3%
Highly Dissatisfied	22	18.3%

18. The quality of public schools in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	11	9.2%
Satisfied	21	17.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	20	16.7%
Dissatisfied	49	40.8%
Highly Dissatisfied	19	15.8%

19. The quality of workforce development services in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	5	4.2%
Satisfied	48	40.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	34	28.3%
Dissatisfied	31	25.8%
Highly Dissatisfied	2	1.7%

20. The quality of services for aging individuals in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	7	5.8%
Satisfied	37	30.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	48	40.0%
Dissatisfied	25	20.8%
Highly Dissatisfied	3	2.5%

21. The quality of intergovernmental coordination in Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	4	3.3%
Satisfied	26	21.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	39	32.5%
Dissatisfied	42	35.0%
Highly Dissatisfied	9	7.5%

22. The overall direction of Middle Georgia.

Highly Satisfied	1	0.8%
Satisfied	48	40.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	29	24.2%
Dissatisfied	38	31.7%
Highly Dissatisfied	4	3.3%

Section III – Action Principles

23. The local economy should be more diverse and less dependent on a few industries.

Strongly Agree	62	51.7%
Agree	52	43.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	5	4.2%
Disagree	1	0.8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

24. Local governments should work together to draw large-scale employers to the region.

Strongly Agree	67	55.8%
Agree	46	38.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	3	2.5%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

25. The region should actively seek those involved with the "maker culture" (a technology-based extension of the Do-It-Yourself culture).

Strongly Agree	37	30.8%
Agree	45	37.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	35	29.2%
Disagree	2	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

26. Large regional economic stakeholders (such as corporations, universities, etc.) should be engaged in community revitalization efforts.

Strongly Agree	65	54.2%
Agree	44	36.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

27. What additional recommendations do you have for economic development in Middle Georgia?

The smaller counties must cooperate with the larger cities, even if it does reduce some of their "power" so we can attract more investment in the area. Sometime we are competing between counties for the same industry when if we corporation between the municipalities we could land some larger companies that would benefit the whole area

Need to focus on asset-based community development and more planning done at the community level.

There should be more publicizing and broadcasting of available resources, funding, education, etc. to both employees and employers.

Section 8 housing in Macon should mirror Oglethorpe Homes and should be available in ALL areas of the community. If a developer wants to build housing in the Bass Rd. area or Zebulon Rd. area, I think a certain percentage of the units should be Sec. 8. If Middle Ga wants all its citizens to thrive, the ghettos must go, and we must live together as brothers and sisters regardless of one's skin color.

Use more private entities rather than government to help solve problems and provide services. Education, recreation, workforce development etc.

Stop using economic development to destroy established neighborhoods. A strong commitment to protecting the very places where people live, rather than how to entertain, move, and employ them, will make a region desirable. Everything else will fall into place. Perhaps this is a case where you need to focus on the trees rather than the forest.

To have a workforce that attracts businesses and industries, a strong, quality education is necessary for all citizens. The elementary and high schools need to be turning out people who businesses and industries want to hire.

27. What additional recommendations do you have for economic development in Middle Georgia?

Middle Ga should focus on bringing more corporate/white collar jobs to the area... There are so many colleges and universities that bring so many students to this area and after graduation they all flee to Atlanta or other cities because of lack of business or professional job opportunities.. Warehouse/Manufacturing is great but there is a big shortage of white-collar jobs for those who have degrees or desire more professional level work.

I would make it a priority to expand the runway at the Macon Airport to attract cargo air freight from the Atlanta area. Use our location and resources to attract industry that would produce jobs to keep our citizens in the middle Georgia area.

The Zebulon Rd corridor is in danger of being over developed to the detriment of existing stable neighborhoods. The Lofts on Zebulon are not needed and will bring a big traffic burden to this area. If approved by P&Z the rest of Zebulon Rd will fall like dominos. This land would be better used for senior housing. Not apartments. The R1AAA zoning needs to be preserved to prevent future blight.

There should be a focus on the outskirts of the region, as well as, the metro areas of Macon & Warner Robins.

Keep what you have and grow existing industry and assets

Regional co-operation. Consolidation of several counties to have one point of contact for development etc. We would be the envy of the state!

Programs to encourage, develop and assist truly small businesses. Break up government protected distribution networks (communications, alcoholic beverages, TV) Make cheaper transportation options safe and convenient.

A rail trail from Macon to Milledgeville would bring tourists and customers to businesses in Bibb, Jones and Baldwin counties. This is not about local kids riding bikes, but about bringing customers to local businesses. A 30 mile trail would be big enough to attract travelers from across the southeast.

Give prospects a good incentive package, need to attract more industries to Middle GA rather than them going to another city with a better incentive package.

Allow private corporations to grow and limit governmental restrictions. Preserve the historic nature of middle Georgia. Place governmental emphasis on roads, sewers, bridges and infrastructure. Limit welfare programs. Provide equal taxation for all citizens.

More for the youth - teenagers to do as far as activities, jobs, leisure safely. More restaurants and places for families to enjoy each other, like movie theaters, parks, museums, etc

The development of entertainment amenities and small businesses.

27. What additional recommendations do you have for economic development in Middle Georgia?

Middle Georgia must do everything possible to enhance Robins as the major economic driver in the community while preparing for future possibilities of closure. This means that any effort to create a logistics hub or any other centralized industry effort must include the base within the boundaries of service. Leaving the base out of the core strategic area sends a message to Federal policy makers that the base is not relevant. Closure of the base would impact the region negatively for decades!

Less surveys

Counties should not recruit businesses from their neighbors, give tax breaks, incentives, or tax abatements then call the relocated jobs "new".

Public officials should broaden their vision to work for policies and programs that will benefit the most people for the long-term.

More cottage industries and less reliance on global manufacturing.

Synchronized traffic lights. Strongly enforce litter laws. Have better public access to the ocmulgee.

We need to leverage our strengths - agriculture and a stable workforce = the opportunity for more and varied food processing and manufacturing. We don't need a 2nd "Atlanta" in middle GA - our strength should be in expansion of blue collar and manufacturing jobs.

more drug and gang law enforcement and better facilities geared to help people get off drugs and in jobs to be able to support themselves. better housing that is affordable for all income levels. jobs that pay a living wage as to reduce dependance on government programs.

Repair infrastructure OUTSIDE of Atlanta!

STOP THE SPRAWL!!!!!! STOP PUTTING DOWN MORE ASPHALT TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF BETTER TRANSPORTATION. ROUNDABOUTS, LIGHT RAIL, BIKING and PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH A BUFFER FROM TRAFFIC. READ THE GA DOT DESIGN GUIDES. READ the NACTO GUIDE. READ SMART GROWTH AMERICA. ATTEND the GA TRAIL SUMMIT.

Bike friendly

Road infrastructure needs to accommodate ALL users- that includes bicycles and pedestrians. Quit wasting shoulders with rumble strips. Encouraging new business brings more traffic, improve the roads first.

