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April 28, 2022

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

RE: Draft Regional Plan Update Submittal

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SW GA RC) has completed an update of its Regional Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

We certify that the SW GA RC has conducted the two public hearings and, at a minimum, has involved regional stakeholders in the development of the plan and completed the participation techniques in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (Chapter 110-12-6), and in a manner appropriate to our region's dynamics and resources. Evidence of this has been included with our submittal in accordance with Chapter 110-12-6(5)(d).

I certify that appropriate regional staff and decision-makers have reviewed the following documents and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan: Georgia Regional Water Plan covering our area and the Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria (O.C.G.A. 12-2-8), Georgia' Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, Regional Water Plans, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), MPO Plan (DARTS) Plan, and adjacent Regional Commission's Regional Plans and taken them into consideration in formulating our plan.

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Barbara Reddick at Southwest Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 522-3552 or at breddick@swgrc.org.

Sincerely,

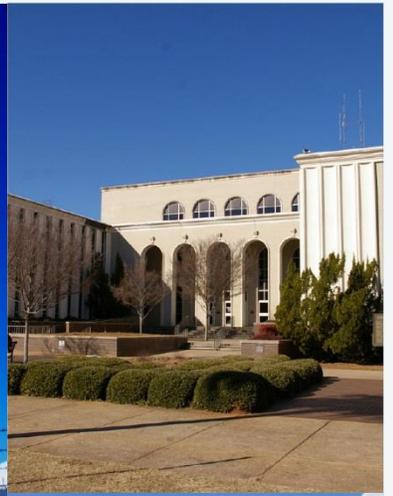
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elaine Mays".

Elaine Mays
SW GA RC Chairman Emeritus

Enclosures

Serving all of Southwest Georgia

Baker.Calhoun.Colquitt.Decatur.Dougherty.Early.Grady.Lee.Miller.Mitchell.Seminole.Terrell.Thomas.Worth

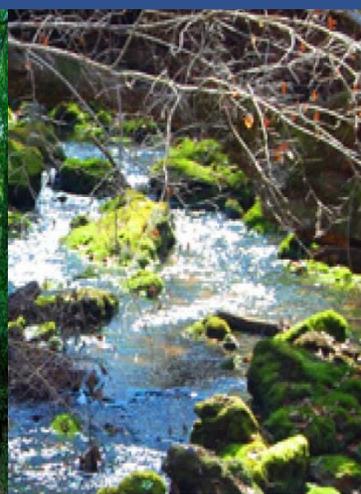



 Southwest Georgia
 Regional Commission

REGIONAL PLAN

2022 - 2026

(Draft)



Region 10

Southwest Georgia
Regional Commission
service area that includes
the Georgia 2nd and 8th
Congressional Districts.
The counties in the
Georgia 2nd Congressional
District: Terrell, Lee,
Dougherty, Calhoun,
Early, Miller, Baker,
Mitchell, Seminole,
Decatur, and Grady. The
Georgia 8th Congressional
Districts in the service
area are Worth, Colquitt,
and Thomas counties.



Baker County

City of Newton

Calhoun County

City of Arlington

City of Edison

City of Leary

City of Morgan

Colquitt County

City of Berlin

City of Doerun

City of Ellenton

City of Funston

City of Moultrie

City of Norman
Park

Decatur County

City of Attapulugus

City of Bainbridge

City of Brinson

City of Climax

Dougherty County

City of Albany

Early County

City of Blakely

City of Damascus

City of Jakin

Grady County

City of Cairo

City of Whigham

Lee County

City of Leesburg

City of Smithville

Miller County

City of Colquitt

Mitchell County

City of Baconton

City of Camilla

City of Pelham

City of Sale City

Seminole County

City of Donalsonville

City of Iron City

Terrell County

City of Bronwood

City of Dawson

City of Parrott

City of Sasser

Thomas County

City of Boston

City of Cooldige

City of Meigs

City of Ochlocknee

City of Thomasville

Worth County

City of Poulan

City of Sumner

City of Sylvester

City of Warwick



Prepared by :
Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Staff

Steering Committee

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- Debra Bell-Dison, USDA Area Director
- Rhonda Gordon, Executive Director Golden Triangle RC&D
- Sharon Edwards, Executive Director, Community Outreach Training Center
- Randy Weldon, CEO of Southwest Georgia Community Action Council
- Jami Harper Community Program Manager, SOWEGA Council on Aging
- Jessica Jennings, Baker/Mitchell Family Connection
- Lisa Rigsby, Director, De Soto Trail Regional Library
- Pate Council, Assistant Director, De Soto Trail Regional Library
- Keirston McMillan, Sheena Stephens, Barbara Reddick, Jeff Hamilton, Southwest Georgia Regional Commission

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Calhoun County: Commissioner Charlie Williams, Councilman Darryl Warren, Mrs. Benny Flowers – Private Sector

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Decatur County: Commissioner Steve Brock, Councilman, Kregg Close, Mrs. Revonn Miller – Private Sector, Mr. Billy Poppell – Additional Member

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Terrell County: Commissioner Earnest Johnson Councilman Sondra Walker Mr. Doug Powell – Private Sector

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Worth County: Commissioner Kemp Willis Councilman Christopher Wheeler Mr. Melvin Harris, Sr. – Private Sector

Table of Contents

06 - Executive Summary

07 - The Stakeholder Involvement Summary

09 - Regional Goal Summary

10 - List of Regional Goals

11 - Regional Policies

12 - Regional Survey Analysis

13 - Regional Development Map

14 - Areas Requiring Special Attention

15 - Areas In Need of Redevelopment

17 - Defining Narratives for Areas Requiring Special Attention

20 - Areas of Rapid Development

21 - Threatened Regionally Important Resources

25 - Areas of Significant Infill Potential

29 - Areas of Significant Disinvestment

32 - Regional Issues & Opportunities

36 - Broadband

38 - Economic Resilience

42 - Implementation Program

43 - Performance Standards

52 - Report of Accomplishments

64 - Regional Work Program

77 - Guiding Principles

82 - Evaluation and Monitoring

84 - Appendices

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Region 10 is comprised of fourteen counties and forty-three cities with a population of 352,426 according to the last Census. In most counties, the population is decreasing; however, some counties have grown. Our region has a rich history, a strong sense of community, and an agricultural base that makes it unique. The region has abundant natural and cultural resources, making our region attractive to mid-size to large businesses. Poverty is something that always impacts growth or development; however, growth continues to occur in half of our counties. The past two years have been challenging to say the least. The COVID-19 pandemic opened our eyes to gaps in our broadband infrastructure and motivated us to conduct business differently. Natural disasters, high winds, tornadoes, and hurricanes have impacted our housing stock, and more families live in substandard housing.

The Regional Plan is a comprehensive analysis of the region based on the community's local plans and other secondary data. The plan describes how the region is growing and developing. We received feedback from local governments and other stakeholders in the region. Online surveys were made available for almost one year to obtain input from citizens. The rules that govern Regional Planning (110-12-6-.06(3)) were established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) under the provisions of Georgia state law 50-8-1 and require the Regional Plan to be completed.

The purpose of the plan is to:

- Articulate the vision for the future of the region.
- Generate pride and enthusiasm about the future of the region.
- Engage the interest of regional policymakers and stakeholders in implementing the plan.
- Provide a guide to everyday decision-making for use by government officials and other regional leaders.

REGIONAL VISION

The vision for Southwest Georgia is to create solid and vital communities that preserve their small-town character while pursuing economic growth that respects our agricultural heritage improves the quality of life and supports the development of future generations.

THE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

The Regional Plan is an analysis of the comprehensive plans for the region. The issues and opportunities were reviewed for commonalities. Strategies were developed to address these issues. Stakeholder engagement is extremely important and hard to obtain, especially since the COVID -19 pandemic.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most engagement has been virtual, with few in-person meetings. This has worked well for some age groups; however, most individuals have embraced the virtual world for the most part.

