

# Middle Georgia Regional Plan

## 2011-2031

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## Regional Agenda

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# Middle Georgia Regional Plan 2011-2031

## Regional Agenda

Adopted, June 9, 2011  
by the Middle Georgia Regional Council

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# Executive Summary

## *Purpose*

The Middle Georgia Regional Agenda is truly a path to the region's future. It is the most important component of the larger Middle Georgia Regional Plan in that it contains the region's vision for the future; but more importantly, it offers an implementation program for achieving that vision. This document is intended to be utilized by regional leaders during their day-to-day decision-making as they work towards creating a growing, successful, and sustainable Middle Georgia.

## *The Middle Georgia Regional Plan*

The Middle Georgia Regional Plan was prepared in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (Chapter 110-12-6 – effective July 1, 2009) established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The Plan is made up of several components:

The Regional Assessment is the factual foundation upon which the rest of the Plan is built. The Assessment involved the collection and analysis of data and information pertaining to a number of regional planning factors. These factors included population, economic development, housing, community facilities and services, cultural and historic resources, intergovernmental coordination, and transportation. The Regional Assessment reflects the current state of the Middle Georgia region and served as a valuable guide for regional stakeholders and decision makers during the development of the Regional Agenda.

The Stakeholder Involvement Program outlines the various strategies and techniques utilized by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission in obtaining public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of

the Agenda portion of the Regional Plan. Due to the regional nature of the Plan and the diverse needs of the communities, which comprise the region, it is essential that a variety of outreach efforts are utilized to engage broad-based participation, ranging from regional policymakers to average citizens.

The Regional Agenda is the implementation agent of the Plan, and thus, its most critical part. The Regional Agenda contains the following sections:

- A Regional Vision which describes what the region desires to become. The Regional Vision includes a Vision Statement; a Regional Development Map illustrating desired future land use patterns as well as the Areas Requiring Special Attention identified in the Regional Assessment; and a Defining Narrative consisting of both a written and visual depiction of the types, forms, styles and patterns of development to be encouraged for each area identified on the map. The Defining Narrative also includes suggested implementation measures to achieve the desired development patterns.
- The final Regional Issues and Opportunities that emerged from both the Regional Assessment and the Stakeholder Involvement Program. Each issue and opportunity is addressed with corresponding implementation measures in the implementation portion of the Agenda.
- The Implementation Program is the strategy and action plan for achieving the Regional Vision by appropriately addressing each of the Regional Issues and Opportunities. In addition to identifying specific measures to be undertaken by regional leaders, it also provides guidance to developers, local government officials, and other public agencies. The Implementation Program contains guiding principles intended to offer *direc-*

tion to regional leaders for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision, as well as identification of performance standards to measure progress towards Plan implementation. The performance standards consist of a minimum standard and an excellence standard. A Regional Work Program is also included, whereby the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, as well as various outside agencies, will initiate specific strategies and activities geared towards implementation of the Regional Plan.

- The final section of the Regional Agenda contains various activities Middle Georgia Regional Commission staff will undertake towards Evaluation and Monitoring. These activities are designed to ensure the Regional Plan is successfully implemented and achieves desired results. Specific activities include conducting periodic Quality Community Objectives (QCO) Assessments and performing regional surveys.

## *The Planning Process*

In January 2011, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission received notification from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) that the Regional Assessment was complete and adequately addresses all required components.

On January 26, 2011, a regional public hearing was held at the Middle Georgia Regional Commission to present the draft Regional Agenda to interested regional stakeholders and the general public. At the hearing, the contents of the Agenda were reviewed and suggestions for additions or revisions were solicited. Modifications were made to the Regional Agenda as deemed appropriate.

In March 2011, the Council of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission approved the transmittal of the Middle Georgia Regional Agenda to the DCA for review of the Agenda's completeness and for its adequacy at addressing required components and developing an effective implementation program for achieving the Regional Vision. Additionally, DCA notified all interested parties of the availability of the Regional Agenda for review and comment.

In May 2011, DCA issued a Report of Findings and Recommendations from its review of the Middle Georgia Regional Agenda. Additionally, comments received during the interested parties review period were also provided to the Regional Commission for consideration.

The Middle Georgia Regional Agenda was formally adopted by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council in June 2011.

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## *Conclusion*

As previously noted, the purpose and intent of the Regional Assessment is to identify where the region stands today, and to provide a fact-based foundation upon which a path for the region's future is to be built. The completed Regional Agenda provides that path. Success for the region, however, is determined by how well the path is followed.

Moving forward towards successful implementation will require cooperation and collaboration between local governments, developers, state and federal agencies, as well as a variety of local interest groups and ordinary citizens. The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will continually encourage and facilitate cooperative efforts between these various entities. Additionally, the Regional Commission will provide ongoing technical assistance to the region's local governments in helping them to achieve performance standards and to successfully address the various issues and opportunities facing the region. The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will also promulgate the Regional Agenda by taking action to ensure that all local governments in the region are aware of the contents of the Agenda and by encouraging application of its vision and guiding principles into local planning initiatives.

The Middle Georgia Regional Agenda is readily available for public information. It can be viewed on the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's website at [www.middlegeorgiarc.org](http://www.middlegeorgiarc.org), or by contacting or visiting the Middle Georgia Regional Commission at 175 Emery Highway, Suite C, Macon, GA 31217.



## **Regional Vision**

# Regional Vision

Middle Georgia seeks to be a region where jobs and economic opportunities are in abundance; where natural settings are protected, enjoyed, and appreciated; where community facilities and services are readily available and first-rate; where cooperation and collaboration among communities and local officials is common-place; and where a high quality of life is enjoyed by all citizens. Middle Georgia in the year 2030 will:

- Preserve and maintain its many natural and cultural resources;
- Promote economic diversity;
- Provide outstanding community facilities and services;
- Ensure its roads and bridges are well-maintained;
- Offer transportation alternatives;
- Provide quality education;
- Ensure the availability of appropriate infrastructure;
- Promote managed, balanced, quality growth;
- Offer diverse and sufficient housing choices; and
- Demonstrate the value of cooperation and close intergovernmental coordination.



## Regional Development Patterns

The Regional Development Map, found in Appendix A, depicts desired future land use patterns for the region that directly correspond to the four general categories identified in the Regional Assessment; specifically:

**CONSERVATION** – Areas identified for potential preservation in order to protect important resources and/or environmentally sensitive areas of the region. Characterized by overlapping natural development constraints.

**RURAL** – Areas not projected to experience urbanization or require corresponding urban services over the 20-year planning period. Characterized by high levels of open space uses, such as agriculture, forestry, and recreation.

**DEVELOPED** – Areas exhibiting urban-type development and where services (water, sewer, etc.) are already in place. Future development potential within these areas is typically limited to infill development and redevelopment of existing uses.

**DEVELOPING** – Areas projected to become urbanized and require the provision of urban services in the next 20 years. This classification often reflects logical extensions of existing developed areas.

Additionally, the Regional Development Map includes the Areas Requiring Special Attention determined during the Regional Assessment, all of which were further analyzed and refined during the stakeholder involvement process. A separate map depicting just the Areas Requiring Special Attention (see Appendix A) is included for illustrative purposes. Specific strategies for managing the Areas Requiring Special Attention are identified in the defining narrative for each.

It is also important to note that all of the areas identified on the Regionally Important Resources (RIR) map, as contained in the Middle Georgia Regionally Important Resources Plan, are also considered Areas Requiring Special Attention and are depicted as such on the Areas Requiring Special Attention map. Specific policies and protection measures as well as appropriate development practices related to planning and decisions that affect RIRs are detailed in the RIR Plan.



# *Defining Narrative - Areas Requiring Special Attention*

The Regional Development Map, shown in Appendix A, illustrates Specific Areas of Special Attention within the Middle Georgia region. The Department of Community Affairs has set forth broad categories of Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA). To further enhance the Regional Vision of Middle Georgia, these broad ARSA categories have been delineated into more specific segments within the region. A defining narrative for each of these segments includes:

- List of Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in the area;
- Descriptions/Illustrations of Development Patterns that outline types, forms, and styles and patterns of development to be encouraged in the area;
- Specific Land Uses; and
- Implementation Measures to achieve desired development patterns.

Within the Middle Georgia Region, the Areas Requiring Special Attention are as follows:

## **Regionally Important Resources**

### **Areas of Significant Natural Resources**

- Green Infrastructure / River Trails

### **Areas of Rapid Development**

- Areas Around Lakes (Oconee and Sinclair)
- Suburban Area (Northwest Monroe County / Central Houston County - Area between the City of Perry and the City of Warner Robins)
- Highway 80 from I-475 to Bibb / Crawford border
- Highway 129 / 44 from Eatonton City Limits to Morgan County
- Highway 44 from Eatonton City Limits to Oconee / Greene County

### **Areas in Need of Redevelopment**

- Commercial Redevelopment Areas
- Regional Center
- Developing Corridors

### **Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities**

- Highway 247 Connector / Watson Boulevard
- Eisenhower Parkway

### **Military Installation**

- Robins Air Force Base and Surrounding Area



## Regionally Important Resources

In 2009, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission completed and adopted a Regionally Important Resources Plan (RIR) and map. The RIR plan is organized into three broad categories (Parks and Forestry, Heritage, and Water Resource) with specific resources identified in each category, all of which are depicted on the RIR Map. State Vital Areas and Critical Protection Areas, as identified by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, located within the Middle Georgia region, are included on the RIR Map; as are any natural or cultural resource areas in the region that already have preservation mechanisms in place (State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas, National Forests, etc.). These resources serve to help form a regional green infrastructure network as depicted on the RIR Map. All RIRs as reflected on the Map in Appendix A are Areas Requiring Special Attention.

### Quality Community Objectives

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

**HERITAGE PRESERVATION** - The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

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



# Regionally Important Resources

## Development Patterns

The RIR Plan provides specific Appropriate Development Practices and General Policies and Protection Measures that specifically pertain to each of the three resource areas: parks and forestry, heritage and water.

## Specific Types of Land Uses

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

## Implementation Measures

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will actively promulgate the plan in an effort to coordinate activities and planning of local governments, state agencies, land trusts, and conservation or environmental advocacy groups toward protection and management of the identified RIRs. Specifically, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will work with and encourage each of these stakeholders to coordinate their activities to foster protection of the RIRs.

Additionally, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will encourage local governments in the region to adopt appropriate protection measures, policies, and enhancement activities that will promote protection of the region's important resources. The Regional Commission will also encourage local governments to include the areas on the RIR Map as conservation areas in their respective local comprehensive plans and will review and evaluate local comprehensive plans for consistency with the RIR Plan.

Finally, the listing of best practices to be considered by developers when designing new developments in close proximity to RIRs, will be used by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission when reviewing all Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) proposed to be located within one (1) mile of any area included on the RIR Map. The DRIs will be reviewed for consistency with the recommended development standards.



# Areas of Significant Natural Resources

The Middle Georgia region has an abundance of natural resources, many of which are Regionally Important Resources (RIR). As stated above, the RIR Plan includes numerous parks, forestry lands, bodies of water and other significant regional natural resources. To minimize duplication, the Areas of Significant Natural Resources section focuses on Green Infrastructure and River Trails.

Green Infrastructure and River Trails are primarily natural lands and environmentally sensitive areas not suitable for development (e.g. scenic views, coast, steep slopes, flood plains, wetlands, watersheds, wildlife management areas) which assist with stormwater management, promotes environmental protection, and provides a higher quality of life for area residents. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs defines Green Infrastructure as:

*Areas of protected open space that follows natural and man-made linear features for recreation, transportation and conservation purposes and links ecological, cultural and recreational amenities. Greenways can provide safe, efficient pedestrian linkages and at the same time give users an opportunity to enjoy the natural environment.*

Within the Middle Georgia Region a number of communities have recognized the importance of connected networks of green infrastructure and river trails, examples of these initiatives include Macon's Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, the Hawkinsville-Pulaski Riverwalk, Milledgeville's Oconee River Greenway, and the Ocmulgee Blueway (from Bibb to Twiggs County). The green infrastructure and River Trail initiatives in Middle Georgia are gaining momentum at the local level; greater integration of efforts, including land-use planning on a regional level, should be fostered.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

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



# Areas of Significant Natural Resources

## Development Patterns

- Very large minimum lot size requirements (25+ acres) to limit development density and protect farmland and rural character.
- Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas by setting them aside as public parks, trails, or greenbelts.
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Maintain natural, rural character and protect environmentally sensitive areas by:
  - Promoting use of conservation easements.
  - Widening roadways in these areas only when absolutely necessary.
  - Carefully designing the roadway alterations to minimize visual impact.
  - Promoting these areas as passive-use tourism and recreation destinations.
- Create these linkages by:
  - Linking local greenspaces, rivers, and other multi-use trails into a pleasant network of regional greenways.
  - Setting aside land for pedestrian and bicycle connections between schools, churches, recreation areas, city centers, residential neighborhoods, and commercial areas.
  - Designing greenways to serve as alternate transportation networks, accommodating commuting to work or shopping as well as recreational biking, skateboarding, walking, and jogging.



Figure 1



Figure 2

# Areas of Significant Natural Resources

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Trails, Greenways, Blueways
- Passive Recreation
- Parks and Nature Preserves
- Agricultural Working Lands
- Natural, Cultural, and Historic Parks and Sites
- Wildlife Management Areas
- Low-Density Residential

## Implementation Measures

- Establish networks of greenspace and blueway trails and infrastructure to provide maximum connectivity and greater use as recreational and travel routes.
- Enact DCA Model Codes for:
  - Scenic Corridor Overlay Districts – Protect scenic views by requiring land uses to complement rather than detract from scenic experience.
  - Rural/Suburban Arterial Corridor Overlay District – Establish an amenity zone adjacent to arterial corridors to provide for sidewalks and other enhancements and to manage development so as to avoid a strip commercial pattern.
  - Bicycle Facility Specifications
- Encourage the use of Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) to protect and preserve natural, historic, and ecologically sensitive areas.<sup>1</sup>
- When development does occur, encourage low-density, low-impact, compatible development that uses context-sensitive design practices.

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<sup>1</sup> TDR: Enables landowners in an area planned to remain as open space to sell their property development rights for use in other “receiving” areas of the community where higher density development can be accommodated. Purchasing these additional development rights enables developers to build at higher density than would otherwise be allowed in the “receiving” areas.



# Areas of Rapid Development

## AREAS AROUND THE LAKES

Lake Sinclair and Lake Oconee, in Baldwin and Putnam Counties, continue to be destinations for locals and visitors alike. The Lakes Area is a unique area because of its geography and natural resources with a high percentage of seasonal residents, vacation homes, and retirees. Lake Oconee, in particular, has experienced significant growth and development over the past five years. While this development has slowed during the economic downturn, it is anticipated that the Lakes Areas in Baldwin and Putnam Counties will continue to expand.

Development patterns vary in this area of the region; however, there are three predominate growth patterns emerging: large lot suburban-type residential, developing traditional neighborhoods, and town centers.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

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

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (BIKE/PED)** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

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



# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

**Suburban Residential:** Area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred or are likely to occur (due to availability of water and sewer service). Characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high degree of open space, high-to-moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)

Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform to traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles. Promote moderate density, TND-style residential subdivisions by:

- Creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small-scale commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
  - Enhancing Connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections to retail/commercial services.
  - Encouraging compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
  - Permitting accessory housing units, or new well-designed, similarly scaled infill multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.
  - Mixing of housing types and styles to create character, neighborhood diversity, and allow for varying densities and prices in the same neighborhood (i.e. single-family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments).
- Employing Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.
  - Incorporating traffic-calming measures to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
  - Adding neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhoods.
  - Encouraging new development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, and pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
  - Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.
  - Integrating appropriate mixed-use and/or housing development with new school construction to increase walkability and reduce trip generation.
  - Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas.