Middle Georgia needs to have better support for existing small businesses and provide resources to help those businesses expand and grow more jobs. These are the companies that have a bigger impact on our communities.

Quality of life! Pawn shops, check-cashing shops, gaming stores, liquor stores and fast-food restaurants are choking the progress and vitality from this area.

Agriculture is so important to the past and future of the middle GA economy. What can we do to support farms, and better educate students where their food and clothing comes from?

27. What additional recommendations do you have for economic development in Middle Georgia?

While Middle Georgia needs to broaden business/Jobs in the area we don't need to over develop and drive out the small town agriculture that is what originally brought people here and drove Middle Ga. WE DONT NEED TO BECOME METROPOLITAN AREA (Atlanta / Macon). We need to walk the line so while have good diverse Business / Job opportunities but not LOSE the small town feel.

Offer career training to support all businesses. Make these opportunities available to a variety of age classes in our area to help create a better future for people at all economic levels.

There is an idea about that (soon) FED-EX and UPS will be allowed the use of runways and infrastructure at RAFB for economic development. Many persons feel that they are being lied to by local politicians and the Ga.DNR in this property buy-up that is being conducted by the DNR. I feel that the persons doing the planning here should put "all information" in the public domain readily and freely accessible to all; HONESTY should be there for everyone to see, instead of a few big dogs gonna try to get rich on this thing. There are old folks such as us who are tired of being lied unto and taken advantage thereof!

Need to pursue the I-75 corridor for economic growth if all parties can work together.

Public should be kept abreast of on-going actions, not just the actions in Bibb and Houston Counties.

Middle Georgia needs to get large economic stakeholders interested in improving local housing. It is unethical for a large and profitable business to be okay with their employees commuting across counties to get to work every day because the housing market near the business' location is in shambles.

The Middle Georgia Region is a very diverse region from county to county. The more 'metro' areas of the region seem to have addressed or currently addressing the vast majority of survey items, it is the rural counties where governments may not be working together to draw new industries; no public transportation, less elderly programs, less diverse housing, no large corp/universities to be engaged in revitalization efforts or have the funding or possibly the desire to 'spruce' up their community to promote economic development.

TALK TO THE PEOPLE AND GET INPUT FOR THE COMMUNITY

27. What additional recommendations do you have for economic development in Middle Georgia?

In Bibb County, new houses and growth has been allowed to move very quickly from the downtown north of the city. At the same time, population has remained steady or fallen slightly. This leaves a huge housing surplus in some parts of the city (East Macon, for instance). The infrastructure and housing quality in this area is still very high in many places...I feel the city/county government could do more to promote this area while things are still good. Renters who usually rent apartments could be renting single-family homes in the area and have a better quality of life. I feel like a huge obstacle is a misguided or mistaken reputation for crime in East (and South) Macon when many places have few problems if any. This is outside of the responsibility of this commission, but I would LOVE it if the Ocmulgee Heritage site could become a National Park!

DO NOT RAISE THE SALES TAX TO 8% ... via the T-SPLOST. Let the private enterprise/business & individual citizen drive growth and a corresponding economic revitalization. Get off the small business folks with regulations and HIGH taxes & high utility costs. Let me, the private citizen, build the spaceship that will send the region into space (in other words, a great place to work, play & live!)

Make it clear to investors that there is actually two separate educational systems in Macon-Bibb County. One public and one private. Half the population is in private schools doing quite well, the other half of the population is in public schools and they are currently doing quite poor.

28. The region's mixed-income housing stock should be increased.

Strongly Agree	20	16.7%
Agree	45	37.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	36	30.0%
Disagree	14	11.7%
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2%

29. More housing options should be provided for elderly residents.

Strongly Agree	27	22.5%
Agree	54	45.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	34	28.3%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

30. Local governments should develop policies that promote infill and small-lot development to create more dense in-town neighborhoods.

Strongly Agree	23	19.2%
Agree	56	46.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	26	21.7%
Disagree	11	9.2%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3%

31. Vacant buildings in downtown areas should be converted to loft-style apartments.

Strongly Agree	22	18.3%
Agree	45	37.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	42	35.0%
Disagree	8	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5%

32. What additional recommendations do you have for improving housing in Middle Georgia?

Elderly housing options should be increased in downtown areas, where they can more easily get to the places they need to go.
While loft apartments are cool, they may not be appropriate for all vacant buildings. Each should be assessed for its highest-and-best use, possibly by local planners or a land bank/trust organization that may be able to take an ownership stake in the site.

Massive apartment building complexes should only be allowed in places designated. They are contributing to sprawl and the decay of neighborhoods as people move out of houses that are left empty and turn to blight.

Police neighborhoods and keep a high standard for existing structures. Emphasis on maintenance of homes and buildings, regulate number of cars and parking in natural areas (yards etc). No basketball goals over public streets. Make sure that street lights are burning and those that are not replaced quickly. The blight initiative has been a good one but needs to be expanded significantly.

Developers should be encouraged to use vacant buildings for whatever the community needs. Businesses, Loft style apartments are fine if needed but not over built hoping that occupants will come.

There needs to be more middle income housing, not just lower income and upscale housing (especially in Putnam County).

there is no market for growing downtown residential housing

The Dempsey as a Section 8 housing option is a misuse of an important downtown structure. should have a better balance of income types.

32. What additional recommendations do you have for improving housing in Middle Georgia?

Stream line building regulations and zoning regulations to encourage developers to do what they do best.

improve walking and bicycling conditions to make downtown businesses more accessible.

Allow private enterprise to determine building use and housing need. Government needs to stop forcing lower income housing into all areas.

Clean, inviting environments means that housing must be clean and presentable.

Rural parts of the region need new residential development. Incentives to encourage builders to reach out to rural communities would help those counties recruit new industry where workers are transferred in to the area. Elderly housing and housing for disabled individuals are needed in outlying areas so they are not forced to be moved away from family and communities in order to access needed services. Offering incentives, again, could encourage such development by minimizing the financial risk of the builders.

Something has to be done about abandoned mobile homes littering urban areas. A fee or trust fund should be set up to pay to clear this abandoned trailers.

Get community leaders onto the planning and zoning boards who care about the property value of existing buildings and neighborhoods, instead of real estate developers who only see profit when they convert a farm field into crappy subdivisions.

Section 8 housing in heart of the city need a plan.

Neighborhood revitalization is great - but the downtown area is a gem that has yet to be discovered. A small but vibrant urban residential climate could result in a better and more positive environment and an attractive cultural asset for the region.

more help for the elderly to keep their homes up to date, and abandoned homes should be torn down after being vacant for 6 months not years. More affordable senior living facilities in nice secure areas. Better neighborhoods for starter homes for families with children with safe streets and child friendly parks for families.

Any housing development should be done by private enterprise.

READ the HUD DOT EPA partnership of Sustainable Communities.

We need better quality/affordable rental properties. Not everyone wants to own their home or has the ability to keep up a house.

Hold owners of blighted property accountable for their neglect.