Our stakeholders for the region are numerous. They comprise communities with only a few hundred people to those with thousands of people. Our approach was designed to be responsive and inclusive of both groups. The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Council comprised public and private representatives of the region, so we used this group to serve as our steering committee. We also reached out to specific regional partners and community-based organizations for participation.

Digital Marketing

Stakeholder involvement for the Regional Plan included posting on our website, and social media announcements.

Listening Sessions

We conducted five listening sessions in various locations throughout the region.

In Person Meetings

Communities had the opportunity to aid in the development of the regional Vision, provide feedback and to learn about the Performance Standards

Staff Hosted Virtual Meetings

With the residents of each county to get valuable feedback for the regional plan.

...

Regional Community Survey

Distributed in 2021 and stayed active in 2022 to solicit information on community issues.

Press Release

Announcements were sent to all regional newspapers to advertise the Regional Plan meetings.

In addition, two additional virtual meetings were undertaken to secure input. Participation in the meetings and survey was not robust; however, combining all these outreach methods yielded significant results.

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission partnered with Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute Center for Economic Development Research to develop an Economic Recovery and Resilience Strategic Plan. To create ERRSP, Georgia Tech utilized stakeholder interviews and research. We will use the ERRSP to capture feedback from stakeholders in areas that align with the Regional Plan (e.g., housing, economic development, transportation, etc.). This additional perspective on the region made the stakeholder participation process more prosperous. This allowed the RC to formulate the needs and opportunities, as well as strategies and specific actions for Region 10.

KEY PRIORITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A list of needs and opportunities were developed based on multiple consultations with the Steering Committee, SWOT Analysis, online surveys, listening sessions, virtual meetings, and regional and secondary data. From these discussions and other information, it was determined that our region faces many challenges as a rural region, yet we still have many things to be proud of. However, issues that are of concern include persistent poverty, economic development, housing, land use, broadband, community facilities, and local and regional coordination



This S.W.O.T. analysis can be found in more detail in the ERRSP LOCATED ON OUR WEBSITE.

<https://www.swgrcplanning.org/strategic-plan.html>

KEY STRATEGIES AND SPECIFIC ACTION

The primary focus for the next five years will be the Regional Work Program (RWP), which contains actionable projects measured annually that address the needs and opportunities identified in this plan. The RWP action items include topics and issues that depend on a collaborative effort between local, state, and federal partner agencies, economic development organizations, nonprofit and community-based organizations, and the private sector. The implementation depends on available funding, state and regional priorities, and current issues and concerns.

REGIONAL GOAL SUMMARY

Regional planning seeks to achieve the comprehensive development of the entire region. It seeks the development of all municipalities, which advances us all as a region. The Regional Plan parallels the framework in the comprehensive plans, and as cities and counties are strengthened, the region is made more robust. Over the years, communities have adopted plans and programs that dealt with housing, economic development, transportation, natural and cultural resources, and others. Each of these plans is interrelated in its planning goals, policy approach, and performance monitoring approach. The Regional Plan seeks to coordinate these plans for overall effectiveness in meeting regional quality of life goals. These goals will serve as a guide for future growth and development.

The region has not experienced significant growth, except for a few cities and counties with marginal increases. With the lack of change, the Regional Plan must go beyond what is called for and be forced to look ahead to accommodate the lack of growth and its effects on each goal listed below:



LIST OF REGIONAL GOALS

HOUSING

The region will have safe, affordable owner-occupied and rental housing for various families and income types.

TRANSPORTATION

The region will increase mobility, walkability, and transportation choices.

INDUSTRY ATTRACTION and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The region will have an educated, trained workforce that can meet the demand of current industries and attract new industries.

ECONOMIC RESILIENCY RECOVERY

The region will build capacity for long-term economic impact and invest in communities and economies that advance critical infrastructure and enhance downtowns and small businesses.

DIGITAL ECONOMY/BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

The region will accelerate the development of a strong digital economy and the ability to attract and grow businesses, entrepreneurship, tourism, and innovation.

EDUCATION

The region will provide training and quality educational opportunities that improve worker skills and meet the demands of a changing workforce.

LOCAL and REGIONAL COORDINATION

The region will develop leadership that promotes regional cooperation and collaborative public and private partnerships.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

The region will create safe, healthy, and equitable communities for all people to live, work and play.

NATURAL and CULTURAL RESOURCES

The region will preserve, protect, and promote natural, cultural, ecological, and scenic assets and resources.

LAND USE

The region will protect and conserve land resources through a coordinated long-term land-use plan that balances conservation with development needs.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES and SERVICES

The region will maintain and build structures that enable the community to deliver public and emergency services that create a safe community for all residents and businesses.

REGIONAL POLICIES

Housing: Promote a range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in the region.

Encourage the development of housing that is reflective of all economic profiles.

Create regional and local funding programs that provide for housing rehabilitation continuously.

Prioritize housing needs by developing housing plans and assessments.

Transportation: Improve the transportation system to attract industry and improve mobility.

Foster livable communities where coordinated transportation, housing, and commercial development give people access to affordable and environmentally sustainable transportation.

Industry Attraction and Workforce Development: Expand efforts to attract new industries and support and retain current businesses and entrepreneurs. Grow the economy by amplifying business recruitment and expansion efforts, strengthening technology, innovation, and generating more high-paying jobs.

Economic Resiliency Recovery: Intergovernmental collaboration in economic development and long-range planning to create strategies for the region's future, including digital economy, supply-chain disruptions, inflation, and inequality.

Digital Economy/Broadband Infrastructure: Build a strong digital economy with the ability to attract and grow businesses, entrepreneurship, tourism, and innovation and accelerate the development of Information Communication Technologies.

Education: Create training and quality educational opportunities that improve worker skills and meet the demands of a changing high-tech workforce. Increase graduation rates and strengthen the link between local schools, colleges, and universities.

Local and Regional Coordination: Strengthen intergovernmental coordination in all community and economic development areas. Invest in local and regional partnerships that leverage available natural, geographic, and infrastructure assets.