Figure 3

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

**Developing Traditional Neighborhood:** A neighborhood having relatively well-maintained housing, possessing a distinct identity through architectural style, lot and street design, and higher rates of home-ownership.

Community neighborhood with characteristics such as high degree of pedestrian orientation, sidewalks, street trees, and street furniture; on-street parking; small, regular lots; limited open space; buildings close to or at the front property line; predominance of alleys; low degree of building separation; neighborhood-scale businesses scattered throughout the area. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs).

- Compact site design.
- Connected street pattern.
- Mixed use zoning that allows different types of uses (such as housing, shopping, and offices) to locate within the same district, provided these uses are reasonably related and compatible.
- Traffic-calming measures to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Strong pedestrian and bicycle connections.



Figure 4



Figure 5

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

**Town Centers:** Often contain a community focal point and a high degree of pedestrian orientation with sidewalks, street trees and pedestrian amenities. Buildings situated close together and are oriented at the property line and have a mix of uses within them, with residential on the upper floors. Alleys and on street parking are also predominate. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)

- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites, focusing on those areas closer in to the center of the community that have existing infrastructure in place.
- Locate buildings and structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making the corridor more attractive and more pedestrian-friendly.
- Incorporate traffic-calming measures; sidewalks, street trees, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability and slow traffic within existing neighborhoods.
- Enhance Connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections to retail/commercial services.
- Promote building designs that are compatible to regional character and compliments surrounding uses (ex: breaking up the façade of a big box store to look like a collection of small stores).
- Design new developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses, and community facilities at a small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.
- Locate higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads, and single-family detached housing elsewhere in the neighborhood.



Figure 6

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Specific Types of Land Use

- Suburban Residential
  - Variety of housing types (single-family, two-family, multi-family)
  - Recreation/Parks/Open Spaces
- Developing Traditional Neighborhoods
  - Variety of housing types (single-family, two-family, multi-family)
  - Small-scale neighborhood commercial (corner stores, restaurants, etc.)
  - Light commercial business and retail
  - Small-scale lodging and bed and breakfast inns
  - Recreation/Parks/Open Spaces
- Town Centers
  - Commercial business and retail
  - Parks and open spaces
  - Mix of housing and commercial uses
  - Range of housing types and price points

## Implementation Measures

- Promote creative design for higher density and ensure zoning codes allow for mixed use type of development (i.e. does not separate commercial, residential, and retail uses in every district and provides for flexible parking and street design standards).
- Allow neo-traditional development “by right” to ease process for developers and encourage this type of development.
- Balance bicycle and pedestrian needs and safety with automobile convenience through the use of design standards and guidelines.
- Context sensitive design to plan roads that takes into account compatibility, livability, sense of place, urban design, cost and environmental impacts while meeting transportation goals of safety, efficiency, capacity, and maintenance.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus redevelopment efforts (include: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements).
- Promote infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites over development of new Greenfield sites.
- Establish traffic calming, where applicable, in residential neighborhoods and at connectivity points between residential and commercial areas to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Office and housing linkages.



## *Areas of Rapid Development*

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- Adopt landscaping guidelines and Tree ordinances to:
  - Encourage greening of commercial areas;
  - Mitigate building and parking lot impact (i.e. heat islands);
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists;
  - Promote the creation of pocket parks;
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities; and
  - Add aesthetic character.
- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact development, town centers, Complete Streets, etc.



# Areas of Rapid Development

## SUBURBAN AREAS

There are two primary areas within the Middle Georgia Region that can be considered rapidly developing Suburban Areas.

- Northwest Monroe County
- Central Houston County (area between the City of Perry and the City of Warner Robins)

Northwest Monroe County. Monroe County is located between Atlanta and Macon and is bisected by Interstate 75. The presence of the Georgia Department of Corrections and being within commuting distance to Atlanta is increasing Monroe County's desirability as a place to live for those working in Atlanta. Although residential growth has slowed over the past few years, the northern portion of Monroe County has a number of recently constructed residential subdivisions. While the economy has put further development in a holding pattern at present, it is anticipated that as growth continues to move south of Atlanta that northern Monroe County will continue to be a desirable location.

Central Houston County (area between the City of Perry and the City of Warner Robins). Houston County is one of the fastest growing counties in the state as evidenced by the rapid residential development continuing to occur between Russell Parkway in the City of Warner Robins to Highway 96 and South to the City of Perry. This continued development places a strain on the surrounding road network and on the limited arterial network serving major employment centers such as Robins Air Force Base. The area is located along a major groundwater aquifer, and residences are predominately served by private sewer systems (septic tanks). A future potential need is the provision of public sewer service to the area.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

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

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

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



# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

**Suburban Residential:** Area where typical types of suburban residential subdivision development have occurred or are likely to occur (due to availability of water and sewer service). Characterized by low pedestrian orientation, little or no transit, high degree of open space, high-to-moderate degree of building separation, predominantly residential with scattered civic buildings and varied street patterns, often curvilinear. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)

Foster retrofitting of these areas to better conform to traditional neighborhood development (TND) principles. Promote moderate density, TND-style residential subdivisions by:

- Creating neighborhood focal points by locating schools, community centers, or well-designed small-scale commercial activity centers at suitable locations within walking distance of residences.
  - Enhancing Connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections to retail/commercial services.
  - Encouraging compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.
  - Permitting accessory housing units, or new well-designed, similarly scaled infill multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.
  - Mixing of housing types and styles to create character, neighborhood diversity, and to allow for varying densities and prices in the same neighborhood (i.e. single-family homes, town homes, live/work units, lofts, over-the-shop, and apartments).
- Employing Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.
  - Incorporating traffic-calming measures to increase safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
  - Adding neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhoods.
  - Encouraging new development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, and pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
  - Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.
  - Integrating appropriate mixed-use and/or housing development with new school construction to increase walkability and reduce trip generation.
  - Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas.



Figure 7



Figure 8

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Variety of Housing Sizes and Types
- Mixed Use Trails
- Open Space
- Parks and Recreational
- Small Scale Neighborhood Commercial
- Schools

## Implementation Measures

- Incorporate traffic-calming measures; sidewalks, street trees, and increased street interconnections to improve walk-ability and slow traffic within existing neighborhoods.
- Establish connectivity to bike routes, paths, greenway trails.
- Employ Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.
- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact development, town centers, Complete Streets, etc.
- Review existing codes, standards, and guidelines to ensure they allow for desired development patterns, i.e.:
  - Allow neo-traditional development “by right” to ease process for developers and encourage this type of development.
  - Permit accessory housing units, or new well-designed, similarly scaled infill multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.
- Adopt landscaping guidelines and Tree Ordinances to:
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists;
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities; and
  - Add aesthetic character.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus on retrofitting conventional subdivisions to provide greater connectivity and amenities, such as adding small neighborhood commercial areas and linkages between existing residential and commercial areas.

HIGHWAY 80 - FROM I-475 TO BIBB/CRAWFORD BORDER



## Areas of Rapid Development

The area of Highway 80 west of I-475 area is partially developed. The majority of commercial development on Highway 80 is located on the east side of I-475 (Eisenhower Parkway). The west side of Highway 80 includes a couple of older budget hotel/motels, a gas station, and a couple of fast food restaurants. The largest tenants along this corridor are Goodwill Industries and Macon State College. Residential subdivisions, a cross-roads community (Lizella), and forested areas comprise the remainder of the road between Macon State/Goodwill and the Crawford County border. Beginning at I-475 and traveling west, there is a very clear transition from commercial to institutional to residential to rural.

### Quality Community Objectives

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

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

**APPROPRIATE BUSINESS** - The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the

community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

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



# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

- Complete Streets – design and operate roadways with all consideration for users. Incorporate facilities and connections to allow for safe bicycle and pedestrian usage and access to retail/commercial services and other destinations.
- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes and landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.
- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Minimize visual clutter along roadways by placing restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses; use of landscaped tree islands and medians to break up large expanses of paved parking.
- Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.
- Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers and existing Greyfields in lieu of new construction further down the strip to convert vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites, focusing on those areas closer in to the center of the community that have existing infrastructure in place.

- Promote building designs that are compatible to regional character and compliments surrounding uses (ex: breaking up the façade of a big box store to look like a collection of small stores).
- Focus on redeveloping abandoned commercial centers and Greyfields first rather than moving farther down the strip to construct new development.
- Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources

Greyfield: Before



Greyfield: After



Figure 9

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Commercial (office and retail)
- Mixed Use
- Residential (various types and price points)
- Mixed Use Trails/Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- Hotels
- Institutional
- Town Centers
- Recreational/Parks/Open Space

## Implementation Measures

- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact and mixed use development, town centers, Complete Streets, alternatives to big box designs, etc.
- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Employ Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces
- Design new developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.
- Enhance connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections to retail/commercial services, parks, and greenway trails.
- Adopt street, parking, and landscaping guidelines to:
  - Encourage greening of commercial areas;
  - Promote traffic calming;
  - Allow for shared use of parking spaces;
  - Mitigate building and parking lot impact (i.e. heat islands);
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists;
  - Mitigate stormwater runoff;
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities; and
  - Add aesthetic character.



## Areas of Rapid Development

### HIGHWAY 129/44 - FROM EATONTON CITY LIMITS TO MORGAN COUNTY

The Highway 129/44 corridor between the Eatonton City Limits to Morgan County is being developed with institutional, residential, and commercial uses. The road is primarily a scenic rural road with forests and agricultural fields. The newly constructed Pulaski County High School is situated along this road, and there are plans to develop the area adjacent to the High School as an office park.

#### Quality Community Objectives

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

**EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS** - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.



# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Landscaping raised medians separating traffic lanes and landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways and mixed-use trails.
- Establishing access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.
- Minimizing visual clutter along roadways by placing restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Encouraging new residential development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
- Integrating appropriate mixed-use and/or housing development with new school construction to increase walkability and reduce trip generation.
- Establishing connectivity to bike routes, paths, greenway trails.
- Employing Conservation Subdivision methods and promoting cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.

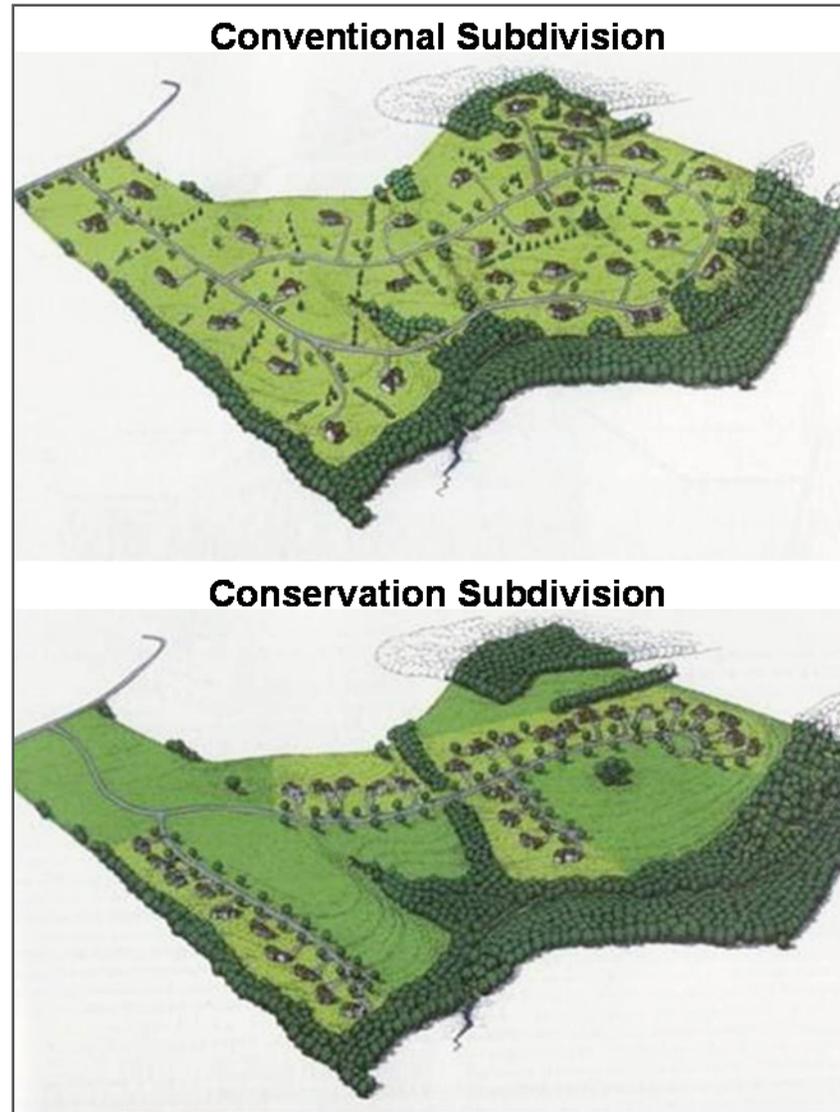


Figure 10

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Institutional
- Commercial (office park, retail, general office)
- Recreational/Parks/Open Space

## Implementation Measures

- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Consider establishing more stringent sign regulations and standards to include provisions for billboards, to minimize visual clutter along roadways, (ex. Sign Control for Rural Corridors, DCA Model Code).
- Adopt street, parking, and landscaping guidelines and tree ordinances to:
  - Encourage greening of commercial areas;
  - Promote traffic calming;
  - Allow for shared use of parking spaces;
  - Mitigate building and parking lot impact (i.e. heat islands);
  - Promote the creation of pocket parks;
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists;
  - Mitigate stormwater runoff;
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities; and
  - Add aesthetic character.
- Cluster high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Undertake and implement a Corridor Plan to provide for balanced development and protection of agricultural uses, incorporating features such as agricultural buffers and context sensitive design.
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes and landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways and multi-use trails.
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites, focusing on those areas closer in to the center of the community that have existing infrastructure in place.
- Promote building designs that are compatible to regional character and compliments surrounding uses (ex: breaking up the façade of a big box store to look like a collection of small stores).
- Redevelop abandoned commercial centers and Greyfields first rather than moving farther down the strip to construct new development in Greenfields.



# Areas of Rapid Development

## HIGHWAY 44 - FROM EATONTON CITY LIMITS TO OCONEE/GREENE COUNTY

The portion of Highway 44 between the Eatonton City Limits and Oconee County is increasingly being developed. Currently, commercial development is concentrated around the City of Eatonton and the Harmony Road/Highway 44 intersection. The areas between these two primary development nodes are highly agricultural with some residential homes. As the dairy capital of Georgia, the City of Eatonton and Pulaski County will need to plan for future growth to ensure a continued balance between the competing interests of commercialization and agricultural tradition.

### Quality Community Objectives

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

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

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

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



# Areas of Rapid Development

## Development Patterns

- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes and landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways and mixed-use trails.
- Establishing access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Using infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources.
- Minimizing visual clutter along roadways by placing restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards.
- Establishing connectivity to bike routes, paths, greenway trails.

- Employing Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.
- Enhancing Connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian and bike connections to retail/commercial services.
- Encouraging compatible architecture styles that maintain the regional character, and do not include “franchise” or “corporate” architecture.