Invest in redevelopment of blighted areas and bring them up. Slow down development of Farm / Green areas. As the song says we don't need to "Pave Paradise and put up a Parking LOT".

32. What additional recommendations do you have for improving housing in Middle Georgia?

The problem is AFFORDABILITY!!!! We are in the housing business, we own an area that the city (of W/R) stopped development thereof, because we are considered "encroachment" to RAFB. We always did concern ourselves with being affordable to our tenants. And Yes!!! Jobs are needed badly to help develop the middle Ga. area. But affordability in housing has got to be #1.

I see that certain areas of Middle Georgia are seeing exponential growth (Bonaire for example) and that community development seems to be focused on those areas while the regions that are suffering from blight, abandoned buildings and dilapidation continue on that ruinous path. I feel that giving equal attention to the suffering areas can create not only a new sense of pride for the residents of those areas, but that young adults looking to become homeowners will be more likely to purchase the soundly-built older homes of these neighborhoods, breathing yet more new life into the area. As a young homeowner myself, I am surprised at the debt that some of my peers are willing to take on in order to buy a house far larger than they need for their family all in an effort to be in a "nice neighborhood". Why do the "nice neighborhoods" have to be in the newest and most expensive part of town? The best built homes and the most majestic magnolias and pecan trees reside in these older neighborhoods that are slipping into blight.

Larger communities within the region are at more of an advantage than the more rural communities, which I believe is primarily due to funding. Not only should downtown areas promote loft type apts for vacant buildings, but also housing for senior citizens that offer transportation and staff as affordable retirement housing

WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE WHAT THE PEOPLE NEED.

Recruitment of senior services that could help elderly people stay in their homes longer.

Also: make sure that culturally/historically important streets with lots of residents and foot traffic have adequate sidewalks (i.e. Vineville). Connectivity along these routes is terrible for pedestrians and bikers. This would help elderly people, people without cars, and people who want to travel in this areas by foot for exercise or recreation.

Watch out!!! What you may or could do can be negative to Robins AFB and the BRAC .. it will come sooner or later

As to 31 above, it is difficult to assess whether more loft style apartments are needed in downtown areas when (1) the downtown areas are not mentioned by name; (2) no idea of current or anticipated occupancy of "downtown" lofts; and (3) whether the "downtown" areas have enough in the way of entertainment, restaurants, employment, etc. to attract and retain renters or owners to live "downtown."

32. What additional recommendations do you have for improving housing in Middle Georgia?

To properly support the (30% vacant retail space) the Macon-Bibb Population has to increase by another 40,000. There are four ways to do this, 1. Build more lofts for a walkable city.

2. Build out the lots in the Old County area that already have the street, gas, water and sewer systems but no houses.

3. Tear down and/or rehab all the blighted housing (make some affordable housing).

4. Increase Tourist attractions, Lake Tobo, Amerson Park, Ocmulgee River Use, The Indian Mounds National Park designation and yes of course our Music Attractions, more music festivals.

33. My community should invest in additional public facilities and equipment for fire, police, and EMS services.

Strongly Agree	24	20.0%
Agree	56	46.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	25	20.8%
Disagree	14	11.7%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

34. Law enforcement agencies should adopt innovative technologies and policing strategies.

Strongly Agree	36	30.0%
Agree	63	52.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	18	15.0%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

35. New businesses and industries should be responsible for the cost of increased public services required when they locate within the region, potentially through development impact fees.

Strongly Agree	14	11.7%
Agree	49	40.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	36	30.0%
Disagree	18	15.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5%

36. Local governments should combine services when feasible.

Strongly Agree	56	46.7%
Agree	45	37.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	13	10.8%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

37. What additional recommendations do you have for improving community facilities or services in Middle Georgia?

I would streamline all government agencies to include privatization where feasible. Duplication of services within each county should be eliminated.

What kind of community facilities/services?

Business people build, development and grow a community when given a friendly environment in which to work.

There are benefits to providing new businesses and industries tax incentives to relocate here. Those incentives should have time limitations on them.

Take care of the public safety officials in the area by providing proper personnel and training along with equipment and resources.

Rural counties need improved community buildings, adult education facilities and local medical care facilities such as dental, vision and dialysis centers. Transportation to metro areas is expensive for poverty-challenged residents in the rural counties. Adults needing job skills training often don't have transportation to technical college classes in the metro areas. Funding to help these challenged cities and counties develop a local public facility is limited to annual CDBG competition where the numbers don't allow the communities to be competitive.

Police have access to billions of dollars and waste it on high-tech gadgets that are useless. Real economic development comes from helping existing neighborhoods build a sense of community. Senior centers, child care, playgrounds, greenways, and parks can achieve what drones and SWAT teams cannot.

Middle Georgia is probably the least safe place to walk or ride a bicycle. It's car or nothing. I still walk and ride - in fear of my life from vehicular traffic in many cases. We need better walking and bike lanes, paths.

READ the GMA's Hometown Connection

Voting should be MUCH easier for all citizens.

Impact fees are a good idea but perhaps TADs or special tax districts could help too.

The County should remain RURAL and let the Cities be CITIES.

Affordable public transportation that is convenient and reasonably priced.

The law enforcement agencies of Middle Georgia have avoided being the target of media scrutiny such as other agencies have experienced. I fully believe that the reason for this is in their training, the lifestyle of this community, and the extreme diversity of the region. With that being said, as a resident of the community I fully endorse additional funds being allocated to the training of those men and women tasked with keeping me and my family safe. Americans pay for passive security measures everyday in the form of home security systems, guard dogs, deadbolt locks, padlocks, vehicle alarms, and so many others. It seems only logical to me that it be equally as important to invest in our law enforcement and public safety employees.

37. What additional recommendations do you have for improving community facilities or services in Middle Georgia?

My community provides exceptionally services and there are talks of city and county combining services, which would allow even better services.

Those fire houses are REAL expensive...they do not need a Taj Mahal for a fire house. As was the dog pound just opened .. why such expense??!?!
 What about services for older adults????

Develop and IT Infrastructure that can handle the Internet.

38. New construction should be designed to imitate existing and historic buildings within the community.

Strongly Agree	23	19.2%
Agree	46	38.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	34	28.3%
Disagree	15	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

39. Historic buildings should be rehabilitated whenever possible.

Strongly Agree	60	50.0%
Agree	42	35.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	14	11.7%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

40. Local governments should take action to improve air quality within the Middle Georgia region.

Strongly Agree	43	35.8%
Agree	48	40.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	20	16.7%
Disagree	6	5.0%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5%

41. The Ocmulgee National Monument should be expanded to include the corridor along the Ocmulgee River between Macon and Hawkinsville.

Strongly Agree	48	40.0%
Agree	28	23.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	35	29.2%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3%

42. What additional recommendations do you have for improving natural and cultural resources in Middle Georgia?

Convert Plant Shearer from coal powered to nuclear powered.

More development of the river area would be something to consider. Combining all the museums under one authority with an arts district.