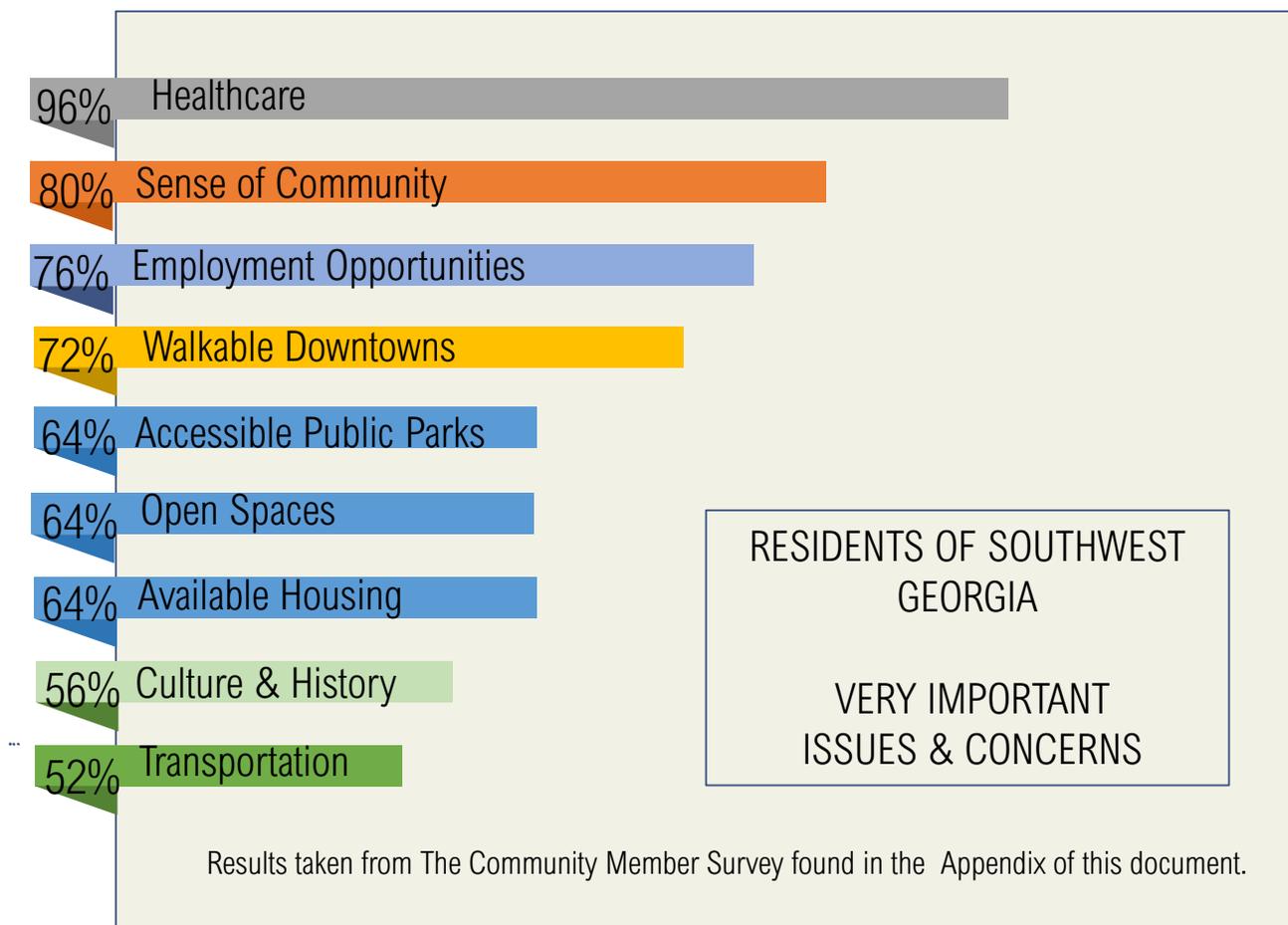
Community Health: Improve the health systems and reduce the effects of health disparities. Address food insecurities and their negative consequences. Create safe, inclusive, and engaging communities

Natural Resources: Environmental planning that protects and regulates natural habitats and renewable natural resources.

Land Use: Develop policies that examine land use issues and the social, economic, political, legal, and physical aspects of urban and rural land use.

REGIONAL ANALYSIS SURVEY

The survey was developed utilizing the quality community objectives to assess community needs. The survey contained thirty-one open and closed-ended questions and available to the public from June 2021 through April 2022. Twenty-five participants responded to the survey region-wide. The question with the highest percentage of responses was, “As a resident of southwest Georgia, how important is healthcare to you?” 96% of the respondents indicated it was very important. Healthcare has always been important, but residents may place higher importance on this issue due to the pandemic. 80% of respondents also thought a sense of community was very important. Other priority issues included employment opportunities (76% of respondents), walkable neighborhoods (72% of respondents), accessible public parks, open spaces, and housing, all received 64% responses, while culture and history were 56%, and transportation was 52%. Several factors could have influenced the importance of these issues. Recent tornadoes and hurricanes in the region have impacted the housing stock and left damage to infrastructure and community facilities. Please see the appendix for more detailed responses and a copy of the survey instrument.



REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAP

The Regional Development Map visually displays what land is most susceptible to the development of change and illustrates the desired future land use patterns.

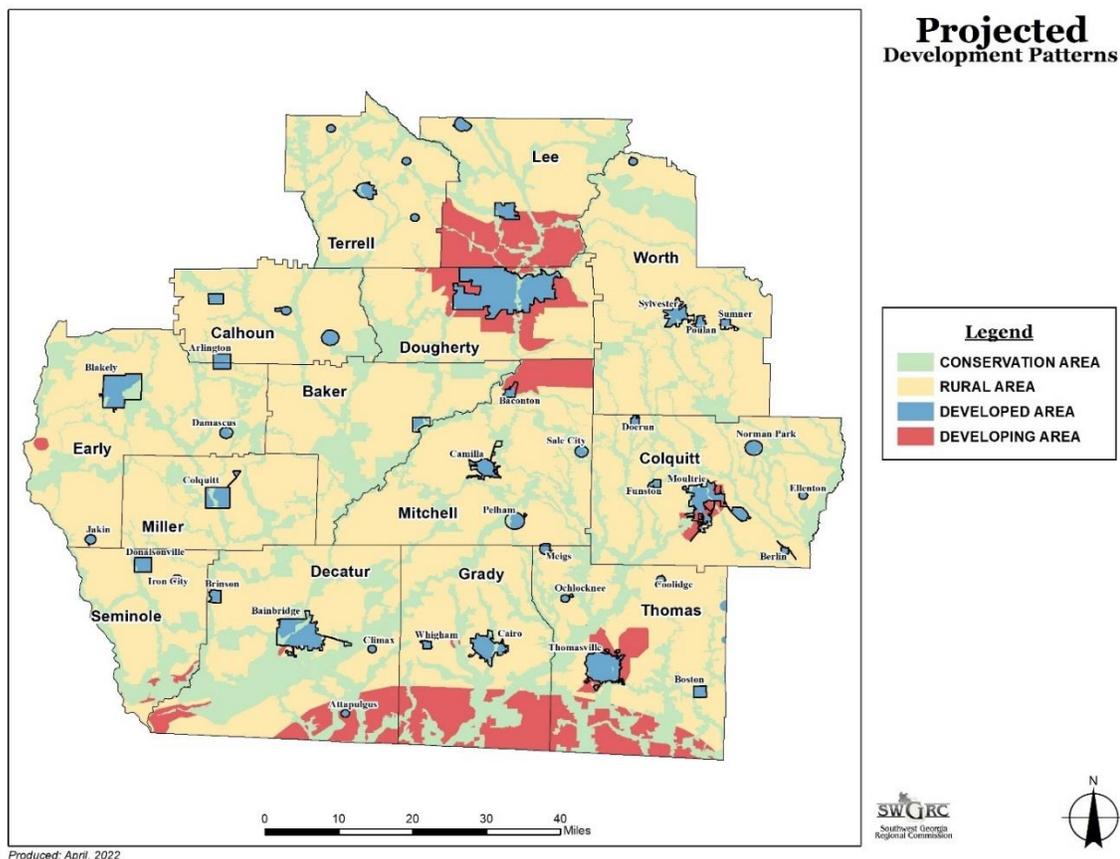
The Regional Development Map illustrates desired future land use patterns using the following categories:

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

Rural: Areas not expected to become urbanized or require the provision of urban services during the planning period.

Developed: Areas exhibiting urban-type development patterns and where urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) are already being provided.