Figure 11



Figure 12

# Areas of Rapid Development

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Town Centers
- Traditional Neighborhoods
- Commercial
- Institutional
- Recreational/Parks/Open Space

## Implementation Measures

- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus development efforts (including: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements).
- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact and mixed use development, town centers, Complete Streets, alternatives to big box designs, etc.
- Enhance Connectivity through design, i.e. Complete Streets: balance vehicular, pedestrian, and bike connections to retail/commercial services, parks, and greenway trails.
- Adopt street, parking, and landscaping guidelines to:
  - Encourage greening of commercial areas,
  - Promote traffic calming,
  - Allow for shared use of parking spaces,
  - Mitigate building and parking lot impact (i.e. heat islands),
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists,
  - Mitigate stormwater runoff,
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities, and
  - Add aesthetic character.
- Employ Conservation Subdivision methods and promote cluster development to allow for greater expanses of open spaces.
- Design new developments that contain a mix of residential, commercial uses and community facilities at small enough scale and proximity to encourage walking between destinations.
- Consider establishing more stringent sign regulations and standards to include provisions for billboards, to minimize visual clutter along roadways, (ex. Sign Control for Rural Corridors, DCA Model Code).
- Review existing codes, standards and guidelines to ensure they allow for desired development patterns, i.e.:
  - Allow neo-traditional development “by right” to ease process for developers and encourage this type of development.
  - Permit accessory housing units, or new well-designed, similarly scaled infill multifamily residences to increase neighborhood density and income diversity.
- Promote infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites over development of new Greenfield sites.
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities wherever possible, including design solutions to address usability and safety (i.e. landscape buffers).
- Undertake and implement a Corridor Plan to provide for balanced development and protection of agricultural uses, incorporating features such as agricultural buffers and context-sensitive design.

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT AREAS

There are three primary areas within the Middle Georgia Region that can be considered Commercial Redevelopment Areas.

- Mercer University Drive/ Highway 74
- Highway 247 Connector/ Watson Boulevard
- Emery Highway

These areas all share similar characteristics of being major transportation corridors and commercial destinations. A large portion of the commercial development is older with numerous access points, parking in the front, little to no landscaping, aging strip development centers, empty commercial buildings, and an excess of advertising signage. Highly auto-centric, these areas have limited pedestrian and bicycle amenities. Sidewalks are present on portions of these roads; however, the design of the sidewalks (adjacent to moderate to high speed traffic with no vegetative buffer) does not invite pedestrian usage.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

**EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS** - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** - Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.



# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Development Patterns

*Declining, unattractive, vacant or under-utilized strip shopping center. Characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic and transit if applicable; on-site parking; low degree of open space; moderate floor-area-ratio; large tracts of land, campus or unified development. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)*

Efforts should be made to retrofit these areas to be more aesthetically appealing and, therefore, more marketable to prospective tenants by:

- Focusing on redeveloping abandoned commercial centers and Greyfields first rather than moving farther down the strip to construct new development.
- Undertaking upgrades to existing commercial buildings including facade improvements, new architectural elements, awnings, etc., to enhance the aesthetic.
- Requiring new commercial and infill development to configure and build structures along the street front to create a shopping “square” around a smaller, internal shared parking lot.
- Enhancing parking lots through:
  - Landscaping islands and shade trees, and
  - Reconfiguring circulation routes.
- Providing pedestrian and bicycling amenities, including covered walkways, benches, lighting, and bike racks.
- Accommodating “big box” retail in a way that complements surrounding uses, such as breaking up the facade to look like a collection of smaller stores.

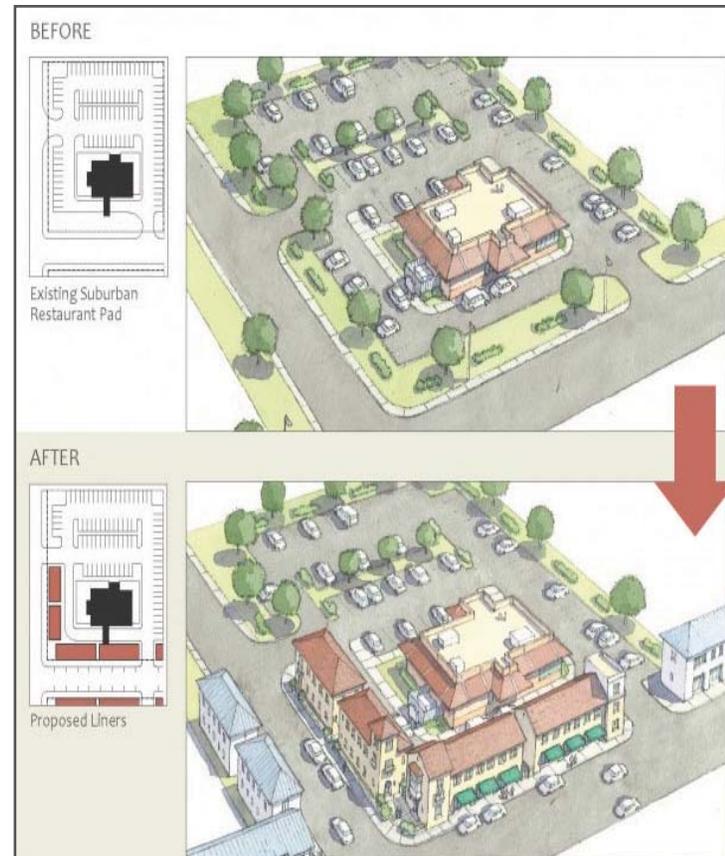


Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Commercial (office and retail)
- Residential
- Mixed Use
- Warehouses
- Recreation/Parks
- Institutional
- Hotels
- Mixed Use

## Implementation Measures

- Identify alternatives to and strategies for reuse of Big Box retail stores and other Greenfields.
- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Promote redevelopment of older strip commercial centers and existing Greyfields in lieu of new construction further down the strip to convert vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Direct development to areas with existing infrastructure.

- Adopt landscaping guidelines and tree ordinances to:
  - Encourage greening of commercial areas;
  - Mitigate building and parking lot impact (i.e. heat islands);
  - Create safe shaded areas for pedestrians and bicyclists;
  - Preserve and restore natural scenic qualities; and
  - Add aesthetic character.
- Promote mixed use and Complete Streets; ensure that local codes and guidelines allow for both.
- Promote parking management practices by allowing shared use of parking spaces and requiring new parking and redeveloped areas to locate parking where it is secondary to the buildings and pedestrians.
- Employ sidewalk and pedestrian network principles and standards
- Consider establishing more stringent sign regulations and standards to minimize visual clutter along roadways.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus redevelopment efforts (include: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments and infrastructure improvements).



# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## REGIONAL CENTER

- Eisenhower Parkway

The portion of Eisenhower Parkway between I-75 and I-475 in Macon can be considered a Regional Center with an abundance of regionally-marketed commercial and retail centers including: Eisenhower Crossing (Target, Best Buy, Home Depot, Kroger); a Wal-Mart Supercenter, the Macon Mall, a shopping center featuring: Lowes and Rooms-To-Go, auto dealerships, Academy Sports and Outdoors, Sam's Club, fast food chains and Central Georgia Technical College. At one time, Eisenhower Parkway was the commercial retail shopping destination for Macon and the surrounding region. Currently, the area between Log Cabin Drive and I-475 is the most vibrant; however, the remainder of Eisenhower Parkway is in a state of decline partly due to safety concerns, the economy, and an increase in commercial and retail development in northern Bibb County.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

**EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS** - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** - Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.



# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Development Patterns

*Regional Center: Concentration of regionally-marketed commercial and retail centers, office and employment areas, higher-education facilities, sports and recreational complexes. These areas are characterized by high degree of access by vehicular traffic, and high transit use, including stops, shelters and transfer points; on-site parking; low degree of internal open space; high floor-area-ratio; large tracts of land, campus or unified development. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs).*

When efforts are undertaken to revitalize and redevelop Eisenhower Parkway, the end-result should include relatively high-density mix of retail, office, services, and employment to serve a regional market area. It should also include a diverse mix of higher-density housing types, such as multi-family town homes, apartments, lofts, and condominiums, including affordable and workforce housing. Specific desirable development patterns include:

### Building and Site Design

- Design should be very pedestrian-oriented with strong, walkable connections between different uses.
- Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers in lieu of new construction further down the strip.
- Buildings in centers architecturally integrated with the site and one another, and developed at a scale sufficient in size, bulk, and height to provide image identification for the center and the surrounding community.
- Promote building designs that are compatible to regional character and compliments surrounding uses (ex: breaking up the façade of a big box store to look like a collection of small stores).

- Homes, shops, small businesses, and institutions grouped together in villages or attractive mixed use centers that serve adjacent neighborhoods. Centers are very pedestrian friendly, and include pleasant community gathering spaces. Residences bring round-the-clock activity to the area.
- Commercial structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making community more attractive and more pedestrian-friendly.
- Add landscaping and other appearance enhancements, trees and landscaping in parking lots to provide shade and help reduce storm water runoff.
- Create new housing opportunities out of former, under-used commercial, warehouse, or industrial spaces.
- Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street / shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs / parking lots that incorporate on-site stormwater mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.



Figure 16

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Streets and Parking

- Clearly define road edges by locating buildings at roadside with parking in the rear. Shared parking and maximum parking limits should be encouraged.
- Provide bike lanes or wide curb lanes to encourage bicycling and provide additional safety; provide conveniently located, preferably sheltered, bicycle parking at retail and office destinations and in multi-family dwellings.
- Consider establishing more stringent sign regulations and standards to include provisions for billboards, to minimize visual clutter along roadways.
- Landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways; landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes.
- Consolidate driveway inter-parcel connections between parking lots.



Figure 17



Figure 18

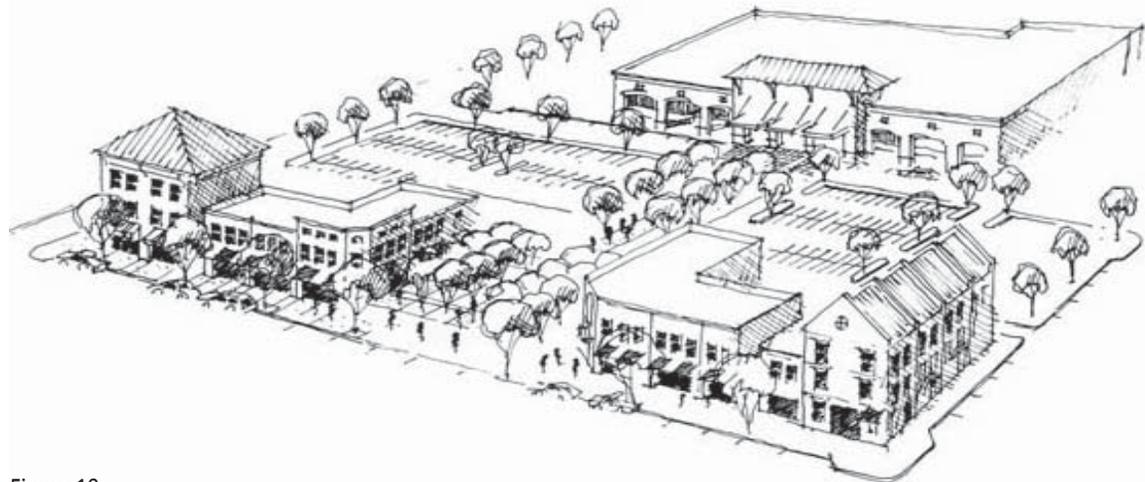


Figure 19

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Large-Scale Commercial
- Residential
- Mixed Use / Town Centers
- Recreation/Parks/Open Spaces

## Implementation Measures

- Promote infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites over development of new Greenfield sites.
- Identify strategies to reuse Greyfields.
- Redevelop older strip commercial centers and existing Greyfields in lieu of new construction further down the strip, to convert vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Establish traffic calming, where applicable, in residential neighborhoods and at connectivity points between residential and commercial areas to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- Facilities for bicycles, including bikeways or bike lanes, frequent storage racks, etc.
- Access Control - redesign access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus redevelopment efforts (include: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments and infrastructure improvements).



# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## DEVELOPING CORRIDORS

- Gray Highway
- Highway 247

Both of these roadways have a significant amount of development in the areas in or just outside the city gateways into downtown Warner Robins, Macon, and Gray. Sporadic development occurs along the center portions of the corridors with scattered commercial, housing, open space, and agricultural fields. These roadways travel through a number of Middle Georgia Communities (Macon/Bibb County; Gray/Jones County; Warner Robins/Houston County), and these roadways can be categorized into three different types of corridors:

1. Gateway Corridor
2. In-Town Corridor
3. Community Connector Corridor

## Quality Community Objectives

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

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION** - Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

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

**EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS** - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.



# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Development Patterns

*Gateway Corridor: Developed or open land paralleling the route of a major thoroughfare that serves as an important entrance or means of access to the community. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)*

- Focus on appearance with appropriate signage, landscaping, and other beautification measures.
- Manage access to keep traffic flowing; using directory/way-finding signage to clustered developments.
- Retrofit or mask existing strip development or other unsightly features as necessary.



Figure 20

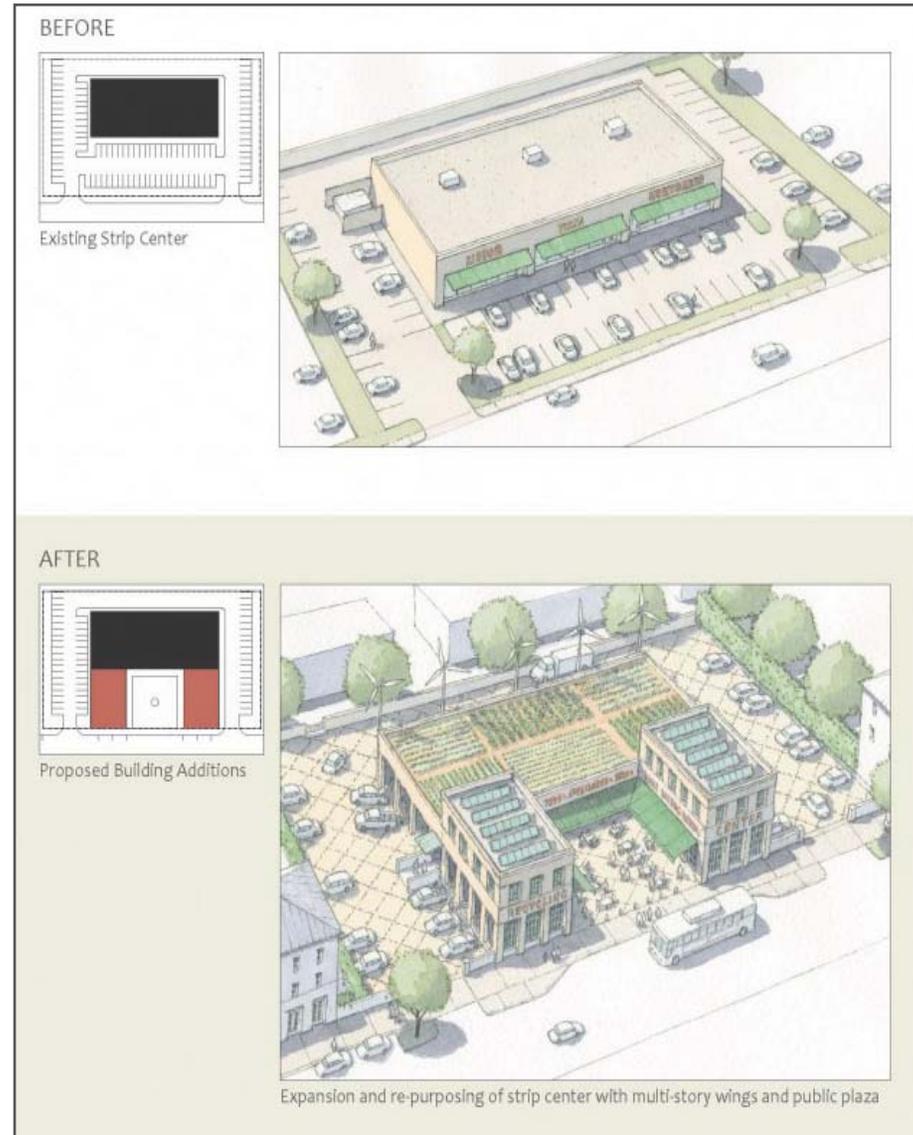


Figure 21

## Areas in Need of Redevelopment

*In-Town Corridor: Developed or open land paralleling the route of a street or highway in town that is already or likely to experience uncontrolled strip development if growth is not properly managed. (Georgia Department of Community Affairs)*

- Gradually convert corridor to attractive boulevard with signage guiding visitors to downtown and scenic areas around the community.
- The appearance of the corridor can immediately be improved through streetscaping enhancements (street lights, street trees, landscaping, etc.).
- In the longer term, enact design and signage guidelines for new development, including minimal building setback requirements from the street and parking in the rear, to ensure that the corridors become more attractive as properties develop or redevelop.
- Corridors leading to town centers or downtown, in particular, should be attractive, where development is carefully controlled (or redevelopment tools are used) to maintain or improve appearances.
- Reduce the role and impact of automobiles in the community by employing attractive traffic-calming measures along major roadways and exploring alternative solutions to parking congestion.
- Provide basic access for pedestrians and bicycles; consider vehicular safety measures including driveway consolidation and raised medians (which also improve safety for bike/pedestrians).