I'm all for it, but new construction and rehab of historic buildings can be very expensive

invest in Central Georgia Rail to Trail project connecting Macon's River Walk with Milledgeville. Expand downtown river walk to connect with Amerson river park

The Ocmulgee National Monument is a single venue in Bibb County. This one place could be connected to a three-county region by using the abandoned rail line that goes through Jones and Baldwin counties thereby creating a region-wide tourist destination.

A campaign to clean and clear the Ocmulgee River to allow recreational boating use should be undertaken by state and federal agencies with encouragement from regional governments. This would enhance the region as a whole and improve the case for a national park along the river from north of Macon to Hawkinsville. Currently, clean-up efforts are left to volunteers and non-profit groups such as the River Keepers. Resources are limited. The river is a natural resource for strong community growth.

Air quality? Look what Wilkinson County lost due to the EPD's placement of the air quality monitor on top of the Gordon Police Department. This air quality equipment was a sham to prevent Wilkinson County from further expanding Carbo. Also, the permit granted to PT Power stopped further progress in securing Carbo's Corporate Headquarters.

Provide long-term planning for integrating neighborhoods through connectivity, for example the Central Georgia Rail-to-Trail or the Ocmulgee National Park & Preserve Initiative. If more of our elected officials would visit neighborhoods in established, progressive, popular locations (Columbus, Athens, Augusta, etc.) they might see that communities come together around commonalities, not abandoned strip malls.

Walking biking trails

The corridor along the Ocmulgee is an opportunity that is just waiting for us to do - but it won't wait forever. Nobody likes these concepts until they get to start to use them - then they become "improved quality of life" things. Can we start?

ATTEND the GA TRAIL SUMMIT <http://georgiatrailsummit.com/>
Existing laws are sufficient to maintain good air quality.

42. What additional recommendations do you have for improving natural and cultural resources in Middle Georgia?

I think there is a fine line between historic preservation and intruding on a property owners rights (my family owns many historical buildings in a downtown). None of the statements can be answered with a yes or no, because it depends on the circumstance. Local governments should work with individuals but not dictates, common sense should prevail. However I do believe that local governments should be given the tools to deal with blight

Better marketing would help. Many people don't know what is available.

Air Quality will remain good as long as OVER DEVELOPMENT doesn't happen. Farms / Green spaces (hunting land, etc) needs to remain UNDEVELOPED..

The properties not being used by the Ocmulgee National Monument CURRENTLY should be RETURNED unto the Local Indian Nation's Peoples, whom were here first (was it not unfairly taken from them?)and then ALLOW THEM TO USE THEIR PROPERTY ANY WAY THAT THEY WISH!!!! WITHOUT ANY GOVERNMENTAL INFRINGEMENT!!!!

I would love to see a canoe/kayak ferry service between Macon and Hawkinsville. Many communities across the country have similar services for tubing down their rivers. I know that this is normally a privatized service, but it requires local government to kick it off.

Complete the Heritage Trail to extend to Ocmulgee National Monument. This would be awesome for bikers and runners (and increase visitation at the Monument)!

Our congressman (The Honorable A. Scott) is on the Ocmul Nat'l expansion. Just needs a broke US gov't to help pay for it. Don't see that happening but would love to expand it.

Turn the Macon-Bibb Train Station Building into a Gambling Casino with restaurants and variety shows to attract tourism, which means the bus station also must be moved.

43. People in Middle Georgia should be able to walk or bike to most destinations.

Strongly Agree	34	28.3%
Agree	41	34.2%
No Opinion/Neutral	27	22.5%
Disagree	15	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	3	2.5%

44. Additional public transportation should be provided in my community and across the region.

Strongly Agree	43	35.8%
Agree	47	39.2%
No Opinion/Neutral	15	12.5%
Disagree	10	8.3%
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2%

45. Dirt roads in Middle Georgia should be improved to pavement or gravel.

Strongly Agree	32	26.7%
Agree	39	32.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	35	29.2%
Disagree	10	8.3%
Strongly Disagree	4	3.3%

46. The Middle Georgia region should invest additional local money in the region's transportation network.

Strongly Agree	42	35.0%
Agree	49	40.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	16	13.3%
Disagree	11	9.2%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

47. What additional recommendations do you have for improving transportation in Middle Georgia?

Dirt roads are an issue for rural communities, particularly for residents who have children or other family members with medical conditions that may require frequent need for emergency services or trips to the ER. If/when rains muddy roads or washout drains (or others with 4 wheel drive trucks decide to tear up the roads), it can be difficult for people to leave their homes and access the services they need.

We need to work to get more money from the state to finance transportation. Atlanta seems to get preferential treatment, and we suffer down here in the rest of the state.

Governments work together instead of individually when considering public transportation.

Find a way to enforce speed limits and traffic lights. Too many drivers speeding through red lights.

47. What additional recommendations do you have for improving transportation in Middle Georgia?

Yes, I highly agree that middle Ga should make it a priority to develop the Middle Ga regional airport and extending the runway. It should be a regional effort as it will benefit the entire region. Also regional transportation plans for buses or light commuter rail these are amenities that will help capture the eye and draw developers and big industries to the area.

As stated earlier, the runway at the Macon Airport should be expanded to draw high paying jobs from the Atlanta area. The I-16/75 interchange has to be completed ASAP. A major road assessment should be done for a comprehensive plan for road expansion. Many major roads in Macon appear to be too small for the amount of traffic. Bass Road as an example. With the expansion of the runway, major corridors surrounding the airport should be studied and expanded where needed. Given our location in the state, expansion of rail from the port should be examined too.

what is the market for more public transportation? we need to improve the I-75/I-16 interchange

Transportation dollars should be used to convert abandoned CSX rail bed between Macon and Milledgeville. Get the Central Ga Rail To Trail project put on the state transportation improvement plan.

Use professional planners with a track record of success.

Develop separate transportation corridors for non-motorized transportation. (Central Georgia Rail Trail for example)

We should invest in bridges for long-term transportation needs. We have several bridges in poor shape. Failure of a bridge would be devastating to the local population and nearby businesses.

There are people living in many areas outside of the two major cities in this region. Putting all resources into public transportation disenfranchises the rural population. Resources should be fairly distributed between the city public services and rural transportation needs that include making roads accessible to school buses and emergency vehicles. Highway 96, coupled with I-16 and I-75, MUST be considered the boundary to any regional development. Limiting the scope of development to Macon only is both short-sighted and unfair to a large percentage of the region's population.

I do not and will not support another T-SPLOST. Wilkinson County was to be a donor county to Bibb. The only T-SPLOST projects presented were for the benefit of CARBO and Howard Sheppard Trucking. Why would we subsidize corporations and have new taxes imposed on our limited incomes? The GDOT received a billion dollar gift in July at the expense of local governments. Now the GDOT wants another billion dollars.

County bus services are not as expensive as they seem when compared to parking spaces, traffic congestion, and highway deaths.

Walking biking pathways connecting multiple cities and counties not on same roadways as vehicular traffic.

Not all dirt roads need paving.