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



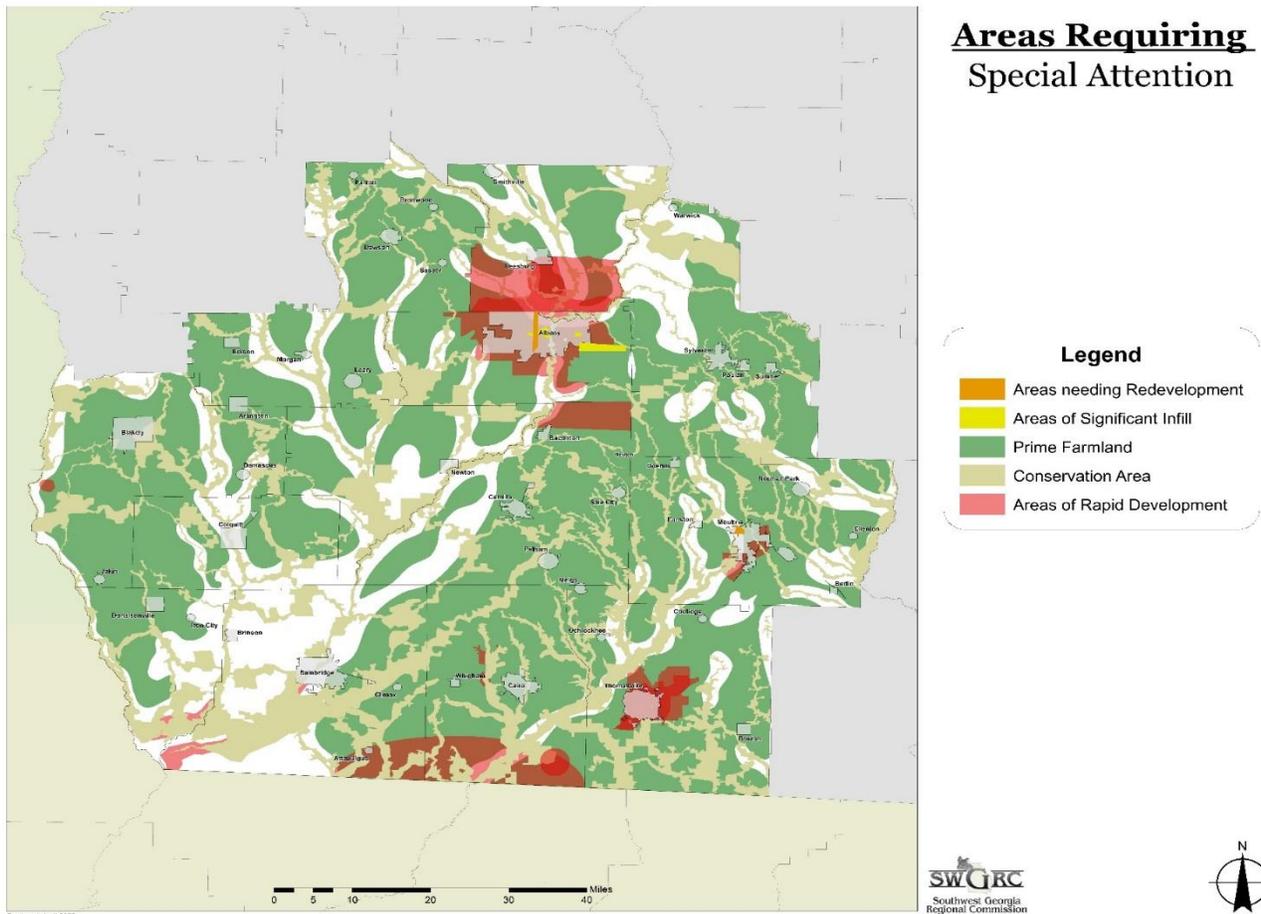
View a larger version of this map in the Appendix of this document

AREAS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION

Areas Requiring Special Attention may need to be monitored due to potential conflicts with economic development opportunities. Solutions to big community problems will be solved locally using the available tools.

Rural economies are particularly taxed in adapting and making changes because of their small size, geographic isolation, low population density, lack of employment diversification, and dependence on outside funding streams.

The potential development opportunities for these unique areas require special planning considerations above and beyond basic land-use policies. Some may require a small area study or plan or updates or changes to existing zoning regulations and districts to support the character of the existing area by requiring development design standards. Any study conducted should pay special attention to potential historic sites within the regions to facilitate preservation.



AREAS IN NEED OF REDEVELOPMENT

Redevelopment is appropriate when properties lie vacant or underutilized for an extended period. Redevelopment can help a community. After all, a half-empty, deteriorating shopping center isn't good for any community, but it can bring revitalization and spur further development and growth when it's developed. The redevelopment also provides increased tax revenue, more jobs, or both. Reusing buildings is a much greener option than building new ones. Another plus to more recent development is that they tend to be more pedestrian and bike-friendly. Many features can be incorporated into the new development that encourages less driving and walking. New, exciting development can also be destinations for tourists and new residents alike, who bring more activity and spending to the area. Several communities in the region have targeted redevelopment activities in their Urban Redevelopment Plans (URP) (Moultrie, Pelham, Camilla, Thomasville, and Colquitt, Georgia). Urban Redevelopment Plans typically involve demolition and reconstruction or substantial renovation of existing buildings or infrastructure within urban infill areas or existing urban service areas. URP is one development tool that can restore economic viability by attracting private and public investment and encouraging business start-ups and survival.

Desirable Patterns of Development for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

- New development should match densities typically found in the older centers of communities.
- New industry or other significant employers should be located close to town, making jobs accessible to all residents by transit, walking, or bicycling.
- Consider restrictions on the number and size of signs and billboards to enhance visual appeal.
- Structures (shopping, warehouses, offices, etc.) should be located near street fronts, with parking in the rear of buildings, making corridors more attractive and pedestrian-friendly.
- Parking areas should be landscaped to minimize the visual impact on adjacent streets and uses.
- Where possible, locate parking at the rear or side of buildings to minimize the visual impact of parked cars from the street.
- Reduce parking requirements for commercial and residential developments, particularly when available nearby parking alternatives or public transit.
- Shared parking could reduce overall parking needs.

Land Uses for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

- Commercial
- Public /Institutional
- Mixed Uses

Quality Community Objectives for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

Efficient Land Use

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

Implementation Measures to Achieve Efficient Land Use

- Big box redevelopment. Abandoned stores should be reused rather than lingering as eyesores while new sprawl pushes into undeveloped areas. Local governments and other agencies can find new uses for these large and flexible buildings, or they may provide incentives for private developers to do so.
- Adaptive use. The conversion of a disused building, usually abandoned and historical, into a functional building with a new service. This is often a better practice than demolishing buildings to build brand-new ones, but sometimes it needs to be encouraged by tax breaks, code changes, or other regulatory means. Adaptive use can be especially valuable for popular historic buildings, but it is also an essential tool for regenerating deteriorating areas



Radium Springs is located on the southeast outskirts of [Albany](#) in [Dougherty County, Georgia](#). Radium Springs is best known as the location of one of the "[Seven Natural Wonders of Georgia](#)": the largest natural spring in the state. The water contains trace amounts of [radium](#), and the water temperature is 68 degrees Fahrenheit (20 degrees Celsius) year round. Prior to the discovery of radium in the water in 1925, the site was known as "Blue Springs".

DEFINING NARRATIVES FOR AREAS OF REDEVELOPMENT

Implementation Measures to Achieve Desired Development Patterns for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

- Business incubators. A business incubator is meant to give entrepreneurs in a particular location sufficient support to create viable and profitable companies. Incubators foster the growth of fledgling "home-grown" enterprises, and they have gained in popularity as an alternative to pursuing relocations.
- Fix it first policy. Gives top priority to repairing and reinvesting existing infrastructure (roads, bridges, water, sewer, power, etc.) by fixing and maintaining what already exists. Funding for expansion, growth, and new purchases is limited and occurs after existing infrastructure has been adequately taken care of and adequately funded.
- Landscaping and buffer requirements. Require planting areas to mask unattractive land uses or provide a visual and sound barrier between incompatible adjacent uses and increase aesthetic values.
- New construction, additions, and infill development should be compatible but not identical to historic buildings.
- New infill development should use existing structures where possible.

PRESERVE THE COMMUNITY'S HERITAGE

The community's traditional character should be maintained by 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 elements that are important to define the community's character.