Figure 22



Figure 23

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

*Community Connector Corridor: Major thoroughfares connecting communities, employment and activity centers that are already or likely to experience uncontrolled strip development. Similar to In-Town Corridors except that these are located outside on the outskirts of cities, usually in counties, rather than in-town areas. (Middle Georgia Regional Commission)*

- Provide new housing opportunities that are created out of former, underused commercial, warehouse, or industrial spaces.
- Locate higher-density attached housing near commercial centers or along arterial roads, and single-family detached housing elsewhere in the neighborhood.
- Cluster high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Redevelop older strip commercial centers and existing Greyfields in lieu of new construction further down the strip, to convert vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Use infrastructure availability to steer development away from areas of natural, cultural, and environmentally sensitive resources and promote site plans, building design and landscaping that are sensitive to natural features of the site, including topography and views.

Before



Figure 24

After



Figure 25



Figure 26

# Areas in Need of Redevelopment

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Commercial
- Institutional
- Residential
- Recreational/Parks/Open Space

## Implementation Measures

- Establish access control measures through redesigning access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Identify alternatives to and strategies for reuse of Big Box retail stores and other Greyfields.
- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact development, town centers, Complete Streets, etc.
- Promote mixed use and Complete Streets; ensure that local codes and guidelines allow for both.
- Incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities wherever possible, including design solutions to address usability and safety (i.e. landscape buffers).
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus redevelopment efforts (include: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments and infrastructure improvements).
- Revitalize existing neighborhood commercial centers to capture more market activity and serve as community focal points.



# Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities

Within the Middle Georgia Region, there are two major Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities:

- Highway 247 Connector/Watson Boulevard
- Eisenhower Parkway.

Both of these areas are similarly situated with institutional, large indoor shopping malls, numerous aging commercial strip malls, fast food chains, big box retail, and a plethora of advertising signage. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities are distinctly lacking as are trees and vegetation. Residential housing developments located off of these streets, mostly just behind these shopping centers, have little to no pedestrian connectivity to the commercial areas.

Highway 247 Connector / Watson Boulevard. The Highway 247 Connector, also known as Watson Boulevard, is one of the main thoroughfares in the City of Warner Robins. The road is a direct connection between Robins Air Force Base (RAFB), located on Highway 247, and Interstate 75. A four-lane transportation route, Watson Boulevard has developed quickly with numerous commercial strip malls and stand-alone buildings. The City of Warner Robins lacks a distinct town center. Typical functions found in a town center are stretched all along Watson Boulevard, including: the main government buildings for the City of Warner Robins, the Houston County Hospital, and Centerville Mall.

Eisenhower Parkway. Located in the City of Macon, Eisenhower Parkway provides connectivity between Interstate 475, Interstate 75, and Highway 129/Martin Luther King Boulevard. Eisenhower Parkway is a four-lane divided highway with a grassy median in the sections around the Eisenhower Crossing Shopping Center, Macon Mall, and Central Georgia Technical College; the remainder of the highway has a narrow concrete median.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

**TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS** - Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.<sup>1</sup>

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

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

**EMPLOYMENT OPTIONS** - A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.

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<sup>1</sup> Particularly in regards to the Manor Neighborhood and the streets directly off of Watson Boulevard.



# Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities

## Development Patterns: Building and Site Design

- Creation of Town Center along Watson Boulevard in the City of Warner Robins; the historic commercial circle area would be a prime location.
- Redevelopment of older strip commercial centers and existing Greyfields in lieu of new construction further down the strip to convert vacant or under-utilized commercial strips to mixed-use assets.
- Promotion of building designs that are compatible to regional character and compliments surrounding uses (ex: breaking up the façade of a big box store to look like a collection of small stores).
- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites, focusing on those areas closer in to the center of the community that have existing infrastructure in place.
- Location of commercial structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) located near street front, with parking in rear of buildings, making community more attractive and more pedestrian-friendly.
- Creation of pocket parks and open spaces through clustering development to within the development site.
- Clustering high-density development at nodes along major corridors, separated by areas of open space or attractive residential development.
- Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density (e.g., small-scale apartment buildings, multi-family that looks like a single residence from the street, etc.).



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29

# Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities

## Development Patterns: Roads & Parking

- Complete Streets – design and operate roadways with all consideration for users. Incorporate facilities and connections to allow for safe bicycle and pedestrian usage and access to retail/commercial services and other destinations.
- Landscaped raised medians separating traffic lanes and landscaped buffers between the roadway and pedestrian walkways.
- Location of parking at rear or side of buildings to minimize visibility from the street.
- Landscaping of parking areas to minimize visual impact on adjacent streets and uses; use of landscaped tree islands and medians to break up large expanses of paved parking.
- Shared parking arrangements that reduce overall parking needs; Parking lots that incorporate on-site storm water mitigation or retention features, such as pervious pavements.



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 30

# Areas with Significant Infill Opportunities

## Specific Types of Land Uses

- Large and Mid-Sized Commercial (office and retail)
- Residential
- Hotels
- Mixed Use
- Town Centers
- Institutional
- Parks, Recreation, Open Spaces

## Implementation Measures

- Implement the Warner Robins Master Plan.
- Ensure zoning codes allow for mixed use type of development (i.e. does not separate commercial, residential, and retail uses in every district).
- Advocate for creative design for higher density with new standards and guidelines that encourage: compact development, town centers, Complete Streets, etc.
- Establish linkages between existing offices/commercial uses and residential neighborhoods where none exist.
- Redevelop declining areas.
- Establish traffic-calming mechanisms where appropriate.
- Set forth strategies for the reuse of Greyfields.
- Promote infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites over development of new Greenfield sites.
- Redesign access and street configuration by consolidating driveways and establishing inter-parcel connections between parking lots.
- Reuse existing vacant or underutilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities.
- Complete more detailed sub-area planning to focus on infill and redevelopment efforts (include: new or revised local development regulations, incentives, public investments, and infrastructure improvements).



# *Military Installation - Robins Air Force Base and Surrounding Area*

Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) is a unique asset within the Middle Georgia Region. As the region's largest employer and economic contributor, RAFB along with the areas directly adjacent to this facility require special considerations and attention in regards to planning and development. In 2004, representatives from RAFB and the area local governments engaged in a thorough land use analysis and planning process, Joint Land Use Study (JLUS), which evaluated current development conditions and land use polices to prevent incompatible development and land use changes that jeopardize the Air Force's mission or restrain Base operations in the future. The recommended development patterns, land uses, and implementation measures are based on this study and the Community Agendas portions of the Houston County and the City of Warner Robins Comprehensive Plans.

## Quality Community Objectives

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

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES** - Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.

**EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES** - Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.

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

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

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

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

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



# Military Installation - Robins Air Force Base and Surrounding Area

## Development Patterns: Base Environs Area

- Consistency with development standards set forth in the City of Warner Robins Base Environs Overlay District.

## Development Patterns: First Street Redevelopment Area

- Construct, repair, or replace sidewalks.
- Landscape roadway right-of-way with trees.
- Install pedestrian-scale lighting and other amenities, including benches and trash receptacles.
- Relocate utilities off the street frontage or underground.
- Improve signage design and limit the size and number of signs.
- Create landscape buffers to shield parking lots from view.
- Install traffic calming devices, such as raised pedestrian crossings, on-street parking, or landscaped medians.



Figure 33



Figure 35



Figure 34

# Military Installation - Robins Air Force Base and Surrounding Area

## Specific Types of Land Uses

### Base Environs Area

- Consistency with the Land Use Compatibility Table in the City of Warner Robins Base Environs Overlay District.

### First Street Redevelopment Area

- High-density residential uses
- Retail shops
- Restaurants
- Entertainment venues

## Implementation Measures

- Continued cooperation between the Central Georgia Joint Development Authority, 21st Century Partnership, City of Warner Robins, and Houston County on a variety of levels to address issues and opportunities that face the Base and surrounding area.
- Meetings on Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) Process. These meetings are intended to foster communication networks developed during the development of the JLUS study and ensure effective implementation of the recommendations contained in the study.
- Mitigation Plans Addressing Incompatible Development- These plans are to identify and prioritize properties that are considered incompatible under Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) guidelines; establish method to monitor and purchase “for sale” properties designated as incompatible uses; identify funding mechanisms; and program funds for the acquisition of designated property.
- Review of Current Codes and Ordinances - This measure involves the continuous review and update of current building codes, height restriction ordinances, and zoning ordinances to insure all AICUZ guidelines are met and the operations of RAFB are protected.
- Undertake economic development initiatives that support the continued vitality of RAFB; such as seeking complimentary, supporting industries in locations in close proximity to the Base.



## Stakeholder Involvement

# Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder involvement and input was extremely important in developing a final list of Regional Issues and Opportunities as well as in identification of specific implementation activities and strategies (see Regional Work Program) designed to successfully address the issues and opportunities. Stakeholder involvement methods ranged from website and email solicitations, to newspaper notices, public meetings, and stakeholder interviews, all of which are further described in the Stakeholder Involvement Program component of the Regional Plan.

One of the more helpful and noteworthy methods the Middle Georgia Regional Commission employed to obtain stakeholder input during the regional planning process was through an online Regional Issues and Opportunities Survey. The survey was a series of 21 multiple choice questions and 2 open-ended questions which took approximately 5 minutes to complete. Tables displaying the results of each multiple choice survey question are located in Appendix C. The survey questions covered topics from housing and transportation to infrastructure and environmental/cultural resources. On questions where respondents had to rate an issue as having low to high importance (with 1 being low and 5 being high importance), the questions with a majority of 4 and 5 importance ratings were considered to be highly important.

The following topics are listed in order of importance according to the respondents' answers (the number in brackets indicates the number of respondents who ranked the issue as highly important).

- Provision of Public Services (25)
- Increase Employment Opportunities (23)
- Manage Traffic (23)
- Preserve History and Heritage (22)
- Rehabilitate Buildings in Downtown Commercial Areas (22)
- Water/Sewer Improvements (21)
- Improve Region-wide Transportation System (20)
- Protect/Preserve Farmland (20)
- Housing (19)

Another aspect of the survey featured two open-ended questions asking respondents to list their top three likes and dislikes about the region. The top two most liked qualities of the region were the high quality of life and history and heritage, with 16 and 15 respondents respectively, commenting on these features. The responses that detailed some aspect of the region's high quality of life included mentions of the cost of living, climate, range of amenities – particularly the arts and cultural offerings. The respondents that commented on liking the historic buildings and heritage of the region discussed how these features lend charm, character, and uniqueness to the region. Nearly half of the respondents listed location and connectivity to other parts of the state and proximity to the lakes and natural resources as an important feature of the region. Another popular response highly rated the people and the hospitality found throughout Middle Georgia.

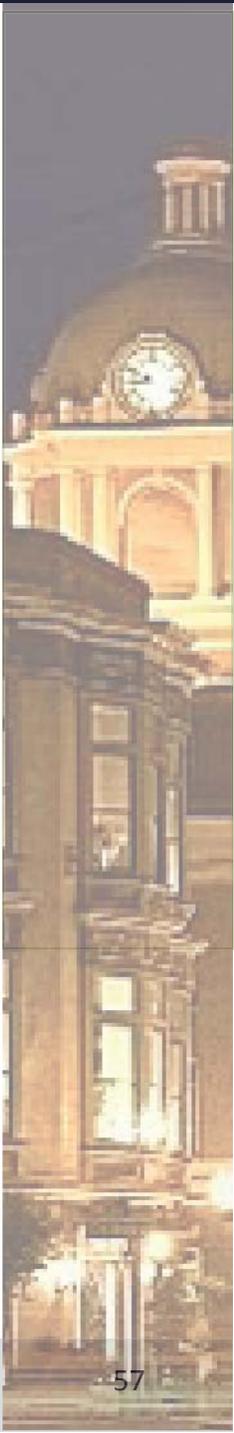


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Transportation was the predominate issue respondents listed as disliking about the Middle Georgia Region. The 16 respondents that commented on transportation systems included statements ranging from inadequate roads and infrastructure, to traffic and trash along roadways, and the lack of public transportation and commuter rail. The second most prevalent issue, identified by 9 survey respondents, criticized the lack of regional coordination, poor political leadership, and community rivalries. The third most mentioned issue, with eight responses, was tied between two topics:

1. Sprawl and under-utilization/maintenance of downtowns and city centers.
2. Lack of employment opportunities, particularly economic diversity and low number of jobs for recent college graduates. Respondents also mentioned that while lack of employment opportunities is a concern, a related problem is that any development is viewed as good economic development.

As indicated earlier, the survey results, along with data and information obtained from other stakeholder involvement techniques, were used to augment the preliminary list of Issues and Opportunities identified in the Regional Assessment and ultimately in development of the final list of Issues and Opportunities that follows.





## **Regional Issues and Opportunities**

# Regional Issues and Opportunities

---

The list that follows represents the final Issues and Opportunities to be addressed in the Implementation Program of the Regional Plan. These Issues and Opportunities were refined by incorporating the results from the various stakeholder involvement mechanisms.

As originally categorized in the Regional Assessment, the final Regional Issues and Opportunities are broken-out by various regional planning elements.



## *Demographics (D)\**

### *Issues*

1. A steadily growing population, along with corresponding growth in the senior population, and an influx of Hispanics lured by seasonal and service-industry employment opportunities, all place a demand on existing community infrastructure and services.
2. Some areas of the region are experiencing explosive population growth, e.g. the Lake Oconee and Lake Sinclair areas, Houston County, and northern Monroe County.
3. There are pockets in the region experiencing higher than average poverty rates; particularly true in some rural areas.
4. There is a disparity in income levels across the region. Many rural areas are characterized by below average levels due to limited employment opportunities.
5. Several Middle Georgia communities are experiencing a high influx of retirees.

### *Opportunities*

1. Employment of effective land use planning to manage population growth.
2. Population growth results in higher demand for retail and service commercial uses, which in turn creates opportunities for new businesses, jobs, and an increase in the tax base.
3. The Middle Georgia region has the opportunity to begin planning for the development/upgrade of infrastructure, housing, transportation, educational facilities, social services, public safety, etc. needed to accommodate population growth.
4. The region's population is projected to consistently grow. As a result, the labor pool will consequently increase. With adequate job skills and training, the Middle Georgia region has the opportunity to increase its marketability from an economic development standpoint.
5. An increased number of senior citizens and retirees in the region may result in stimulation of the local economy through the provision of additional facilities and services to meet the demands of this growing population segment.