47. What additional recommendations do you have for improving transportation in Middle Georgia?

Said it before - I'll say it here. Macon is one of the worst places to walk or ride a bicycle. Dangerous and poorly planned. I realize most folks don't walk or bike anywhere - but many don't because it is not practical on our roadways.

Train to Atlanta = MARTA extended down

BIKING and PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE WITH A BUFFER FROM TRAFFIC. LIGHT RAIL, ROUNDABOUTS. READ THE GA DOT DESIGN GUIDES. READ the NACTO GUIDE. READ SMART GROWTH AMERICA. ATTEND the GA TRAIL SUMMIT.

more bike paths

Bicycles need safe routes to school, work, shopping, and general travel. If the roads are safe to pedal, more people will get out and active, and quality of life and health will improve.

these questions should be answered differently depending on whether you live in a rural or urban community.
If financially feasible, a plan should be looked at that would/could cross county lines

Do what Houston. CTY has done to improve its roads. Each county should fund its own infrastructure

I support the TSPLOST. That is the fairest way to improve transportation in our region.

Bicycle-friendly communities are more prosperous and healthier communities! A win-win-win for citizens, visitors, and cities!

Let people living on the roads decide (some folks want dirt roads for a reason, keeps tourists out) NO Public transportation unless it is accomplished WITH OUT Tax Dollars (Totally funded by users).
Do agree there should be more bike / walking trails like from Perry / Kathleen/ Warner Robins (would be great to be able to do a long ride with out risking life and limb)

Local non-profits, churches, etc. should be engaged to utilize their vans and buses for community transportation through a grant.

I know the size of the Middle Georgia area and find it far-fetched to think that someone should be able to bike or walk across it. We have more pressing concerns for our money to go towards.
I do feel that increased public transportation could cut a lot of traffic during peak hours. I would take a bus to and from work if the service was available, reliable, and cost-effective. I love to save money as much as I care about the environment so I will take any opportunity available to kill those two birds with the same stone.

JUST NEED MORE TO GET JOB DOING.

A Riverside to downtown shuttle loop?

If you mean raising the sales tax to 8% (question 46) via the T-SPLOST, no way! \$270million for the 16/75 is way too much. That will cost \$300M...saw a study. Other means (cash) is avail for roads, etc. Our governor is raising \$1Billion, via a massive tax, so talk to him.

47. What additional recommendations do you have for improving transportation in Middle Georgia?

Fix the I-16 near exit 1

48. Farmlands and open space should be preserved in rural areas.

Strongly Agree	41	34.2%
Agree	49	40.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	24	20.0%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

49. Sprawl should be limited in rural areas.

Strongly Agree	35	29.2%
Agree	33	27.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	42	35.0%
Disagree	8	6.7%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

50. New buildings and services should be promoted in or near existing city centers.

Strongly Agree	38	31.7%
Agree	55	45.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	21	17.5%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

51. Mixed-use developments should be promoted to ensure adequate accessibility between residences, commercial services, and places of employment.

Strongly Agree	33	27.5%
Agree	62	51.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	21	17.5%
Disagree	3	2.5%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

52. What additional recommendations do you have for improving land use in Middle Georgia?

Create major incentives and provide some planning to make use of existing commercial developments and stop allowing more building that creates empty buildings and sprawl to continue.

52. What additional recommendations do you have for improving land use in Middle Georgia?

The greater good should be preferred over a few residents who are upset over a project. In today's society, being against everything seems to be the norm. Land use should be carefully considered but growth should not be stifled by a few loud voices. The builders and developers are economic engines. It has been my experience that few of these proposed developments actually impact property values of the opponents.

Do not build just for the sake of building. Preserve green space whenever possible. Do not crowd the downtown area or the outlying neighborhood areas. People will stop using areas where parking is limited and congestion is heavy.

Stop the development process of builders moving away from already developed areas, abandoning buildings and infrastructure and invading residential and rural areas to build new box stores.

Here again developers will develop where feasible if they have reasonable and friendly regulations and zoning.

A region is only as strong as it's weakest community. Bringing development out of the cities and into rural areas strengthens the entire region and makes it more attractive to industries that would locate here. For example, limited land in Bibb could be remedied by expanding services (ie water and sewer) across county lines into Twiggs, Wilkinson, Jones and Crawford counties. Housing density in metro Houston communities could be eased by expanding into Twiggs, Pulaski and Peach counties in areas adjacent to county lines. Development near county lines could be annexed into the city offering the services in order to bring in taxes to help pay for those services while allowing the rural counties to also benefit from the expanded tax base.

Land and building owners of blighted areas often have an inflated view of the value of their property. Form a consortium to buy blighted lands. Offer land owners a "condemned price" for their property. Offer to let them buy in to the consortium for some percentage above the condemned price. Use this land as a land pool for venture development. Worst case the land owners get a truer assessment of the value of their land as is. Best case they make a higher return if the consortium is more successful. It also puts them on the team wanting to see more development. And they are only investing with assets they already have.

Establish an Urban Growth Boundary based on a Comprehensive Land Development Plan and stick to it. Do not allow any more expansive expensive super-suburban developments while there are houses rotting empty in town. Do not let real estate jokers pretend that they can plan a better community- they have not done that in the last 50 years and they aren't able to do it now. (There are exceptions to that rule- developers who have seen ingrowth and redevelopment... sorry to have to rant, but Macon has been ruined by excessive outbuilding at the expense of the character of our historic neighborhoods.)

52. What additional recommendations do you have for improving land use in Middle Georgia?

all vacant buildings should be required to keep current upgrades and be occupied if possible after being vacant for one year the owner should have to tear down or get a tenant to keep cities from being run down and abandoned

READ and Implement <http://landuse.uga.edu/Documents/cocsrep.pdf>
Once again, you can not compare what Bibb County needs vs Putnam County

Develop a land conservancy. (Refer to Lancaster County or Bucks County, Pennsylvania for details)

The government is messing with private property rights TOO MUCH! ALREADY!

Warner Robins needs a downtown. We currently have three main roads traveling East/West and two main roads traveling North/South, but there is no city center. If one were to be established, it would stay. As things are, the city is continuing to grow outward from an undefined center.

CAN HAVE WALK TRAIL

Tax incentives for using existing/retrofitting old buildings?
This may sound crazy, but removing some of the traffic lights downtown Macon might be helpful. Sometimes it's easier to go up Riverside or zip up the interstate than traveling downtown because of red traffic lights. So frustrating when there is very little traffic downtown.

Mixed use is not wanted on Zebulon Rd ... talk to the folks upset with the recent zoning approval. So, watch out what is mixed.

Consolidate the Macon-Bibb County employees into the Government Center and sell the Personnel Building that houses the Macon-Bibb Human Resource Department and make it Lofts.

53. Local governments and businesses should partner with secondary schools, technical colleges, and universities to provide training to low-skill employees.

Strongly Agree	68	56.7%
Agree	41	34.2%
No Opinion/Neutral	5	4.2%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

54. Registered apprenticeship programs and on-the-job training should be expanded.

Strongly Agree	72	60.0%
Agree	42	35.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

55. Job training and transitional support for members of the armed forces who are leaving military service should be increased.