APPROPRIATE BUSINESSES

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 prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

Land Uses for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

- Commercial
- Public /Institutional
- Mixed Uses

Implementation Measures to Achieve Desired Development Patterns for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

- Focus reinvestment efforts on commercial areas also serve as critical gateways to the city and downtown.
- Promote mixed-use redevelopment strategies as a means of enhancing economic development.
- Promote bicycle and pedestrian-friendly environments.
- Offer incentives to owners of aging shopping centers with consistently high vacancy rates or visible deteriorating physical conditions.
- Enforce city codes to assure that commercial centers have well-maintained buildings, parking facilities, signage, lighting, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities.
- Adaptive use. The conversion of a disused building, usually abandoned and historical, into a functional building with a new use. This is often a better practice than demolishing buildings to build brand-new ones, but sometimes it needs to be encouraged by tax breaks, code changes, or other regulatory means. Adaptive use can be especially valuable for popular historic buildings, but it is also an important tool for regenerating deteriorating areas
- Big box redevelopment. Abandoned stores should be reused rather than lingering as eyesores while new sprawl pushes into undeveloped areas. Local governments and other agencies can find new uses for these large and flexible buildings, or they may provide incentives for private developers to do so.



Mitchell County, Georgia

Quality Community Objectives for Areas In Need of Redevelopment

INFILL DEVELOPMENT

Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging the 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 the use of more human-scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.

STRENGTHEN and DIRECT DEVELOPMENT TOWARD EXISTING COMMUNITIES

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

SENSE OF PLACE

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.



Bainbridge, Georgia

AREAS OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT

Rapid Development may occur when growth exceeds the capacity of available housing and infrastructure or when farmland and other environmentally threatened areas experience development pressure. The larger, more developed communities experience more pressure from developers.

Overall, the region is comprised of small communities with populations of 300 and larger communities with people of 50,000 or more. Most of our communities would be classified as small and rural. How communities develop the landscape is a critical component of creating livable and sustainable communities. One development pattern that has received increased attention is “sprawl.” Sprawl is generally typified as low-density, haphazard development spiraling outward from city centers. This is believed to negatively impact the environment, water, air pollution, and infrastructure cost. Most of our communities in the region do not suffer from this condition. Most are growing slowly, with only a few larger cities experiencing small growth increments. They are experiencing declining populations and other challenges such as rapid growth at their borders and loss of farms and working lands. However, there are a few communities that are experiencing enormous growth. The areas along the edges of Decatur and Grady continue to undergo development pressures from Leon, Gadsden, and Jefferson Counties in Florida. Albany and Dougherty County continue to see development pressures as well. Lee County and Leesburg have developed over the past. Areas in Lee, Mitchell, Decatur and Thomas County have expanded due to the school systems. Moultrie and Colquitt County continue to grow around the Highway 319 bypass. Corridors are ideal places for expansion, such as State Highway 319 in Dougherty, Worth, and Colquitt counties and Highway 84 in Seminole, Decatur, and Thomas counties. Areas in Thomasville and Bainbridge are experiencing growth due to revitalization efforts. Areas along the Flint River and Lake Seminole in Seminole County are experiencing pressure from developers due to rapid growth.



Leesburg, Georgia aims to redefine downtown and establish a Depot Overlay District –Walb.com

THREATENED REGIONALLY IMPORTANT RESOURCES

A Regionally Important Resource (RIR) is any natural or cultural resource identified for protection by a Regional Commission (RC), following the minimum requirements established by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Our region has an abundance of natural and cultural resources. We have abundant water, farmland, longleaf pine, wetlands, state parks, and large tracts of privately owned land. Well-protected natural resources contribute to healthy ecological systems and allow residents to enjoy nature and enhance their quality of life in the region. The Environmental Planning Criteria was established by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. Part V of the act charged the Department of Natural Resources with developing procedures for protecting critical natural resources (groundwater recharge areas, wetlands, river corridors, water supply watersheds, and mountains). All communities in the region have adopted the Part V criteria to protect these precious waters (Flint River, Lake Seminole). Thus, protecting public health and promoting a sustainable economy. Land use management can preserve natural resources from loss and degradation since many resources take years to regenerate and recover once depleted or contaminated. Quality of life and the region's economic future are related to the availability of natural resources and quality land use planning. Cultural resources such as buildings, structures, sites, objects, and landscape features connect us to our shared past. Many of the region's courthouses, historic districts, churches, mansions, libraries, schools, and Native American mounds are regionally culturally significant. These structures tell a story, and preserving this history strengthens communities and the local economy. The preservation is also educational while providing economic and aesthetic benefits as well. Two of the 18 sites operated by the Georgia Parks, Recreation, and Historic Sites in Division 2 are in the Southwest Georgia Region- the Lapham-Patterson House Historic Site in Thomasville and the Kolomoki Mounds Historical Park in Early County.

There are five Carnegie libraries, the only covered bridge in Georgia south of Macon, nine courthouses on the historic register, 13 historic districts, Georgia's official state folk life play, and essential structures related to the civil rights movement.



Quality Community Objectives for Natural & Cultural Resources

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.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Sense of Place

- Preserve, protect, and promote the Southwest Georgia region's unique heritage resources that contribute to the region's distinctive character.

HERITAGE PRESERVATION

The community's traditional character should be maintained by preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the standard features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural elements that are important to define the community's character.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Heritage Preservation

- Encourage and support increased development of historical sites as tourist attractions, when practical and appropriate.
- Encourage the maintenance of all heritage buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects and adaptive reuse.
- Support recognition of good preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive reuse of heritage resources.
- Support and cooperate with federal, state, and local historic preservation agencies, commissions, and organizations in their efforts to preserve and protect Southwest Georgia's cultural resources.

Desired Patterns of Development for Natural & Cultural Resources

- Maintain and strengthen, where appropriate, regulations and incentives that protect the region's cultural resources from inappropriate infill development, incompatible alterations, or destruction.
- Provide for the linkage of environmental and recreational open space.
- Establish and maintain an open space and conservation area network based on existing soil conditions, slopes, watercourses, vegetation, and natural ecological features.
- Encourage cluster provisions and other innovative development techniques.
- Capitalize on natural resources by retaining and protecting trees, streams, and other ecological features.
- Conserve large contiguous tracts of woodland to reduce forest fragmentation, maximize woodland interiors, and reduce the edge/area ratio.
- Natural areas containing floodplains and other areas unsuitable for development should be restricted from development except for agricultural, recreational, and similar uses.
- Encourage the preservation and protection of natural areas in all development proposals.
- The application of environmental protection strategies such as conservation easements, fee simple acquisition, conservation tax credits, etc., will be utilized where possible.

Land Use Types for Natural & Cultural Resources

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

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.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Efficient Land Use

- Develop strategies to preserve and manage forested lands.
- Encourage farming conservation measures such as diversion, terraces, grassed waterways, contour farming, and crop rotation.
- Encourage partnerships with land trusts, conservation organizations, and neighboring local governments to protect priority natural areas.
- Educate the public on the benefits and practices of environmental stewardship.
- Establish incentives for developers to think “green” in their designs

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from adverse development impacts, mainly when they are essential for maintaining the community or region's traditional character or quality of life. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.

- Prepare Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans to address erosion, sedimentation, and other runoff problems.
- Prepare or refer to inventories of all significant environmental resources for use in land use decision-making.
- Provide for the protection of groundwater supplies, including well-head protection programs.
- Prepare, adopt, and implement ordinances that address the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Planning Criteria and local water resources (water supply watersheds, river corridors, significant groundwater recharge areas, and wetlands).
- Encourage partnerships between environmental and conservation agencies and the development and business community.
- Follow the Best Management Practices outlined by the Georgia Forestry Commission in designing and maintaining rural roads near Regionally Important Natural Resources.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT INFILL POTENTIAL

Infill is a planning strategy that recycles vacant or underutilized lands within cities and suburbs with construction and rehabilitation to make these areas desirable. It focuses on the reuse of obsolete or underutilized buildings and sites. This type of development is essential to renewing blighted neighborhoods. With the existing infrastructure in place, these sites should be used for new development before new development on greenfield sites occurs. Examples include the Marine Corps Logistic Base in Dougherty County, Radium Springs, and East Albany. The recent storms and hurricanes in 2018 have increased the number of properties significantly, but Albany/Dougherty County has seen the most significant impact. Every community in the region has substandard housing, and infill is an excellent choice for maintaining stable neighborhoods. Several communities in the region have plans that specifically address infill (Moultrie, Camilla, Pelham, Colquitt, Georgia).