*\* Category abbreviations and numbered issues and opportunities are displayed in the Regional Work Program to reflect the issues and / or opportunities addressed by each identified activity.*



# *Economic Development (ED)\**

## *Issues*

1. Increasing number of greyfields within the region.
2. Lack of industrial park sites equipped with the necessary infrastructure.
3. Strip malls and shopping centers in state of decline (i.e. Colonial Mall in Macon) along major transportation corridors.
4. Heavy dependence on single industry within some of the rural communities.
5. Declining textiles, kaolin, and agricultural industries, which many of the rural communities are heavily dependent upon.
6. Retention of recent college graduates.
7. Greater workforce development and training with a focus to ensure the population within the community possesses the skills and training to enable the community to have a competitive advantage with attracting and retaining businesses.
8. Treatment and distribution of water and wastewater, particularly in rural areas. Development could be hindered or limited due to areas lacking appropriate infrastructure in adequate quantities.
9. Within the Middle Georgia region, there is an increasing amount of aging, under-utilized and vacant strip centers, and stand-alone commercial buildings.

## *Opportunities*

1. Continue support of small businesses and entrepreneurial enterprise; communities should capitalize on “Entrepreneur Friendly” designation as applicable.
2. Develop, expand, re-develop of Brownfield sites within existing industrial parks.
3. Strive to provide greater connectivity between town and gown relationships in other regional communities (i.e. College Hill Corridor in Macon).
4. Increase emphasis on heritage and eco-tourism. Support greater partnerships between regional organizations such as the Middle Georgia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee; Historic Heartland and Magnolia Midlands State Travel Regions; and Better Hometowns/Main Streets communities.
5. Support Georgia-Robins Aerospace Maintenance Partnership (G-RAMP) initiative in Warner Robins.
6. Capitalize on the relocation of the Georgia Department of Corrections to the former Tift College Campus in Forsyth and the addition of 400 jobs to the region through identifying and targeting related business.
7. Increase efforts at downtown development and redevelopment to maintain the strong regional identity and distinctive downtowns of Middle Georgia communities.
8. Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs) identifies natural resources, warehouse and distribution, bio-fuels and the Aerospace industries as growing sectors within the Middle Georgia region.



- 
9. Significant number of organizations to support economic development to benefit the region: joint development authorities, MGRC, EDA, Georgia Department of Economic Development Regional Project Managers to provide support to Existing Industry and Regional Recruitment, Department of Community Affairs Office of Downtown Development.
  10. Additional coordination and collaboration between the various groups in the Middle Georgia region working toward economic development activities.
  11. The communities that comprise the Aerospace region have the opportunity to continue to cultivate business and industry compatible to the operations of Robins Air Force Base.
  12. Communities have the opportunity to encourage the redevelopment of aging and vacant strip centers and other greyfield spaces instead of allowing new strip shopping centers to be developed.



### *Issues*

1. Outside of the region's urban counties, there is a lack of diversity in the housing stock, presenting existing and future residents of these communities with few housing options.
2. Though an important source of affordable housing, particularly in the rural counties of the Middle Georgia region, manufactured homes create a unique set of concerns related to tax revenue and structural maintenance.
3. Many communities in the Middle Georgia region have not completed a housing assessment, thus lack an important tool to address the problem of substandard and dilapidated housing in their community.
4. The region's urban counties have a high percentage of cost-burdened renter-occupied households. A large majority of these households have incomes significantly below the median.
5. Shelter for victims of domestic abuse is limited to several non-profit facilities in Macon and Warner Robins, thus leaving persons needing this assistance from the remainder of the region without an adequate place of refuge.

### *Opportunities*

1. Several communities in the Middle Georgia region have initiated creative strategies to diversify their housing stock, while at the same time finding a new use for vacant historic buildings and lofts of downtown storefronts. These successful examples could potentially be applied to other communities in the Middle Georgia region.
2. The construction of more single-family detached dwellings on smaller lots, and a variety of other single-family dwelling types that is occurring in the urban and suburban markets, can provide an affordable alternative to the manufactured home in the rural areas.
3. Historic preservation programs in the Middle Georgia region provide an outstanding opportunity for communities to maintain and restore historic residential structures and districts, and to transform vacant historic commercial and industrial buildings into residential uses.
4. Several Middle Georgia communities have an approved urban redevelopment plan that sets forth specific actions to address substandard housing and to leverage private resources for redevelopment efforts in the target areas.
5. Innovative programs established by housing agencies, such as the Macon Housing Authority, could be applied to other areas of the region. These programs include: the lease-to-purchase homeownership program, the Section 8 Homeownership Program, and an array of resident assistance programs that encourage economic and social independence.



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6. Because of the growing market demand, the private sector and large private non-profit organizations are making significant investment in all types of elderly housing facilities, and are looking at a variety of development options in order to provide these facilities.
  7. There are well-established agencies in place to address the housing needs of persons with mental, physical, and developmental disabilities, for persons with HIV/AIDS and for those recovering from substance abuse. The key in the future is to secure adequate funding for these agencies, and to ensure that residents outside the urban areas of the region are provided with information on the services these agencies offer.
  8. Most of the region's counties have an adequate supply of work-force housing, but there are insufficient jobs for their labor force. The challenge is finding ways to expand their economic base so that their labor force can work in the same location they reside.



# Community Facilities and Services (CF)\*

## Issues

1. The cost of providing public services and facilities for new development typically exceeds the revenue generated from the new development.
2. Ensuring that new development does not jeopardize existing levels of service for current residents and businesses.
3. Several areas of the region, particularly the more rural areas, are not adequately served by public facilities and services.
4. Several cities and counties within the region lack sufficient space for personnel and/or storage. Expansion to accommodate a growing population is necessary for administrative functions in many departments.
5. Middle Georgia communities are continually seeking to maintain and upgrade water and wastewater treatment capacity in order to serve future demand.
6. Areas served by private septic systems, particularly older systems, pose a threat of leakage into water supply sources.
7. The ability to provide for public safety services into areas experiencing rapid growth and development is a concern.
8. Lack of adequate recreational facilities and programs in many of the smaller and/or rural communities within the region.
9. Rapid residential and commercial growth is contributing to stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation control problems.

## Opportunities

1. Protect existing infrastructure investments by encouraging and promoting infill development, redevelopment, and compact development where appropriate.
2. There is sufficient design capacity in most water systems within the region to meet projected future demand.
3. Development and enforcement of appropriate ordinances and regulations for those communities experiencing stormwater runoff, erosion, and sedimentation control problems.
4. Investment in infrastructure improvements and/or expansion helps create economic development opportunities.
5. Plan for infrastructure placement in those areas that are slated for future development, especially new residential development. Eliminates the need for placement of infrastructure after development and allows communities to identify areas of less intense development by steering infrastructure placement away from those areas.
6. Encourage and promote multi-jurisdictional facilities planning.
7. Multiple opportunities for development of passive recreational facilities in suitable locations.
8. Strong community preference indicated for development of neighborhood parks and multi-use trails.
9. Aggressively pursue alternative funding sources for infrastructure improvements and recreation facilities.
10. Collaboration with local school boards to ensure school location decisions correspond with community growth and development plans.



## *Transportation (T)\**

### *Issues*

1. Transportation plans completed for the Macon Area Transportation Study (MATS) and the Warner Robins Area Transportation Study (WRATS), and for several other counties in the region (Jones, Monroe, and Putnam), indicate that a number of local, state, and federal highways in these areas will exceed acceptable levels of service by 2030, and will need to be widened or reconstructed.
2. There are a number of paved roadways and bridges in the Middle Georgia region that are in need of repair/upgrade.
3. There are approximately 1,100 miles of unpaved roads in the Middle Georgia region.
4. Due to limited resources, local governments and transit agencies in the Middle Georgia region are unable to meet the growing demand for transit service.
5. There is a lack of a coordinated intra- and inter-jurisdictional bicycle/pedestrian facility system connecting major points of interest.
6. There is a lack of coordination between transportation and land use.
7. The scale of development or inefficient development patterns has led to significant traffic congestion in some areas of the region.

### *Opportunities*

1. The Regional Transportation Sales and Use Tax is an important financial tool to improve the transportation infrastructure in the Middle Georgia region.
2. Transit programs, such as Section 5310, Section 5316, and Section 5317, provide an excellent opportunity for local transit operators to expand their service to the elderly, to persons with disabilities, and to low-income persons who live in the city but work in suburban locations.
3. The Georgia Department of Transportation has contracted with the Clean Air Campaign to establish rideshare and commuter choice programs in the Middle Georgia region to help reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality.
4. The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program is an opportunity for communities in the Middle Georgia region to not only improve the health and welfare of their elementary and middle school students, but also reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and expand bicycle/pedestrian facility infrastructure in their jurisdiction.
5. The pedestrian facility/sidewalk infrastructure improvement plans for the Cities of Roberta, Jeffersonville, Hawkinsville, Forsyth, and Gordon provide an opportunity for these communities to enhance connectivity to their downtown areas, maintain their existing pedestrian facility network, provide an attractive alternative transportation mode to major trip attractors, and become a walk-friendly community.



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6. Strong interest has been expressed for development of a Regional Mass Transit System, possibly multi-modal in nature.
  7. Communities have the opportunity to review their existing zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations and add provisions requiring new development connectivity to the existing sidewalk network.



# Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources (N/C/H-R)\*

## Issues

1. Continued protection of water quality and availability through development and environmental regulations to prevent water supply contamination. Water sources in need of protection include:
  - Wetlands (Bond Swamp and discontinuous wetland areas along the Flint, Ocmulgee, and Oconee Rivers and Commissioner Creek).
  - Lake intakes/water supply watersheds. Adherence to the DNR-approved Source Water Assessment Plans (SWAPs) for each water supply watershed.
  - Groundwater recharge areas and aquifers.
2. A number of water bodies in the Middle Georgia region are on the EPA 303(d) List of Impaired Streams.
3. Declining agricultural, parks, and forestry lands and other open spaces.
4. Natural and Cultural Resources are particularly susceptible to uncontrolled or incompatible development.
5. Current economic conditions may make local governments hesitant to adopt and implement the policies and protection measures recommended in the RIR Plan.
6. Encouraging developers to adhere to the RIR Plan's recommended appropriate development practices.
7. Portions of Middle Georgia currently identified by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as non-attainment areas for air quality standards.

## Opportunities

1. Increased recognition and preservation of cultural, historic, archaeological, and natural sites of Middle Georgia.
2. Utilize cultural and historic resources to enhance community identity through revitalizing main streets and downtown commercial cores. One way to achieve this is through the application and enforcement of strong architectural design standards and development regulations enacted at the local level.
3. Institute protection measures for heritage resources where none currently exist and ensure established regulations are up-to-date and enforced.
4. Continue and expand Middle Georgia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC) to provide preservation-minded organizations within the region network and share best practice examples.
5. Capitalize on services offered by the State of Georgia through the Historic Heartland and Magnolia Midlands (Pulaski County) travel and tourism regions.
6. Work to expand the Historic Middle Georgia website as a regional clearinghouse for historic sites, heritage tourism, and special events/educational programs announcements.
7. Promote context-sensitive design for infill and new construction.
8. Coordination and cooperation among neighboring governments in heritage and eco-tourism initiatives in order to maintain, promote, and enhance the existing green infrastructure network.



9. Promotion of designated Scenic Byways (Enduring Farmlands, Historic Piedmont, and Ocmulgee-Piedmont).
10. Continue the development of blueways, greenways, and riverwalks within the Middle Georgia region to both protect the resources and allow for passive recreation activities. Specific projects include: Oconee River Greenway, Ocmulgee Blueway, Hawkinsville-Pulaski Riverwalk, and the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail.
11. Maintain and improve air quality through monitoring, implementation of best management practices, and cooperation among local governments and organizations such as the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition and Middle Georgia Clean Cities Coalition.
12. Guide development to protect Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs), farmland, forestry, and other open spaces through the adoption of tree ordinances, agricultural preservation incentives, conservation easements, and scenic view protections.
13. The seven (7) designated Tree City USA communities in Middle Georgia have the opportunity to engage in additional activities that promote and support this designation (i.e. adoption of a tree preservation ordinance, tree care awareness campaigns, etc.).
14. Each community should be encouraged to complete an inventory of local natural resources to serve as a tool in creating a local greenspace network (with identified protection measures) with regional connectivity.
15. Capitalize on the unique features of the Middle Georgia region by increasing and diversifying Heritage Tourism efforts.
16. Potential to utilize CDBG funding to accomplish historic preservation projects and achieve community goals.
17. Greater education of local government officials, community leaders, and property owners about the responsibilities, opportunities, and Federal and State tax benefits that accompany ownership of an historic property.
18. Cemeteries are important heritage resources, which are not only valuable for the genealogical information they provide but also as an emerging niche of heritage tourism. The sensitive treatment and careful maintenance of cemeteries and their features (gravestones, fences, landscaping, etc.) should be encouraged. State organizations such as the Georgia Municipal Cemetery Association (GMCA) and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division are good sources of information and support.



# *Intergovernmental Coordination (IC)\**

## *Issues*

1. Establishing a regional identity, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation, housing, tourism, economic development, air/water quality and crafting regional strategies to address such issues.
2. Existing regional planning documents and efforts at regional collaboration not adequately promulgated and benchmarked.
3. Competition among local governments for limited state and federal grant funds sometimes fosters a competitive mindset rather than cooperation.
4. Need for greater intergovernmental coordination pertaining to land development and transportation infrastructure improvements, particularly a greater emphasis on corridor management.

## *Opportunities*

1. Greater regional cooperation in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions related to protection of shared natural resources and development of transportation systems and infrastructure.
2. As developable land in the region's urban areas becomes scarce, greater opportunities exist for regional cooperation related to economic development projects.
3. Development and promotion of a regional heritage tourism industry.
4. Work collaboratively to obtain Work Ready Community and Region designation under the Georgia Work Ready Program. By being designated a Work Ready Community and Region, local jurisdictions and the region will have met national standards for work readiness—a valuable standard in marketing the local communities and the Middle Georgia region to national prospects.
5. Continued and expanded multi-jurisdictional coordination provides for enhanced recreation and eco-tourism opportunities in the region. Examples include efforts at connectivity of the Oconee River Greenway with Balls Ferry State Park, connectivity of the Ocmulgee Heritage Trail with the Oconee River Greenway via a multi-use trail along an abandoned rail corridor from the City of Macon to the City of Milledgeville, and development of an Ocmulgee River Blueway corridor originating in Pulaski County.
6. Local government officials should utilize the opportunity to discuss issues of regional concern at Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council meetings.



### Issues

1. Rapid growth and development is contributing to unplanned changes in traditional uses (e.g., agricultural, forestry).
2. Urban sprawl; many corridors have developed into strips of commercial sprawl with characteristic impacts related to traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, urban blight, etc.
3. Needed redevelopment of aging urban areas.
4. Need for corridor rehabilitation and enhancements.
5. Appropriately analyzing and preparing for impacts of new development on transportation infrastructure, environmental resources, and community facilities and services.
6. Appropriate planning for conservation and open space.
7. Many local governments lack adequate planning and zoning expertise to manage the negative impacts of growth.
8. Many Middle Georgia communities do not have development guidelines illustrating the desired type and appearance of new development within the community.
9. There are no local or regional land conservation programs within Middle Georgia aimed at protecting open space and farmland.

### Opportunities

1. Rapid growth has associated benefits; these need to be planned for and capitalized on.
2. Need for greater cooperation between adjacent local governments in the preparation of land use plans in order to avoid conflict and to identify areas where they might coordinate the joint provision of services.
3. A broader regional perspective on future land use needs to ensure that adequate developable lands are available and that future development patterns maintain and enhance regional economic cohesiveness.
4. Redevelopment of existing areas can help to enhance older communities and preserve currently undeveloped land.
5. Infill development opportunities throughout the region.
6. Additional education and training opportunities for local planning and zoning officials.
7. Development patterns that blend uses incorporating housing, employment opportunities, and recreation should be promoted.
8. Enactment and enforcement of local-level land protection measures.
9. Opportunity for communities to review and revise existing zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations to include provisions for open space and farmland protection.