Strongly Agree	71	59.2%
Agree	34	28.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	15	12.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

56. What additional recommendations do you have for improving education and workforce development in Middle Georgia?

It would be great if we had apprentice programs and taught people a skill. I think it is important to be a plumber, or carpenter and we should look at those skills as important as engineering or some other college degree.

More charter schools, more discipline, more partnership opps between highschool and tech schools for training before kids graduate or drop out.

Central Georgia Tech is a huge resource for workforce development. For suggestions, the industries should be consulted to see what is needed and communicate to them that Middle Georgia is committed to giving them anything they need to succeed. I have seen other areas that have developed large industrial areas and built a training center in the middle to serve the needs of the occupants. The Baxter plant as an example. Central Georgia Tech now has the Charles Jones Advanced Technology center for training workers and is a huge asset for our area.

Encourage all college and technical education to train for the future. Investigate what businesses would come to Middle Georgia and their needs. "work ready" not yet.

Develop a program where a high school dropout is required to take training through technical education in an environment like boot camp in the military for say 2 years. Provide housing, food, clothing and a small stipend and require a part of each day be devoted to community service to include cleaning up our streets etc. The military draft saved the futures of many young men of my generation. Let's do it again on a local bases.

People should work for personal betterment. It should never be an entitlement or just given to people.

Put local adult learning centers in each county seat so that rural residents have equal access to the job skills training needed for employment in today's technical environment.

Upon retirement from the military, I received very little training on what I could expect after I retired from the army.

A clearinghouse for local community leaders who have needs that could be addressed by local schools.

free on the job training programs,with job placements in jobs to provide a living wage to support a family and get people off of assistance from the government.More jobs for people with disabilities.

56. What additional recommendations do you have for improving education and workforce development in Middle Georgia?

hire veterans!

PARTNER with 21st Century Partnership.

We need to reach the students in disadvantaged areas of our cities and counties. The challenge is to somehow make these students want an education. That is the key.

For the most part Middle Georgia is in good position with what exists right now. Maybe expand more job (trades) in High School. Not every student is destined for College.

Strengthen collaboration with Middle Georgia State University

I fully endorse any level of education pursued by any individual working in any given field. Whether we are speaking of a military vet enrolled in a pre-med program or a HVAC service technician taking classes to better understand networked thermostats, additional education will always make the members of our community sought-after assets in their respective industries and beyond.

I WILL TO SEE EVERYONE GET CHANCE TO IMPROVE THERE SKILL SO THEY CAN MAKE MORE MONEY.

Have the state income tax exempted from military retired pay and watch all kinds of highly skilled and still young troops, airmen, etc stay here! Many states exempt that retired pay but not GA. And, yes military folks (reserve/active/retired) should be a priority for working & living here

Unfortunate that the technical college system does not permit transfer of basic education credits into the university system.

57. Senior citizens should have the ability to "age-in-place" (to continue living a full life in the home of their choice).

Strongly Agree	56	46.7%
Agree	48	40.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	14	11.7%
Disagree	1	0.8%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

58. Organizations within the region should work together to expand community-based services for senior citizens.

Strongly Agree	51	42.5%
Agree	54	45.0%
No Opinion/Neutral	15	12.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

59. There is a need for increased counselling and advocacy services for senior citizens.

Strongly Agree	32	26.7%
Agree	43	35.8%
No Opinion/Neutral	39	32.5%
Disagree	5	4.2%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

60. Innovative methods should be explored and implemented to meet the needs of the senior population.

Strongly Agree	43	35.8%
Agree	53	44.2%
No Opinion/Neutral	21	17.5%
Disagree	2	1.7%
Strongly Disagree	1	0.8%

61. What additional recommendations do you have for improving aging services in Middle Georgia?

our population is getting older, and we need to be able to give seniors a way to be as independent as possible, I think visiting nurse and meals on wheels type programs will increase that ability and it will be cheaper than nursing homes

There should be stricter regulations placed on nursing homes

I am not very familiar with senior issues but having affordable housing appears to be a need. When seniors can not take care of a single family home, developments for seniors or high density subdivisions need to be available for rent or purchase. The new senior center appears to be a good step in the Macon area.

Mixed use developments for seniors in all sectors would be high on my priority list.

More Senior Living facilities

We should show more interest in our senior citizens.

Depression is one of the top concerns for seniors. With regional support, senior centers offer excellent programs to counter depression and loneliness. The centers need expanded support as the boomer population ages into increased need for these services.

Partner with the Macon-Middle Georgia Age Friendly Council

One of the nice things about middle GA is the mix of generations. We need to take care of our seniors because we want that infrastructure in place when we are there too!

more affordable housing for all income levels in safe protected areas, with senior friendly services

LOCAL CHURCHES Support their Senior members. Nothing to build, no one to hire.

61. What additional recommendations do you have for improving aging services in Middle Georgia?

Encourage/promote active lifestyle BEFORE old age, so that as we age, we can continue to be active.

We have a lot of services available that people don't know about. Letting seniors know about these services would be a big step toward helping them.

Question 58. Organization should not be Government Based (More Church / Non Profit type).

Pleased to see the needs of older adults being considered. Mental health counseling, including depression screenings, is extremely important. Revamping of current senior centers to create more recreational and social opportunities for older adults. Greater opportunities for educational opportunities (although seniors can attend most State colleges tuition free...the hassle to get admitted is burdensome). More opportunities for leisure based activities at a reasonable cost....there doesn't appear to be an adult education program whatsoever.

62. The region's collective buying power should be leveraged to decrease the cost of service delivery, particularly through local government contracting.

Strongly Agree	56	46.7%
Agree	40	33.3%
No Opinion/Neutral	15	12.5%
Disagree	7	5.8%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

63. Regional elected officials should communicate more openly with each other to find solutions to local and regional problems.

Strongly Agree	82	68.3%
Agree	32	26.7%
No Opinion/Neutral	6	5.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0%

64. Economic growth should be promoted regionally, regardless of the exact location where growth and development is to occur.

Strongly Agree	60	50.0%
Agree	39	32.5%
No Opinion/Neutral	11	9.2%
Disagree	7	5.8%
Strongly Disagree	2	1.7%

65. What additional recommendations do you have for improving intergovernmental coordination in Middle Georgia?

More counties should consider consolidation. It is working for Macon, and would be beneficial to others.

I think economic growth should be promoted regionally, this is very important regardless of the location where growth and development is to occur. I can't stress enough how vital this is.... Just look at the Atlanta Area for an example.. Most of the major companies are not located in Atlanta proper but are spread throughout the surrounding counties...Where the entire region benefits... The same should happen in MGA with Macon being the hub.

I'm not sure except just do it. There needs to be a truce on all the turf wars and get along for the betterment of all of Middle Georgia. United We Stand and Divided We Fall is true not just a nice saying.

More public forums all over the communities.

Merger of several counties and cities. One government!