Desired Patterns of Development for Areas of Significant Infill Potential

- Neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites could serve surrounding neighborhoods.
- Homes, shops, small businesses, and institutions could be grouped in villages or attractive mixed-use centers, when possible, to serve adjacent neighborhoods.
- Buildings in centers should be architecturally integrated with the site and surrounding structures and developed at an appropriate scale.
- Redevelopment should occur in older strip commercial centers before new construction occurs.
- Improvements in sidewalks and enhancements to street appearance should be emphasized.
- Allow development to match densities typically found in older community centers.
- New major employers should be located as close to town as possible to make jobs accessible to all by transit, walking, or bicycling.
- Infill development should blend into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density when possible.
- Situating commercial structures near street fronts and offering parking in rears of buildings makes streets more attractive and pedestrian-friendly and should be encouraged.
- Traffic calming measures, such as narrower street widths, raised pedestrian crossings, or rough pavement materials should also be encouraged to make areas more pedestrian-friendly.
- Accessory housing units or “in-law suites” or “granny flats” are independent, complete living units created from surplus space or added in inconspicuous ways within single-family homes or detached structures to encourage mixed-income housing at virtually no public expense and should be encouraged.

Desired Patterns of Development for Areas of Significant Infill Potential

- When houses are located near the street with large front porches, interaction with neighbors is encouraged.
- New development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to streets, a mix of housing types, and pedestrian access to the neighborhood commercial center, should be encouraged.
- Residential development that offers a mix of housing types and prices should be encouraged.
- Residential development with a healthy mix of uses, such as corner groceries, barbershops, drugstores, etc., should be encouraged within easy walking distance of residences.
- Addition of new uses to single-use sites (e.g., restaurants and shopping added to office parks) should be encouraged.

Land Uses to Be Encouraged for Areas of Significant Infill Potential

- Housing
- Parks/Open Spaces
- Commercial on a scale appropriate to the neighborhood.
- Mixed Uses

Quality Community Objectives for Areas of Significant Infill Potential

EFFICIENT LAND USE

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

Implementation Measures to Achieve Efficient Land Use

- Strategies for re-use of brownfields, greyfields, and greenfields. Re-using sites such as abandoned shopping centers for transit-oriented or mixed-use development.
- A comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development while also regulating development to maintain quality of life.
- Developing or revising the local development review process to make obtaining permits easier, particularly for projects that support quality growth.
- Establish a redevelopment district or plan to provide public financing for redevelopment activities, position communities to apply for grants, and obtain incentives and other tax credits.

SENSE OF PLACE

Compact, walkable, mixed-use neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including more human-scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating the pedestrian activity.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Sense of Place:

- Review and revise local land use regulations (e.g., comprehensive plans and zoning regulations) to ensure that they encourage the design and development of traditional developments.
- Take measures to implement subdivision and zoning codes that facilitate new development, infill development, and adaptive use, which will ensure the community's character remains strong without vacant lots and dilapidated buildings detracting from it.
- Encourage the development of pedestrian-scaled streets with attractive and exciting amenities; a recognizable center of community life where people gather, meet, and shop with government offices located within the center.
- Maintain existing street grid patterns and uniform alignment of facades in new construction by orienting new structures at similar setbacks and lot configurations identical in mass and scale to existing traditional cultural resources.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Transportation needs, challenges, and opportunities for all residents should be addressed. 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.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Transportation Options

- Encourage installation of bike lanes and bike racks.
- Improve deteriorating corridors rather than encouraging sprawl in undeveloped areas.

REGIONAL IDENTITY

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

Implementation Measure to Achieve Regional Identity

Review and revise local land use regulations (e.g., comprehensive plans and zoning regulations) if necessary to ensure that they encourage designs that preserve and enhance the region’s distinctive identity.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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 define the community's character.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Resource Management

- Encourage the maintenance of all heritage buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects and their adaptive reuse.
- Encourage new construction, additions, and infill development to be compatible but not identical to historic buildings.
- Review and revise ordinances that protect and preserve cultural and historical resources

HOUSING OPTIONS

A range of safe, affordable, inclusive housing sizes, costs, and densities should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community, to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs. Promote programs that provide housing for residents of all socioeconomic backgrounds, institute programs to address homelessness, and coordinate with local economic development programs to ensure the availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.

Implementation Measures to Achieve Housing Options

- Develop a regional land bank or partner with land banks to acquire, manage and redevelop tax-foreclosed properties, with the long-term interest of the community and surrounding property owners in mind.
- Support policies that support walking, biking, and public transit, and families can live close to their daily destinations
- Review and revise current regulations and land use policies that support mixed-use developments, increased density, and making public spaces and green spaces priorities for redevelopment

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANT DISINVESTMENT

Disinvestment and decline occur in every community throughout the region and are not concentrated in any particular place. The process is often associated with poverty, high crime, abandonment of housing stock, and out-migration. With the recent downturn of the economy, many businesses have closed, and residents have lost their jobs. These circumstances only exacerbate the situation in areas already experiencing a decline.

The only counties in our region that have experienced significant growth are Seminole, Decatur, Grady, Thomas, Colquitt, and Lee. Most counties in our region are classified as “persistent poverty” areas defined by a University of Georgia study. 20% of the population has been below the poverty threshold for three decades as measured by the Census. Regional examples of these declining areas are East Albany, Northwest Moultrie, and Northwest Cairo.

Desired Patterns of Development for Areas of Significant Disinvestment

- Residential Development offers housing types and uses, such as grocery stores, drug stores, and corner stores.
- New development that maximizes the use of existing public facilities and infrastructure.
- Foster alternatives to transportation by automobile to create vibrant, walkable communities and neighborhood centers.
- Infill development that blends into the character of the neighborhood.
- Improvement of sidewalks to encourage walkability and improve the appearance of the street.
- New major employers within the neighborhood make jobs available/accessible to all residents by transit, walking, or bicycling.
- New development that focuses on the uniqueness of the neighborhood and on local conditions that cannot be addressed by conventional zoning

Land Uses to Be Encouraged for Areas of Significant Disinvestment

- Mixed Uses
- Commercial
- Residential
- Parks/Open Spaces



Baker County

*Quality Community Objectives for Areas of Disinvestment***ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

The business and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the area's resources, and prospects of expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.

Implementation Measure to Achieve Economic Prosperity

- Support business incubators to give entrepreneurs a means to create viable and profitable companies. Incubators foster the growth of fledgling "home-grown" enterprises.
- Determine community needs by examining what businesses exist in the community, what assets are available to build on, and which industries show promise based on national and international trends.

EFFICIENT LAND USE

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

Implementation Measure to Achieve Efficient Land Use

- Make use of existing public facilities and infrastructure, reducing local government costs to support new development.
- Provide incentives and public improvements to encourage infill development.
- Reduce sprawl by first developing vacant areas closer to downtown.
- Strengthen older neighborhoods by bringing in new residents and investments.
- Encourage Comprehensive Plans and zoning ordinances that support infill development.
- Utilize Infill Development Programs to determine a comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular community areas while also regulating development to protect the quality of life in affected neighborhoods.

Quality Community Objectives for Areas of Disinvestment

COMMUNITY HEALTH

All residents should have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities.

Implementation Measure to Achieve Community Health

- Support programs that educate communities on healthy lifestyles, chronic disease prevention, and management
- Increase opportunities for physical activity and work with schools to increase physical education classes.
- Encourage the development of Neighborhood Plans that promote health and access to safe, clean neighborhoods and good work opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Communities should encourage and support alternatives to transportation by automobiles, including walking, cycling, and transit, employing traffic calming measures throughout the community, and increasing connectivity.