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10. The communities within Middle Georgia are accomplishing open space preservation through a variety of concentrated projects (e.g. Ocmulgee Heritage Trail, Hawkinsville-Pulaski Riverwalk, and Oconee River Greenway); however, these communities have the opportunity to expand current initiatives and enhance connectivity through greater regional coordination and cooperation.
  11. Middle Georgia communities have the opportunity to maintain community character and sense of place through the adoption of illustrated design guidelines (for buildings, landscaping, and signage) to ensure that the aesthetics of new development is compatible to the existing built environment.





# Implementation Program

## *Implementation Program*

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Just as the Regional Agenda is the most important element of the Regional Plan, the Implementation Program is the most important part of the Regional Agenda. It is action-oriented, performance-based, and critical to the success of achieving the Regional Vision. The Implementation Program contains guiding principles for all regional actors to follow, standards by which achievement and success is measured, specific strategies and activities to be undertaken by the Regional Commission towards implementation, as well as methods of evaluation and monitoring to ensure desired results are obtained.

The Middle Georgia Regional Commission, working closely with its local governments as well as state and federal agencies, will facilitate implementation of the Plan.

## *Guiding Principles*

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What follows is a list of guiding principles, each intended to provide direction for regional leaders in their day-to-day decision-making, as they seek to achieve the Regional Vision. As with other portions of this Plan, the guiding principles are categorized by various planning elements, however; many of the principles are applicable to multiple elements or functions.

### *Economic Development*

- Promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between economic development entities.
- Promote and encourage regional marketing strategies in efforts to recruit business and industry.
- Pursue appropriate federal and state economic development funding assistance opportunities.
- Maintain continual focus on existing industry retention and expansion.
- Encourage economic development initiatives that support and compliment important existing industry sectors (e.g. aerospace, warehousing and distribution, healthcare, etc.).
- Support efforts to enhance workforce skills and development throughout the region.
- Promote downtown revitalization efforts as a means to job creation and entrepreneurship.
- Consider and plan for infrastructure, transportation, and natural resource protection during economic development decision-making.
- Encourage coordination between economic development agencies, existing business and industry, and higher education institutions to promote appropriate workforce training and development initiatives.

### *Housing*

- Seek to eliminate substandard and/or dilapidated housing in all communities throughout the region.
- Promote and encourage development which provides for a variety of residential options.
- Promote and encourage affordable housing opportunities.
- Promote quality housing construction through development and enforcement of appropriate building codes and regulations.
- Consider and plan for future housing needs, incorporating transportation and infrastructure-related requirements.

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## *Community Facilities and Services*

- Continue to provide, maintain, and expand water and wastewater infrastructure in order to meet the needs of current and future users.
- Protect existing infrastructure investment by promoting and encouraging infill redevelopment and compact development as appropriate.
- Continue to provide, maintain, and expand recreational programs and activities for all segments of the population.
- Ensure new development and growth does not result in a decline in current levels of service.
- Continually seek funding sources and opportunities to assist with upgrading or developing new facilities and/or services.
- Encourage growth and development to occur in and around areas that have existing infrastructure.
- Utilize new infrastructure investments to shape development patterns.
- Encourage the placement of new schools near new and existing neighborhoods.

## *Transportation*

- Support and encourage the planning, development, and implementation of multi-modal transportation solutions.
- Encourage the coordination of transportation network improvements and land use planning.
- Promote alternative transportation choices (e.g. walking, biking, car-pooling, etc.).
- Promote connectivity of the region's road network.

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## *Natural, Cultural, and Historic Resources*

- Promote the protection and careful management of the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Advocate development practices that do not negatively impact natural, cultural, or historic resources.
- Promote and encourage new developments that incorporate parks and open space as quality of life amenities.
- Continually protect and enhance the region's water quality and quantity.
- Promote appropriate access to natural, cultural, and historic resources for recreation, education, and tourism purposes as applicable.
- Continually strive to educate and inform residents and visitors of the importance and value of the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Promote and support the region's existing Main Street and Better Hometown communities and encourage additional designations.
- Promulgate the various protection measures, policies, and enhancement activities identified in the Middle Georgia Regionally Important Resources (RIR) Plan.
- Encourage the coordination among agencies (local, state, and federal) in identifying programs, initiatives, and funding sources related to the protection and enhancement of the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Promote viewshed protection of significant natural and cultural resources.

## *Intergovernmental Coordination*

- Promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between jurisdictions in developing solutions for shared regional issues.
- Encourage sharing of services and facilities between jurisdictions for mutual benefit.
- Continue strong record of local and regional collaborative planning efforts.
- Consult and/or inform all affected jurisdictions and public entities on decisions likely to impact them.

## Land Use

- Encourage and promote development that is compatible with, and enhances the character of each of the region's communities.
- Protect Robins Air Force Base from encroachment concerns and other incompatible land uses that jeopardize the Base's current mission and/or possible new missions.
- Encourage and promote growth in areas that can be efficiently served by infrastructure, such as water, wastewater, and transportation.
- Encourage and promote development that provides for open space and protects the region's natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- Encourage and promote the strengthening of existing neighborhoods and communities utilizing housing and infrastructure improvements, infill development/redevelopment, and convenient community facilities.
- Advocate for infill development and/or redevelopment of existing brownfield and greyfield areas versus new development in previously undeveloped areas.
- Encourage coordination and collaboration between jurisdictions and other affected parties in promoting effective and efficient land use planning.
- Pursue opportunities for education and awareness and community outreach as they relate to regional growth management and land use issues.
- Advocate for the allocation of sufficient land to effectively serve the current and future needs of each land use type (i.e. residential, commercial, industrial, etc.).
- Encourage the creation of attractive gateways into the region's various communities.
- Combat urban sprawl and leap-frog development.
- Encourage the development/redevelopment of downtown areas to serve as vibrant community focal points.
- Promote sustainable community growth, development, and redevelopment that follow quality growth management principles and standards.



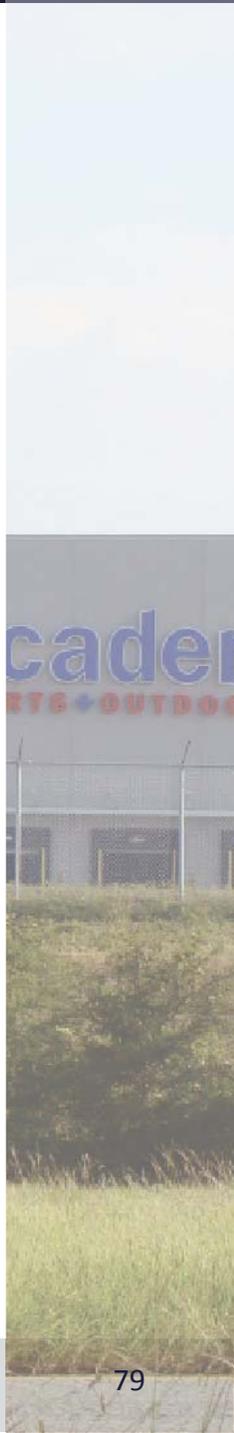
## *Performance Standards*

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The Middle Georgia Regional Agenda establishes two achievement levels, a minimum and an excellence level, in which to assess local government efforts at realizing the Regional Vision and adequately addressing Regional Issues and Opportunities. The Minimum Standard reflects essential activities for local governments to undertake in order to ensure a basic level of consistency with the Regional Plan. The Excellence Standard can be attained when local governments implement a series of preferred activities widely recognized as best practices. The activities related to both the Minimum Standard and the Excellence Standard were derived from the Analysis of Consistency with Quality Community Objectives found in the Regional Assessment. The analysis served as a baseline in determining each community's progress towards achieving the Quality Community Objectives.

All local governments in the region are expected to achieve the Minimum Standard within three years of formal adoption of the Regional Agenda by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission Council. Subsequently, all local governments are encouraged to further seek attainment of the Excellence Standard by choosing to implement and/or enact a suitable number of identified best practices. It is important to note that any local government that attains the Excellence Standard is eligible for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Planning Incentive Program. Find out more about this and either provide more info or identify where communities can find out more about this.

In conjunction with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission's annual update to the Regional Work Program, an annual review will be performed for each local government in the region to determine if the Minimum Standard has been achieved/maintained, and to assess progress made towards attaining the Excellence Standard.



## *Minimum Performance Standards*

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To achieve the minimum standard, each of the following activities must be met:

- Local Comprehensive Plans are developed jointly with all other local government entities (i.e. cities and county).
- An agreed upon Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) has been negotiated.
- Local Solid Waste Management Plans are developed jointly with other local government entities (i.e. cities and county).
- Participation in developing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Middle Georgia Region.
- The economic development component and/or policies of the local Comprehensive Plan advocate programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses and industries that enhance the community's economic well-being.
- Compliance with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria.
- The transportation component and/or policies of the local Comprehensive Plan address multi-modal transportation activities (e.g. roads, rail, air, bicycle, and pedestrian, etc.).
- The land use component and/or policies of the local Comprehensive Plan promotes orderly, functional, and efficient growth patterns.
- The community facilities and services component and/or policies of the local Comprehensive Plan addresses investment in the upkeep and expansion of public infrastructure.

# Excellence Performance Standards

To achieve the excellence standard, a minimum of two activities from each of the five categories below must be implemented. While only two activities from each category are required, communities should strive to implement as many of these best management practices and quality growth initiatives as possible.

## Economic Development

- Participate in the Georgia Department of Economic Development Entrepreneur-Friendly Community Initiative.
- Maintain a current inventory of available sites and buildings suitable for development.
- Develop a defined industry recruitment strategy.
- Develop an existing business retention plan or program.
- Coordinate with neighboring communities in promoting economic development initiatives (e.g. Joint Development Authorities).
- Participate in regional tourism efforts (e.g. promotional materials).
- Support downtown efforts (i.e. Downtown Development Authority, Better Hometown, etc.)
- Utilize of way-finding signage for tourism, shopping district(s), downtown, etc.
- Become a Georgia Certified Work Ready Community.
- Become a Georgia Certified Literate Community.
- Incorporate economic recovery actions into locally developed Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation Plans.

## Housing

- Provide for housing alternatives at multiple income levels (i.e. downtown loft-style housing, single-family, multi-family, etc.).
- Provide quality affordable housing (range of size, cost, density) to make it possible so that those who work in the community can also live there.
- Demonstrate efforts to stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.
- Adopt and implement an ordinance that facilitates the cleanup, repair, and/or removal of dilapidated properties.
- Conduct periodic Housing Assessments to determine existing conditions and current and future needs.
- Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH).
- Establish recognition programs such as “Home of the Month” or “Yard of the Month.”

## Community Facilities and Services

- Adopt and implement local land development ordinances and standards that:
  - Discourage the use of individual lot septic systems for developments that exceed a density threshold of one dwelling unit per acre.
  - Require connections to a public or community water / wastewater system(s) when available or nearby.
  - Prohibit the installation of new septic systems within 100 feet of any river and within 50 feet of any state water body.
- Develop an inspection, maintenance, and monitoring program for private septic systems.
- Develop and implement a water quality monitoring program.
- Adopt and implement a stormwater management plan and/or ordinance.
- Develop and maintain a Capital Improvements Plan or similar document.
- Develop and maintain a community-wide Recreation Plan.
- Update and amend the Service Delivery Strategy when changes occur.
- Demonstrate regional sharing of resources and/or services (e.g. Mutual Aid Agreements, Water/Sewer Authorities, etc.).

## Transportation

- Develop and implement polices/ordinances/plans that encourage or promote street connectivity and improve access and mobility.
- Participate and include local projects in the Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan for the Middle Georgia Region.
- Develop a local Bicycle-Pedestrian Plan.
- Initiate local transportation improvements consistent with all existing bicycle and pedestrian plans.
- Employ access management techniques for public roads and to provide incentives for private roads.
- Prepare a local Transit Assessment and/or Transit Development Plan.
- Participate in regional transportation-related forums that focus on multi-modal transportation approaches.

## *Natural and Cultural Resources*

- Develop and/or maintain a comprehensive inventory of cultural, archaeological, and historic resources.
- Develop a local process to evaluate natural, cultural, and historic resources identified in the Regionally Important Resources Plan during the land development process.
- Integrate cultural and historic resources with heritage tourism efforts.
- Develop and adopt ordinances that encourage developers to protect open space, natural resources, and wildlife habitat.
- Develop and adopt a Historic Preservation Ordinance under the Georgia Historic Preservation Act and have an active Historic Preservation Commission.
- Designation as a Georgia Certified Local Government (CLG) by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division.
- Maintain an inventory of the community's natural, historic, cultural, and recreational resources.
- Actively seek state and federal designations for local historic districts and/or properties.
- Adopt and implement a Water Conservation Ordinance.
- Implement a Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Program.
- Incorporate appropriate consideration of natural, cultural and historic resources into locally developed Emergency Operations and Hazard Mitigation Plans.
- Adopt and implement a tree ordinance.

## *Intergovernmental Coordination*

- Demonstrate planned sharing of services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Provide evidence of working jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, natural resource protection, transportation, air quality, etc.).
- Establish joint processes for collaborative planning and decision-making with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Develop active partnerships with state and/or federal agencies in addressing regional issues.
- Provide input and feedback, as applicable, during the review process of Developments of Regional Impact.

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## Land Use

- Require or provide incentives for provision of sidewalks and/or multipurpose paths for new developments.
- Develop, adopt, and implement design overlay ordinances for important gateways, corridors, and city center areas.
- Develop, adopt, and implement community appearance ordinances (e.g. litter control, sign ordinance, dilapidated properties, landscaping, design control, etc.).
- Require or provide incentives for new developments to include open/green space (i.e. cluster development, conservation subdivisions).
- Require or provide incentives for new development/redevelopment to pursue certification for “green” site planning, construction, and post-construction practices.
- Adopt and implement an impact fee ordinance in accordance with state law.
- Develop standards / ordinance that provide incentives for developments to utilize low-impact design, follow green growth guidelines or other quality growth approaches.
- Develop, adopt, and implement standards or ordinances that require development to minimize effective impervious area and (i.e. allow low impact development techniques that minimize the quantity and improve the quality of runoff).
- Require that new developments consider and accommodate upstream stormwater runoff, and do not negatively impact downstream areas.

## *Strategies and Regional Work Program*

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The Regional Work Program identifies specific activities the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will undertake over the next five years in its efforts to successfully implement the Regional Plan. Additionally, specific strategies to be undertaken by actors other than the Regional Commission, designed to assist in implementation of the Regional Plan, are also included.

Various implementation measures are categorized under **Planning and Coordination** and **Review** activities.

- **Planning and Coordination** measures are those activities undertaken by the Regional Commission to assist both local governments and regional partners in ensuring conformity with the Regional Plan.
- **Review** activities, on the other hand, are those activities initiated or performed by other actors in the region that require review and comment by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission.

It is also important to note that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission hopes to foster the development of livable and sustainable communities throughout the region by seeking to successfully integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure improvements to the greatest degree possible. This is consistent with the principles espoused in the Livable Communities Act of 2009 and are further incorporated into many of the implementation activities included in the Middle Georgia Regional Work Program.

Each activity includes an anticipated timeframe for implementation, an estimated cost associated with the activity, and identification of expected or possible funding sources. Additionally, the specific issues and opportunities addressed by each activity are provided.