Have an annual conference/public meeting where all city & county leaders come together and roundtable their issues in front of the public. Take questions from the audience. Do not duck inside closed quarters to decide difficult questions. Personally, I enjoy going to the planning & zoning meetings, but it's not available for everyone and it should be.

We are all in this together when it comes to competing for job producing business development and industrial development.

READ this article

<http://jacksonville.com/news/georgia/2015-06-02/story/waycross-warns-it-will-shut-water-and-sewer-pierce-county-unless-judge>

Communication is the answer. How to make that happen is the big question.

Consolidate Peach and Houston counties. These should never have been separated.

While intergovernmental coordination is need to a point we don't need to lose our community personality. I live in the county for a REASON. I have lived in city / neighborhood before and moved to county because that is the life style I wanted. I knew it would come with a cost (like Volunteer Fire Dept an Slower Police response) and having to drive 20 / 30 Min to a Store but that is what I wanted. The same holds true 99% of the folks who move / buy in county (if they don't they leave very soon).

65. What additional recommendations do you have for improving intergovernmental coordination in Middle Georgia?

If we were to appraise the value of a community in the same manner we would appraise the value of a home, the neighboring communities have a higher impact on the appraisal than the actual community in question has on itself. For this reason, Middle Georgia needs to come together to solve problems and create greatness. Middle Georgia is right in the middle of Savannah, Atlanta, and Columbia. I promise that the residents of those communities can tell you less about Middle Georgia than our residents can tell you about those three areas. That needs to change. Middle Georgia is a beautiful place full of beautiful people, but that needs to be known by those outside of this community.

NEED KEEP EVERY ONE INFORME OF WHAT GOING ON.

New leadership and term limits.

Section IV – Demographics

66. In which county is your primary residence located?

Baldwin County	10	8.3%
Crawford County	5	4.2%
Houston County	25	20.8%
Jones County	6	5.0%
Macon-Bibb County	31	25.8%
Monroe County	17	14.2%
Peach County	8	6.7%
Pulaski County	8	6.7%
Putnam County	2	1.7%
Twiggs County	2	1.7%
Wilkinson County	3	2.5%
Other*	3	2.5%

*Includes: Coffee, Laurens, and Upson counties

67. Which of the following best describes your age?

Under 18	0	0.0%
18-24	0	0.0%
25-34	9	7.5%
25-44	22	18.3%
45-54	29	24.2%
55-64	33	27.5%
65-74	23	19.2%
75 and Over	4	3.3%

68. Which of the following best describes your race?

White	105	87.5%
Black or African-American	10	8.3%
Asian-American or Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
Native American	0	0.0%
Multiracial	1	0.8%
Did Not Answer	4	3.3%

69. Would you describe yourself as of Hispanic or Latino origin?

Yes	2	1.7%
No	112	93.3%
Did Not Answer	6	5.0%

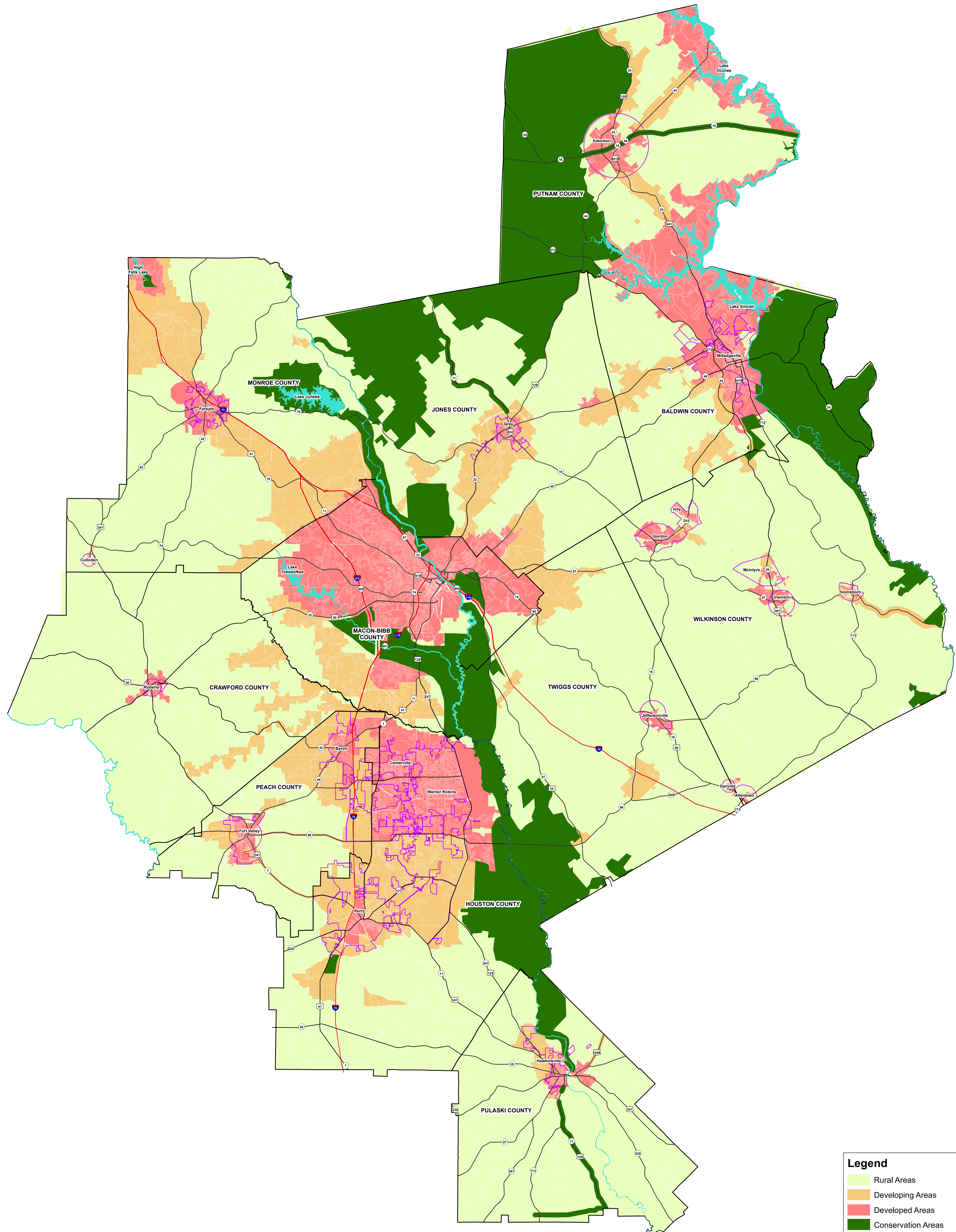
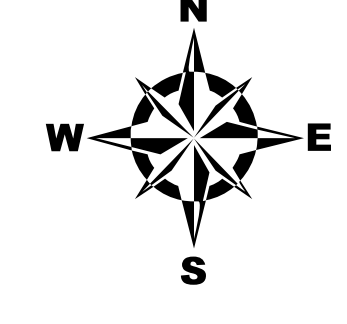
70. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?