- Provide sidewalks, bike lanes, landscape buffers, and narrower streets to calm traffic and encourage walkability.
- Require a rewrite of the local development regulations to incorporate TND principles. TNDs typically include tiny lot single-family homes, multi-family residences, and neighborhood commercial developments, all within easy walking distance.



Southwest Georgia Rural Transit

REGIONAL ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

HOUSING

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing for low to moderate-income families. • Additional housing for seniors. • Reduce substandard and dilapidated housing. • Few credit-worthy applicants • Few housing choices • Poor collaboration between cities and community housing development organizations • Weak or non-existent code enforcement • High numbers of manufactured homes which are usually taxed as personal property • Substandard housing and overcrowded housing • Few programs/funds for housing rehabilitation • All those who work in the community have a viable option to live in the community. • COVID 19 pandemic impact on housing and rental affordability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill Development • Provide more affordable housing options for all family income types • Address dilapidated and substandard properties • Provide education about housing programs • Redevelopment and revitalization • Collaboration and Community Building

TRANSPORTATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved Department of Transportation projects throughout the region currently delayed • Roadway designs discourage pedestrian and bike activity • Inadequate public transportation • Limited access to services, goods, economic development programs, healthcare, and recreational facilities • Lack of state funding for road and street improvements • COVID 19 Pandemic reductions in mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Much of the region has convenient access to state highways and railroads • Link transportation options • Collaboration and shared funding • Implement or develop Complete Street policies and strategies • Increase access to public transportation and rural transit • Accommodate and target a more significant segment of the population (older adults, mentally and physically challenged)

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments lack funds to replace or repair aging infrastructure • Limited recreation facilities • Inadequate public facility capacity to support significant new development • Additional after-school programs needed • Cost of providing public services and facilities for new development typically exceeds the revenue from these developments • Lack of capital to fund public services (animal control, police protection, fire protection, etc.) • Potable water and sanitary sewer systems in need of repair/replacement • Need for additional recycling centers • Low revenue streams from the tax base and low utility fees make it difficult for governments to balance their budgets • COVID 19 negative impact on the use of community services(more people staying at home) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ample groundwater resources • Minimize replication of services • Presence of regional medical centers • Develop and upgrade aging infrastructure • Collaboration and sharing of services and facilities • Increase services for seniors and the disabled • Create more green space/open space/parks • Better plan for upgrading existing green space • Develop community pride and enthusiasm • Review zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations • Develop and conduct preventative maintenance programs

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication between local governments, boards, and authorities • Lack of new ideas in the current leadership • There is little regional coordination and cooperation • COVID 19 impact and the slow coordination of crisis management (vertical and horizontal) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve regional collaboration • Improve service delivery • Strengthening intergovernmental relations • Share power and resources • Identify and assess what can be coordinated • Need for a regional system of communication

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low educational attainment • High property crime rates • Economic development efforts favor new development over redevelopment • Business retention is not active, successful, or is underfunded • High poverty levels • Lack of job diversification • Few skilled workers and jobs for skilled workers • Few amenities to attract new businesses • Lack of Interstate highways in the region • Too few commercial airports in the region • COVID 19 negative pandemic impact on the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher education options • Ample water resources • Competitive utility rates • Entrepreneurship • Support small business growth and development • Develop critical infrastructure • Develop human capital • Attract new business or industry • COVID 19 has a positive impact on jobs and the job market

LAND USE

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differing opinions on the need for zoning and land-use ordinances • Lack of a sidewalk requirement for new development and no connectivity requirement for sidewalks • Many zoning and land use ordinances are outdated • Need for design guidance for new development throughout the region • Large acreage plantations • Solar Farms • Poultry Houses • COVID 19 pandemic (Limitations on access to public and private spaces) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop attractive subdivisions • Review and update zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations • Preservation of natural areas • Protection of natural resources • Provide more Recreation facilities • Available space for industry and development • Increased opportunity for infill • More Agri-tourism • Develop more open/green space and reevaluate current land-use policies

NATURAL & CULTURAL RESOURCES

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited public access to natural resources • Limited public awareness of natural and cultural resources and their significance • Farmland, rural scenery, and environmentally sensitive areas are disappearing in areas of rapid development • Inadequate protection of rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, and aquifers • Allowing development in floodplains • Septic tanks in groundwater recharge areas • COVID 19 pandemic (Social impact, Economic Impact) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple Prime Farmland (as designated by the United States Department of Agriculture) areas in the region • Abundant forest, farmland, and rural scenery • Spur innovation and redefine policies

BROADBAND

<u>ISSUES</u>	<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of broadband connectivity • Need a broadband ordinance that will control, guide, and provide broadband services • COVID 19 pandemic identified the need for broadband and the gaps in services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise and amend the Land Use policies to accommodate broadband installation without jeopardizing the safety of the citizens and the environment • Utilize broadband provides healthcare resources, job training, employment options, and a myriad of goods and services to improve quality of life • To expand broadband connectivity • Increase funding for broadband

BROADBAND

As we navigate through the coronavirus and practice social distancing, it is becoming blatantly apparent that we are not only socially distant but also digitally distant and disconnected. We have learned many things through this pandemic, and one would be that there is a great digital divide. We always knew we had an issue in rural communities, but it has been confirmed, and the problem is more significant than we realized. According to the Pew Institute, nearly 21 million Americans, mostly in rural areas, still lack a reliable high-speed connection. This can present its challenges with so many people working from home. Access is essential when we work, learn, and socialize from home.

We are now learning and utilizing new technologies, and we are not sure if things will ever be the same again, and things do not need to be the same in some aspects of our lives. There has been federal funding to rural areas through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan Act. (ARPA). Several counties in the region have benefitted from this opportunity (Colquitt, Early, Lee, Terrell, and Thomas).

Broadband is delivered through fiber, fixed wireless, digital subscriber line, or cable. Laying fiber is a major infrastructure project, and states can use the CARES Act and ARPA funding to expand access if they can utilize the funds by the end of the year.