## Planning and Coordination

#	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ESTIMATED COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES ADDRESSED
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>					
1	Provide technical assistance to local governments, industrial authorities, and chambers of commerce in economic development and industrial recruitment.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, EDA, GDEcD	ED: I-7, I-9, O-1, O-9, O-10, O-12 D: I-4 H: O-8 IC: O-2
2	Pursue funding avenues to aid in providing infrastructure to industrial parks/sites.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA	ED: I-2, I-8, O-2, D: O-3
3	Research, prepare, and administer economic development-related grants/loans for local governments.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	ED: O-2, O-5, O-8 D: O-3
4	Provide technical services to the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Partnership; assist with educating communities on Partnership's role and its ongoing efforts to support Robins Air Force Base (RAFB). Provide coordination among community leaders to support RAFB activities, expansion efforts, and new missions as identified by the Partnership.	2011-2015	\$30,000 Annually	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Partnership, MGRC	ED: I-6, I-7, O-5, O-8, O-9, O-10, O-11 D: I-5, O-4, O-5
5	Plan, organize, and orchestrate a strategic plan to remediate encroachment issues to RAFB's physical boundaries, noise contours, and noise abatement areas.	2011-2013	TBD	MGRC, DOD	D: O-1 LU: I-1, I-5, O-3

6	Provide technical assistance on the creation of an inland port / intermodal center in Middle Georgia.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> O-9, O-10 <b>T:</b> I-6, O-3, <b>CF:</b> O-2, O-4 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-1
7	Develop and assist with implementation of both regional and county-specific projects/ activities identified in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Middle Georgia Economic Development District.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, EDA	<b>ED:</b> O-8, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-2, O-1, O-3 <b>H:</b> O-8
8	Undertake Local Economic Impact Analyses (LOCI) and other economic impact models to determine the extent of public benefit for economic development projects.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> I-4, I-7, O-2, O-11
9	Provide technical assistance to local governments with participation in the Certified Work Ready Communities and Work Ready Region programs.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-3, I-4, O-4 <b>ED:</b> I-7, O-8 <b>IC:</b> O-4, O-6 <b>H:</b> O-8
10	Provide technical assistance for the creation of local Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, and Redevelopment Plans.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA	<b>D:</b> O-2 <b>ED:</b> I-1, I-9, O-1, O-2, O-12

11	Assist Middle Georgia counties in a joint economic development initiative to market the entire region.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-3, I-4, O-2, O-4 <b>ED:</b> I-4, I-5, I-6, I-7, O-1, O-6, O-8, O-9, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-3, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-6
12	Provide technical assistance for the Georgia-Robins Aerospace Maintenance Partnership (G-RAMP).	2011-2013	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> O-5, O-8, O-11 <b>IC:</b> O-2
13	Promote, encourage, and engage in economic development initiatives and opportunities in respective Joint Development Authority regions.	2011-2015	TBD	CGJDA, MGRDA, etc.	<b>ED:</b> I-2, O-2, O-9, O-10 <b>CF:</b> I-2, O-1, O-4, O-6 <b>IC:</b> I-4, O-1, O-2
14	Promote Middle Georgia tourism industry (Historic Heartland & Magnolia Midlands).	2011-2015	TBD	GDEcD, HPAC	<b>ED:</b> O-4 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-5, O-6, O-15 <b>IC:</b> O-3, O-5
15	Promote and provide technical assistance with the implementation of Foreign Trade Zone and EB-5 Foreign Investor Program in all eligible areas of Middle Georgia.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> I-4, I-5, O-1, O-9, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-3, O-6
16	Provide technical assistance to local governments in the "Camera Ready" program of the Georgia Department of Economic Development to promote middle Georgia communities as locations for the film industry.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, GDEcD	<b>ED:</b> I-4, I-5, O-7, O-9 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-2 <b>IC:</b> I-1

## HOUSING

1	Assist local governments with researching, preparing, and administering Community Home Investment Program (CHIP) applications / awards.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>H:</b> O-4, O-6
2	Perform housing assessments and data collection as requested.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA, Local Governments	<b>H:</b> I-3
3	Promote, encourage, and participate in housing-related workshops, conferences, and symposiums.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>H:</b> I-1, O-1, O-3, O-6 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-6 <b>LU:</b> O-7
4	Partner with local governments, Housing Authorities, social service agencies, non-profits, etc. to promote housing options for those most in need.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>H:</b> I-1, I-2, I-4, I-5, O-2, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-7 <b>LU:</b> O-7
5	Provide technical assistance to local Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) communities.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA	<b>H:</b> I-1, O-3 <b>IC:</b> I-1 <b>LU:</b> O-7
6	Promote affordable housing options.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, DCA	<b>H:</b> I-2
7	Promote and provide for safe, clean, and affordable housing choices.	2011-2015	TBD	MHA, other local Housing Authorities	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-3, I-5, O-3 <b>H:</b> I-1, I-4, O-1, O-2, O-4, O-5 <b>IC:</b> I-1 <b>LU:</b> O-7

## NATURAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

1	Prepare, maintain, and promulgate a Regionally Important Resources (RIR) Plan.	2011-2015	\$12,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-4, I-5, I-6, O-8, O-10, O-12, O-14 <b>IC:</b> O-5 <b>LU:</b> I-1, I-6, I-9, O-10
2	Assist local governments with researching, preparing, and administering Land and Water Conservation Fund grant applications / awards.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3, O-10, O-12 <b>LU:</b> I-6, I-9
3	Provide technical assistance and services to the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition (MGCAC) to address air quality issues within the region.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-7, O-11 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-6
4	Provide support to GDOT for the Scenic Byway Program and assist local Byway sponsors with Corridor Management Plan (CMP) implementation.	2011-2015	\$10,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-9, O-10, O-15 <b>IC:</b> I-4, O-3, O-5 <b>LU:</b> I-4, O-10, O-11
5	Assist the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Environment and Location in providing historic resource support.	2011-2015	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-4 <b>IC:</b> I-4 <b>LU:</b> I-5
6	Conduct historic resources surveys for local governments; assist in preparing historic preservation grants, forms, nominations, and tax credit applications.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> O-3 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-2, O-14, O-16, O-17, O-18

7	Provide staffing and technical services to the Middle Georgia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee (HPAC).	2011-2015	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> O-4 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-4, O-6, O-8 <b>IC:</b> O-6
8	Maintain and update the Historic Middle Georgia website.	2011-2015	\$1,000 Annually	MGRC, HPAC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1 O-6
9	Provide outreach, training, and technical assistance on Historic Preservation-related topics through presentations at institutions, agencies, government meetings, workshops, symposiums, etc.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, HPD	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-5, O-6, O-8, O-17, O-18 <b>IC:</b> O-3, O-5, O-6 <b>LU:</b> I-7, I-8, O-6, O-11
10	Conduct and comment on Section 106-related undertakings involving historic resources.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5
11	Encourage and assist local governments in participating in the Certified Local Government Program; assist in the preparation and adoption of local preservation ordinances.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-6, O-2, O-3, O-7, O-13, O-16 <b>LU:</b> I-8, O-8, O-11
12	Provide technical assistance to local historic preservation organizations.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-4, O-5, O-6, O-16
13	Assist communities with state and federal historic preservation initiatives and programs including Better Hometown and Main Street Programs and the Preserve America Initiative.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC, HPD, DCA	<b>ED:</b> O-4, O-7 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-1, O-2

14	Provide technical assistance with implementation of Phase I development of Balls Ferry State Park.	2011-2014	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-3, O-8, O-10, <b>IC:</b> O-5 <b>LU:</b> I-6, O-10
15	Partner with Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in developing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plans, Watershed Improvement Plans, and Monitoring Reports for impacted stream segments in the region.	2011-2015	\$20,000 Annually	MGRC, EPD	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, I-2 <b>LU:</b> O-8
16	Assist local governments with implementing TMDL and Watershed Improvement Plans.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, I-2, I-5 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5, O-8
17	Partner with other Regional Commissions and prepare a feasibility study for development of a multi-region river corridor establishing linkage and connectivity through the use of multi-use trails, greenways, conservation areas, and recreational facilities along the Ocmulgee River and Oconee River, starting in Athens-Clarke County and ending at Jackson Lake in Butts County.	2011-2012	\$80,000	MGRC, NEGRC, TRRC, HOGA RC	<b>ED:</b> O-4 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, O-1, O-8, O-10, O-12, O-14 <b>IC:</b> I-2, I-3, O-1, O-5, O-6 <b>LU:</b> I-6, I-9, O-1, O-10
18	Develop and implement Regional Water Plans through Regional Water Councils (Upper Oconee & Middle Ocmulgee).	2011-2015	TBD	DNR/EPD	<b>CF:</b> I-2, I-6, O-2, O-3 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, I-2, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5

## TRANSPORTATION

1	Provide assistance to local governments with local transit planning.	2011-2015	\$25,000 Annually	MGRC	T: I-4, I-5, I-6, O-2, O-3,
2	Assist GDOT and local sponsors with implementation of TE Program and related activities.	2011-2015	\$8,000 Annually	MGRC	T: I-5, O-6 IC: I-4 LU: I-4
3	Provide staffing and technical services to the Macon Area Transportation Study (MATS).	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	T: I-1, I-6, O-1, O-2, O-3
4	Provide staffing and technical services to the Warner Robins Area Transportation Study (WRATS).	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	T: I-1, I-6, O-1, O-2, O-3
5	Incorporate into local comprehensive plans, policies and strategies that will link growth management and transportation system improvements.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	T: I-6, I-7, O-5, O-7 IC: I-4, O-1, LU: I-1, I-2, O-1
6	Provide assistance with determining feasibility of a Regional Mass Transit System.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	T: I-4, O-2, O-3, O-4 IC: I-1, I-3, O-1, O-6
7	Maintain and update the Middle Georgia Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian website.	2011-2015	\$5,000 Annually	MGRC	T: I-5, O-5, O-6, O-7

8	Provide assistance in the update of the WRATS socio-economic database, (i.e. population, housing, employment, median income, and school enrollment) using a variety of data sources.	2011-2015	\$12,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, O-3 <b>T:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3 <b>IC:</b> I-4, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-7, O-1
9	Administer Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transportation Program in the Middle Georgia region.	2011-2015	\$70,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>T:</b> I-4, O-2, O-3 <b>IC:</b> I-3
10	Develop Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans for Baldwin, Peach, Putnam, Pulaski, and Monroe Counties, to include all of their municipalities.	2011-2015	\$175,000	MGRC	<b>T:</b> I-5, I-7, O-4, O-5, O-6,
11	Prepare Pedestrian Facility/Sidewalk Infrastructure Improvement Plans for the Cities of Centerville, Gray, and Irwinton.	2012-2015	\$45,000	MGRC	<b>T:</b> I-5, I-7, O-4, O-5, O-6
12	Prepare Walkability / Bikeability Assessments in various Middle Georgia communities.	2012-2015	\$30,000	MGRC	<b>T:</b> I-5, I-7, O-4, O-5, O-6 <b>LU:</b> I-2, I-5, O-10
13	Develop and distribute brochures to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety, inter-regional bicycle routes, and multi-use trails network.	2011-2015	\$15,000	MGRC	<b>T:</b> I-5, O-4, O-5, O-6 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-9, O-10

14	Facilitate presentations to local governments, business and civic organizations, and other entities promoting interregional bicycle routes, multi-use trails network, and bicycle and pedestrian safety.	2011-2015	\$30,000	MGRC	<b>T:</b> I-5, O-4, O-5, O-6 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> O-9, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-4, O-1, O-5
15	Conduct Multi-County and Small Area Transportation Studies.	2011-2015	TBD	GDOT	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>T:</b> I-4, O-3 <b>IC:</b> I-4, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-2, I-5, O-1
16	Provide technical assistance to local governments on implementation of the Transportation Investment Act of 2010.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>ED:</b> O-3 <b>T:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3, I-7, O-1, O-3 <b>CF:</b> O-4, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-4, O-1

## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

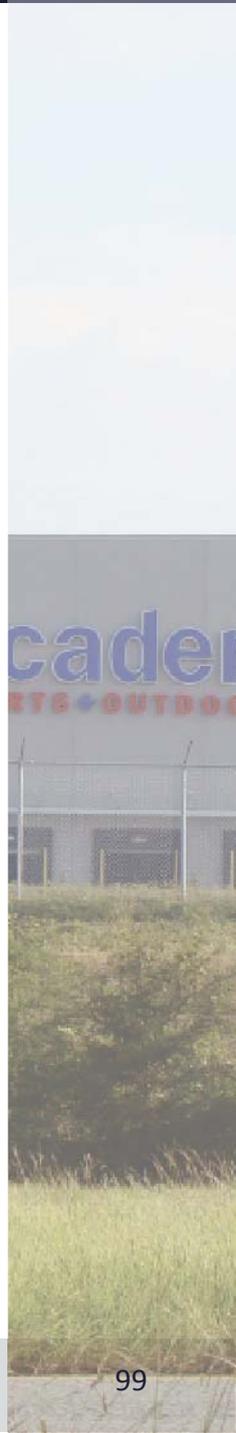
1	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade or develop new law enforcement, fire protection, and emergency management facilities and services.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3, I-7, O-1, O-6
2	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade or develop new recreational facilities and services.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-3, I-8, O-6, O-7, O-8, O-9
3	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade or develop new community facilities and services, such as Senior Centers, Head Start, Workforce Development Boys and Girls Clubs, Libraries, etc.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, I-5, O-3, O-5 <b>ED:</b> I-1 <b>CF:</b> I-2, I-3, O-1, O-6, O-10
4	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade or develop new government administration facilities.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-2, O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-2, I-3, I-4, O-6, O-10
5	Assist local governments in efforts to upgrade and/or extend water/sewer infrastructure.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, O-3 <b>ED:</b> I-2, I-8 <b>CF:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3, I-5, I-6, I-9, O-1, O-2, O-3, O-4, O-5, O-10
6	Create, maintain, promote, and host web pages for local governments, development authorities, and other regional entities.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>ED:</b> O-9, O-10 <b>CF:</b> I-2, O-1, O-3 <b>IC:</b> I-1

7	Create, maintain, and promote internet-based map services.	2011-2015	TBD	Local Governments & MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-3, O-6, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-4
8	Provision of water and sewer in respective service areas.	2011-2015	TBD	Local Authorities & Local Governments	<b>D:</b> I-2 <b>CF:</b> I-1, I-2, I-5, O-2, O-4, O-5, O-6 <b>LU:</b> I-5
9	Provision of electricity and energy services.	2011-2015	TBD	EMCs, Georgia Power	<b>D:</b> I-2 <b>ED:</b> I-2 <b>CF:</b> I-2, I-3, O-1, O-5 <b>LU:</b> I-5
10	Create road and structure point data layers to support E-911 mapping services.	2011-2012	TBD	GEMA, Local Governments, MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-2 <b>CF:</b> I-3, I-7 <b>LU:</b> I-5
11	Explore the feasibility of acquiring highly accurate elevation (LiDAR) data and region-wide ortho-aerial photography.	2011-2014	TBD	Local Governments, MGRC, USGS, NOAA, FEMA	<b>D:</b> I-1, O-2 <b>ED:</b> O-3 <b>T:</b> I-2, I-3 <b>CF:</b> I-9, O-7, O-8 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-4

## LAND USE

1	Assist local governments with development and preparation of Solid Waste Management Plans.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>LU:</b> I-5, I-7, O-1, O-8
2	Assist local governments with development and preparation of Comprehensive Plans.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-1, I-2, O-1, O-3 <b>LU:</b> I-1, I-2, I-6, I-7, O-1, O-2, O-9
3	Assist local governments in the preparation/modification and adoption of local land-use ordinances, zoning ordinances, and/or development regulations.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-1 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-5, I-6 <b>LU:</b> I-7, I-8, O-1, O-8, O-9, O-11
4	Administer and manage the Developments of Regional Impact (DRI) program in the Middle Georgia region.	2011-2015	\$40,000	MGRC, DCA	<b>D:</b> O-1, O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-2, O-5, O-10 <b>LU:</b> I-5, I-6, I-7, I-9, O-1, O-2, O-3
5	Coordinate implementation of action item from 2004 Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) and update and revise JLUS as needed.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>LU:</b> I-1, I-5, O-2, O-3 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-4, O-1, O-6
6	Promote growth and development in areas that can be efficiently served by existing infrastructure.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> I-3, O-7, O-12 <b>LU:</b> I-2, I-3, I-5, O-2, O-4, O-5
7	Encourage the placement of new schools near existing infrastructure.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> I-3, O-7 <b>CF:</b> I-2, O-1, O-10 <b>LU:</b> I-5, O-4