8th Grade or less	0	0.0%
Some high school, no diploma	1	0.8%
High school graduate, diploma or equivalent	2	1.7%
Some college, no degree	18	15.0%
Associate degree	8	6.7%
Bachelor's degree	52	43.3%
Master's degree	28	23.3%
Professional degree	5	4.2%
Doctorate degree	5	4.2%
Did Not Answer	1	0.8%

Appendix B

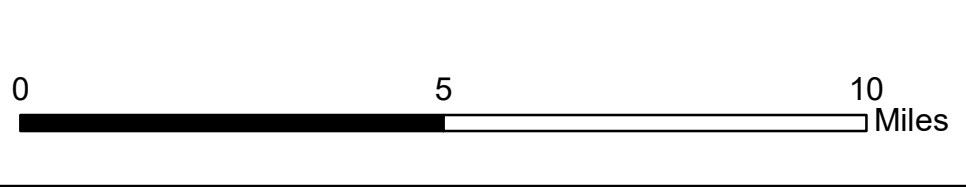
Maps

Middle Georgia Regional Plan: Regional Development Map

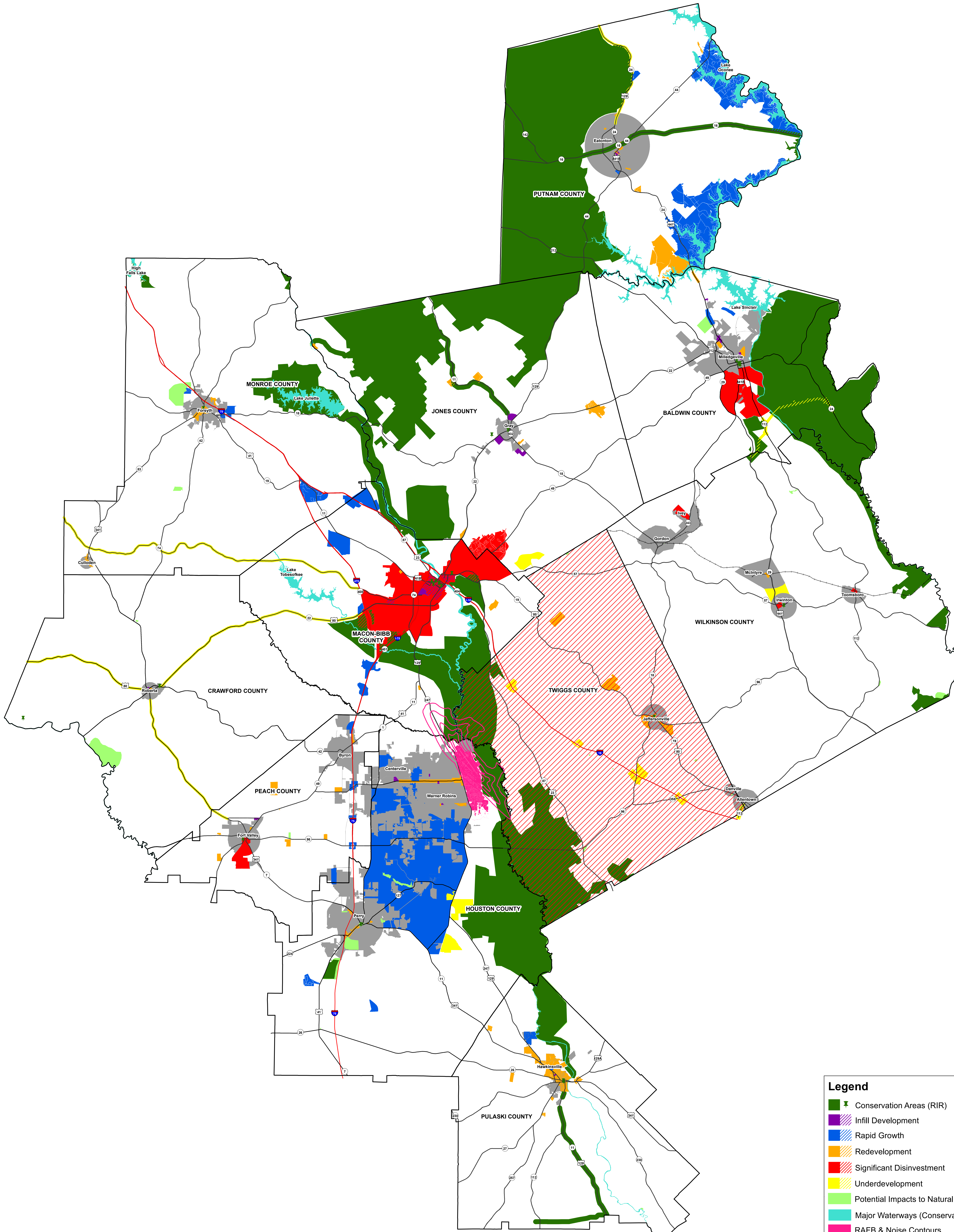
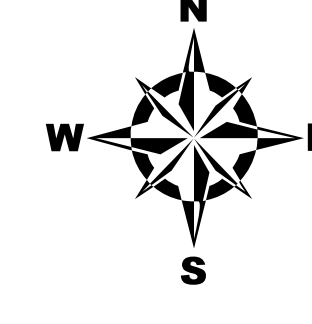


Legend

- Rural Areas
- Developing Areas
- Developed Areas
- Conservation Areas
- Major Waterways (Conservation)
- Highways
- Interstates
- City Limits
- County Boundary



Middle Georgia Regional Plan: Areas Requiring Special Attention



Legend

- Conservation Areas (RIR)
- Infill Development
- Rapid Growth
- Redevelopment
- Significant Disinvestment
- Underdevelopment
- Potential Impacts to Natural Resources
- Major Waterways (Conservation)
- RAFB & Noise Contours
- Highways
- Interstates
- Railroads
- City Limits
- County Boundary



RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION
To Adopt the 2016-2036 Plan for ... A Thriving Middle Georgia

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires every Regional Commission in the state to periodically update their Regional Plan in accordance with the state's Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning and Schedule for Regional Planning; and

WHEREAS, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission has completed technical work on updates to the Middle Georgia Regional Plan in accordance with the Regional Planning rules and procedures provided by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, a robust public input process was held throughout the development of the plan, including 18 stakeholder meetings across every county in the region, attended by more than 150 unique individuals; and

WHEREAS, regional stakeholders have identified a shared vision of a thriving Middle Georgia, a diverse region of opportunity, where people want to live, learn, work, and play; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Assessment, Stakeholder Involvement Program, and Regional Agenda have all been transmitted to, and subsequently accepted by, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED on the 12th day of May 2016, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council, meeting in regular session, hereby adopts the *2016-2036 Plan for ... A Thriving Middle Georgia*, to become effective immediately as a strategic planning and visioning document for the region.

Chairman: 
M.A. "Butch" Hall

Attest: 
Ralph Nix, Executive Director

Date: May 13, 2016