8	Assist communities with updating Floodplain Management Plans/Regulations to address new Flood Insurance Studies (FIS) and Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) issued by FEMA.	2011-2013	TBD	MGRC, FEMA	<b>D:</b> I-2 <b>CF:</b> I-9, O-3 <b>LU:</b> I-1, I-5, O-8
9	Provide Geographic Information Systems (GIS) digital mapping and Global Positioning System (GPS) data collection services to local governments.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>ED:</b> O-3 <b>H:</b> I-3 <b>T:</b> I-6 <b>IC:</b> I-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5, I-7



# Review

#	ACTIVITY	TIMEFRAME	ESTIMATED COST	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	ISSUES/OPPORTUNITIES ADDRESSED
1	Conduct Intergovernmental Consultation Reviews (Executive Order 12372) to ensure consistency of proposed projects with regional and local planning documents.	2011-2015	\$12,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-1, <b>LU:</b> I-1, I-5, O-2 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-2, I-4 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-4, O-1
2	Review and comment on long-range transportation plans for consistency with the Regional Plan.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-3 <b>T:</b> I-1, I-2, I-3, I-6 <b>IC:</b> I-1, I-2, I-4, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-2, I-4, I-5, I-7
3	Review and comment on developments in close proximity to resources identified in the Regionally Important Resources (RIR) Plan.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> I-2 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-1, I-4, I-5, I-6, O-1, O-3, O-8, O-12, O-14 <b>IC:</b> I-1, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5, I-7, O-10
4	Review all Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) submitted by neighboring Regional Commissions.	2011-2015	\$40,000 Annually	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-1, O-3 <b>CF:</b> I-2, O-5, O-10 <b>IC:</b> I-4, O-1 <b>LU:</b> I-5, I-7, O-1, O-2, O-3
5	Review statewide plans and programs for local and regional application.	2011-2015	TBD	MGRC	<b>D:</b> O-1, O-3 <b>ED:</b> O-9 <b>H:</b> O-7 <b>T:</b> I-1, O-1, O-4 <b>N/C/H-R:</b> I-7, O-3, O-5, O-15, O-18 <b>IC:</b> O-5, O-6 <b>LU:</b> I-9, O-9, O-10

## *EVALUATION and MONITORING*

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

- Accomplish 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 minimum standard, but will also be used to assess each local government's progress towards Plan implementation.
- Perform Biennial Quality Community Objectives (QCO) Assessments to evaluate current and planned policies, activities, and development patterns in the region.
- Administer periodic regional stakeholder surveys to assess needed changes or modifications to 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).

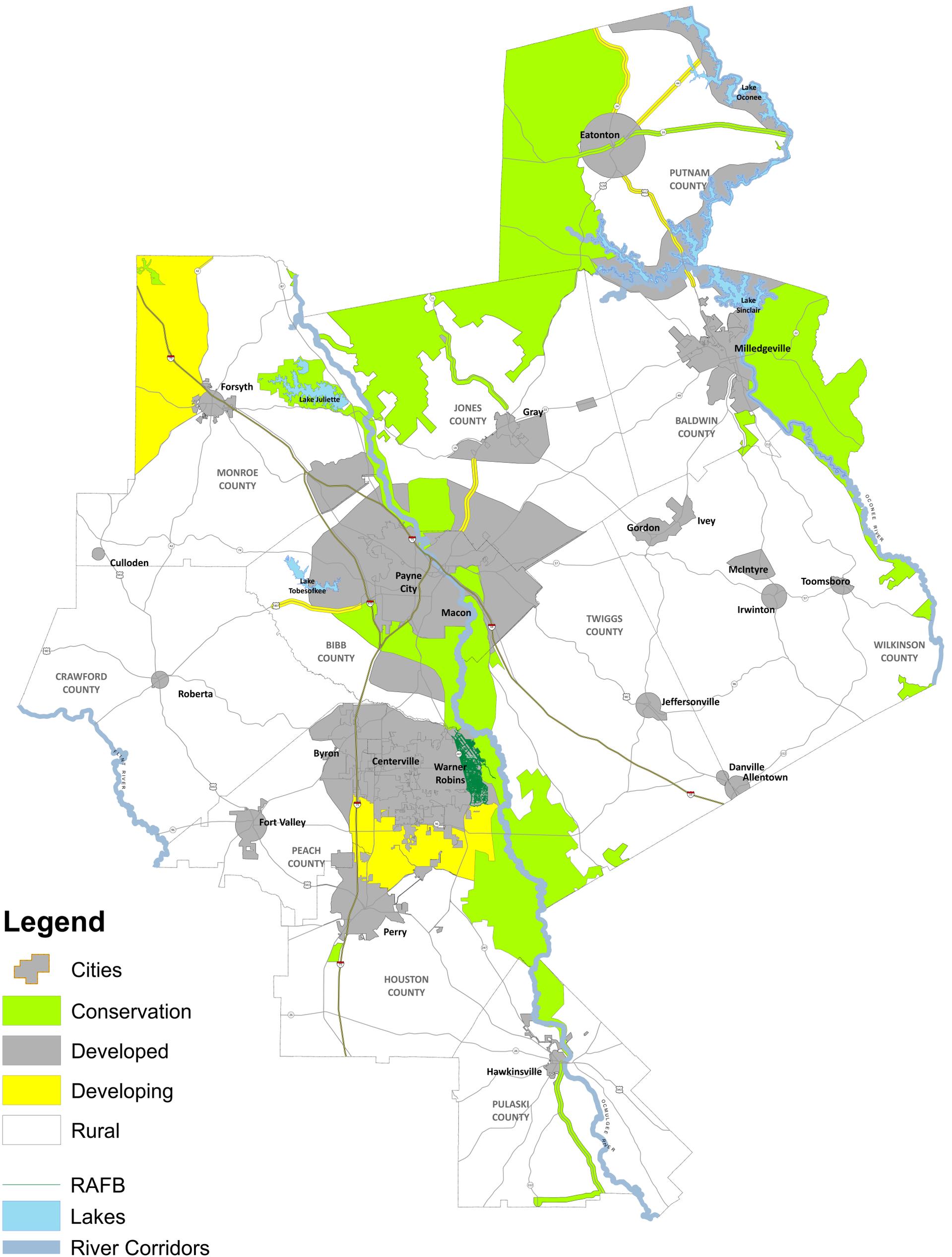
The Middle Georgia Regional Commission will provide the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an annual Evaluation and Monitoring Report that includes: a description of the monitoring activities and evaluation procedures undertaken over the course of the previous year, a synopsis of the results 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 - Maps**

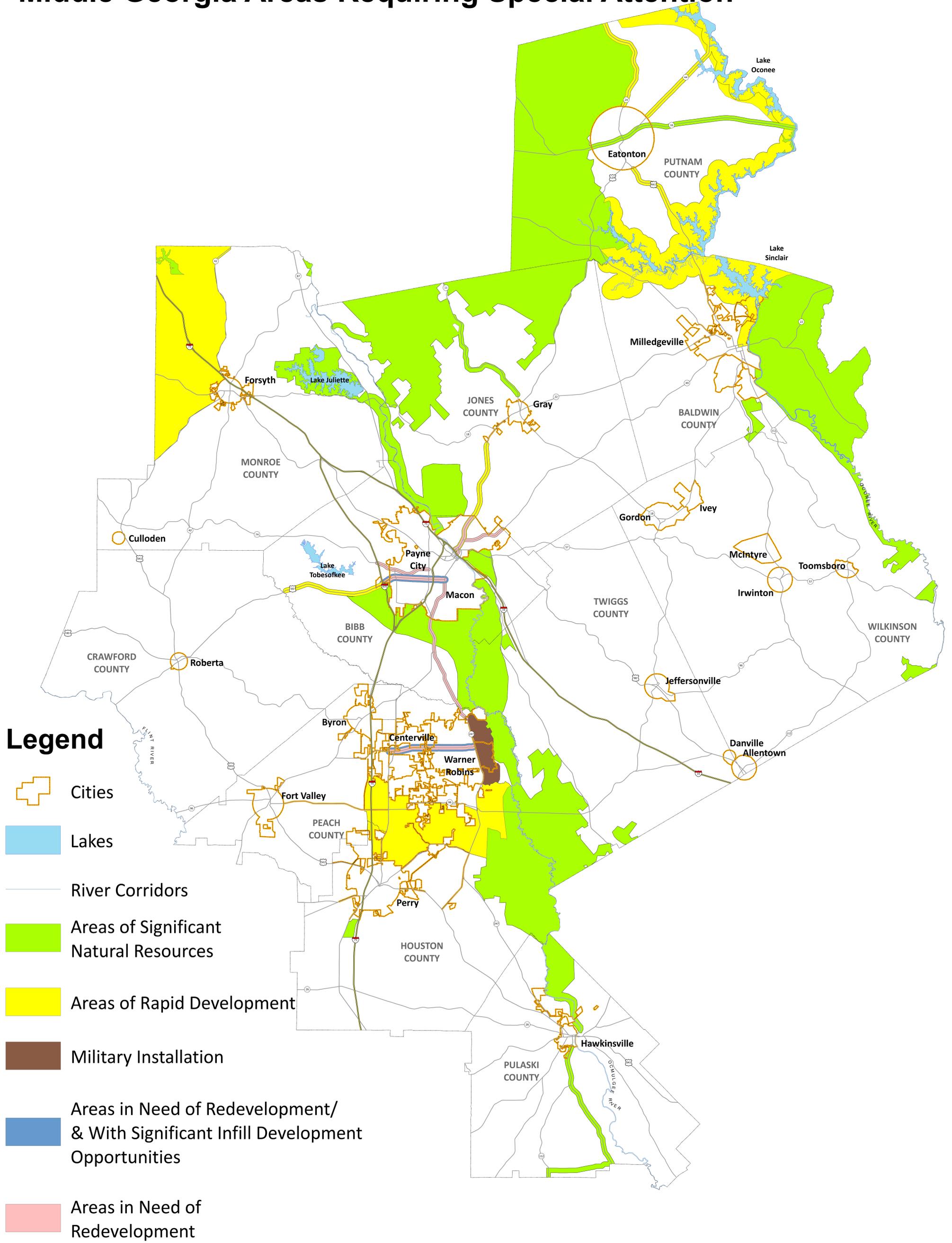
# Regional Development Map



## Legend

-  Cities
-  Conservation
-  Developed
-  Developing
-  Rural
-  RAFB
-  Lakes
-  River Corridors

# Middle Georgia Areas Requiring Special Attention





## Appendix B - Survey Results

<b>Question 1: Middle Georgia is a unique place with a character that distinguishes it from other places.</b>					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
11	12	0	2	0	25
44.00%	48.00%	0.00%	8.00%	0.00%	100%

<b>Question 2: There is an adequate supply of housing that is affordable in Middle Georgia.</b>					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
0	15	2	7	1	25
0.00%	60.00%	8.00%	28.00%	4.00%	100%

<b>Question 3: The overall quality of the environment (water, air, etc.) in Middle Georgia is _____.</b>					
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total	
4	12	9	0	25	
16.00%	48.00%	36.00%	0.00%	100%	

<b>Question 4: It is important to protect the historic and cultural resources in Middle Georgia.</b>					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
12	12	0	1	0	25
48.00%	48.00%	0.00%	4.00%	0.00%	100%

<b>Question 5: More sidewalks, trails, and bikeways should be provided for both recreational and transportation uses.</b>					
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral/No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
10	11	2	2	0	25
40.00%	44.00%	8.00%	8.00%	0.00%	100%

**Question 6: Please list three things that you LIKE about the Middle Georgia Region:**  
 Textarea and Textfield results are not displayed.

**Question 7: Please list three things that you DISLIKE about the Middle Georgia Region:**  
 Textarea and Textfield results are not displayed.



<b>Question 8: Do you view sprawl as a problem facing the communities of Middle Georgia?</b>				
Yes	No	Neutral/No Opinion	Total	
14	9	2	25	
56.00%	36.00%	8.00%	100%	

<b>Question 9: Are there sufficient outdoor recreational facility and opportunities available in Middle Georgia (e.g. boating, fishing, biking, hunting, etc.)?</b>				
Yes	No	Neutral/No Opinion	Total	
10	14	1	25	
40.00%	56.00%	4.00%	100%	

<b>Question 10: How important is it to protect and preserve farmland? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	0	5	9	11	25
0.00%	0.00%	20.00%	36.00%	44.00%	100%

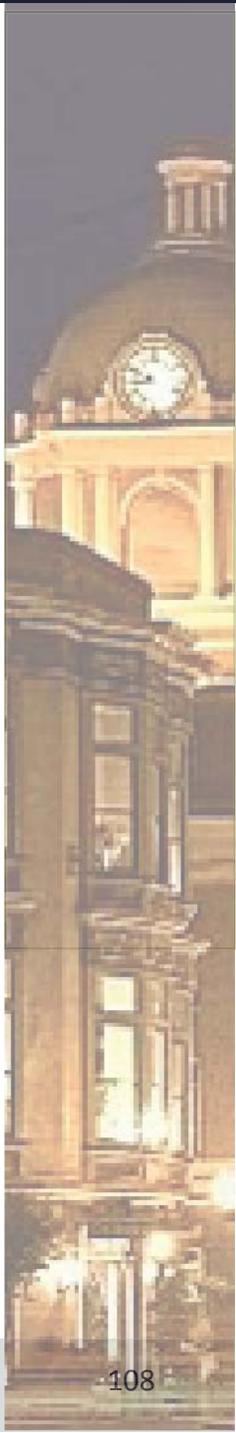
<b>Question 11: How important is it to provide a range of housing choices? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	0	6	7	12	25
0.00%	0.00%	24.00%	28.00%	48.00%	100%

<b>Question 12: How important is it to increase employment opportunities? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	0	2	2	21	25
0.00%	0.00%	8.00%	8.00%	84.00%	100%

<b>Question 13: How important is it to provide public services (e.g. streets, schools, police, fire, etc.)? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	0	0	6	19	25
0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	24.00%	76.00%	100%



<b>Question 14: How important is it to build more trails (both biking and walking)? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	2	7	11	4	25
4.00%	8.00%	28.00%	44.00%	16.00%	100%
<b>Question 15: How important is it to preserve the history and heritage of Middle Georgia? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	1	2	7	15	25
0.00%	4.00%	8.00%	28.00%	60.00%	100%
<b>Question 16: How important is it to manage traffic? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	1	1	8	15	25
0.00%	4.00%	4.00%	32.00%	60.00%	100%
<b>Question 17: How important is it to purchase open space? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
2	1	8	8	6	25
8.00%	4.00%	32.00%	32.00%	24.00%	100%
<b>Question 18: How important is it to improve the region-wide transportation system? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	1	4	5	15	25
0.00%	4.00%	16.00%	20.00%	60.00%	100%
<b>Question 19: How important is it to create more parks? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>					
1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	2	6	8	8	25
4.00%	8.00%	24.00%	32.00%	32.00%	100%



<b>Question 20: How important is it to build more sidewalks? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	2	8	11	4		25
0.00%	8.00%	32.00%	44.00%	16.00%		100%
<b>Question 21: How important is it to rehabilitate buildings in downtown commercial areas? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	1	1	10	12		25
4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	40.00%	48.00%		100%
<b>Question 22: How important are street/drainage improvements? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	1	3	9	11		25
4.00%	4.00%	12.00%	36.00%	44.00%		100%
<b>Question 23: How important are water/sewer improvements? (1 low importance and 5 High importance)</b>						
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
0	1	3	10	11		25
0.00%	4.00%	12.00%	40.00%	44.00%		100%





Middle Georgia Regional Commission