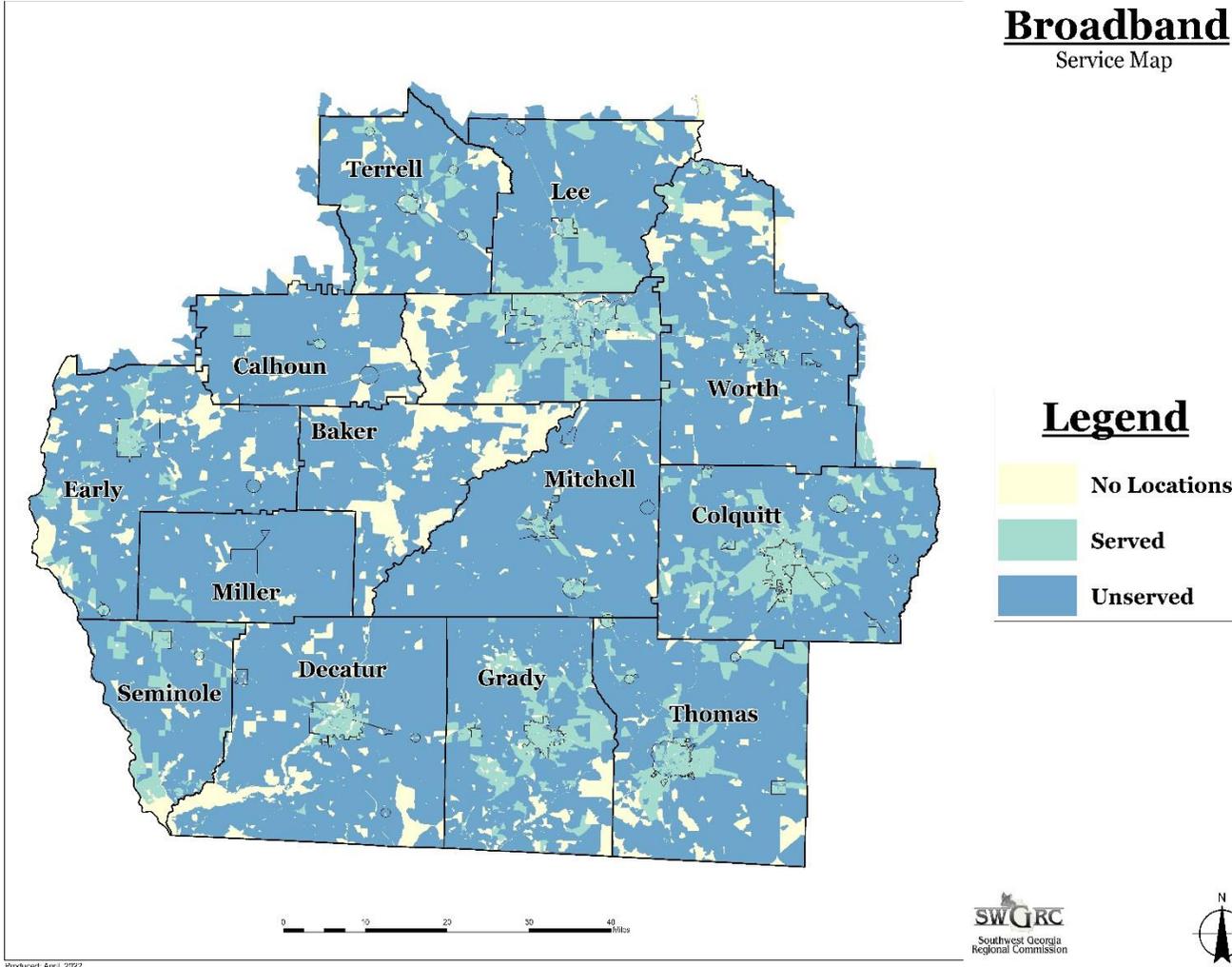
According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), 22% of Americans in rural areas and 28% of Americans in tribal lands lack broadband coverage —opposed to 1.5% of Americans in urban areas. This gap has narrowed since 2015. According to the FCC, 21 million Americans lack broadband access, though some experts say the FCC data vastly overestimates broadband connectivity.

For the past few years, policymakers recognized the need for broadband and have attempted to expand broadband access, even before the coronavirus highlighted the need for more connectivity. In 2019, six states – Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas – enacted bills giving electric cooperatives the authority to provide broadband, either directly or through an affiliated, doubling the number of states that permit this approach.

Five of these states—Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas—along with Colorado, further clarified that electric cooperatives can use their existing electric easements for broadband service. This allowance prevents cooperatives from negotiating new easements with property owners, thus removing a barrier that can increase costs and time.

States clarifying which entities can provide broadband service is an important step forward in addressing the digital divide. Specifying which entities are eligible for funding can offer new providers the opportunity to enter the market and clarifies the options that local leaders must increase broadband access through public-private partnerships or by providing the internet themselves.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) knows broadband is essential to education, healthcare, economic development, and so much more. Communities that meet specific criteria can seek the Broadband Ready Certification. This designation encourages communities to be prepared for economic development and growth. Most businesses that locate in a community ask about taxes, land costs, schools, healthcare, and internet capability. This designation says, “We Are Ready!” Several communities in our region have the designation (Colquitt County and Lee County), and some are in progress (Thomas County and Seminole County). With these new tools and additional funding, the broadband gap is shrinking. The regional map below indicates the served and unserved areas.



ECONOMIC RECOVERY & RESILIENCE STRATEGIC PLAN

(Information taken from the Economic Recovery and Resilience Strategic Plan)

Through the U.S. Economic Development Administration's 2021 CARES Act, Georgia Tech developed an **Economic Recovery + Resilience Strategic Plan** for the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (SWGRC) economic development district (EDD) to facilitate economic development and growth following recovery from Hurricane Michael (2018) and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-present). Georgia Tech developed the Economic Recovery + Resilience Strategic Plan for the 14-county Southwest Georgia region, encompassing the following counties: Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth.

To develop this plan, Georgia Tech utilized stakeholder interviews and research, prepared a target sector study, investigated the historical impact of manufacturing, and conducted goal development and strategic planning sessions. This process informed a five-year work plan and tangible action items for Southwest Georgia to allow the region to build on existing assets and competitive advantages, encouraging future prosperity and economic resilience in Southwest Georgia.

Southwest Georgia has a rich history, a strong sense of community, and a diverse agricultural and manufacturing base. The region boasts beautiful natural landscapes, architecture, and an abundance of outdoor sporting activities. Despite these strengths, Southwest Georgia has faced its share of economic hardship. Devastating hurricanes and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have presented various challenges for the region. Hurricane Michael's destruction was especially damaging to the agricultural industry, a cornerstone of the local economy and the state's "food basket," and compound economic impacts for years following the disaster. COVID-19 stressed the region's already under-resourced healthcare industry.

For some industries and schools, the transition to a remote work environment highlighted the lack of comprehensive broadband infrastructure. Taking these strengths and challenges into account, Georgia Tech conducted in-depth research to develop a community profile for the region. Georgia Tech's community profile of Southwest Georgia included an overview of the population, demographics, income, education, housing, and workforce. While Southwest Georgia's population is approximately 346,000 people, Lee County is the only county with population growth in recent years. All other counties in the region have declined between 0.2 and 10.5 percent. Southwest Georgia's population is also aging, resulting in a growth of the elderly population alongside a decrease in the number of working-age adults. The median household income for Southwest Georgia is \$38,850, which is lower than the state's median household income of \$58,700.

To capture additional feedback from the public, Georgia Tech distributed an economic resilience community survey, receiving a total of 104 responses. These respondents listed workforce development, business recruitment, and infrastructure improvements as the most important strategies to increase regional economic resilience. Overall, stakeholder input from interviews and surveys provided Georgia Tech with a unique perspective on Southwest Georgia's key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Manufacturing plays a significant role in Southwest Georgia's economy. In previous decades manufacturing was an even larger economic driver in the region. For instance, in 2001, nearly one out of five jobs in the region were in manufacturing. However, manufacturing in Southwest Georgia has followed the nationwide downward trend and has experienced an even sharper decline than the nation. In total, manufacturing in the region currently supports nearly \$9 billion in economic output and contributes \$3.2 billion to the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Moving forward, Georgia Tech recommends that Southwest Georgia builds upon the strength of the advanced manufacturing industry, as recommended by the target industry sector analysis.

Vision Statement:

The following is a vision statement that was developed for the region.

“The Southwest Georgia Region will...

rebuild stronger, generating high-quality jobs and wealth creation opportunities within its local economies that advance critical infrastructure, enhance downtowns and small businesses, and provide accessible community healthcare for everyone in the region.”

Mission Statement:

Southwest Georgia will accomplish this vision by focusing on the following goal areas in our workplan

INFRASTRUCTURE - Planning public infrastructure to protect regional utility assets, minimize vulnerabilities, and support initiatives to expedite broadband infrastructure expansion.

- *General Infrastructure improvements*
- *Implement Natural Disaster Resilience within the Region's Public Infrastructure*
- *Expand and Improve Broadband Access*
- *Strengthen Regional Transportation Systems*

DOWNTOWNS.- Encouraging small businesses and local governments to participate in resiliency planning efforts that result in downtowns that are better prepared to withstand economic stresses associated with natural and human-caused disruptions

- *Encourage the use of Downtown Development programs*
- *Historic Preservation*
- *Marketing and Promotion of Regional Downtowns*

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT - Strengthening our existing businesses and supporting educational opportunities by diversifying our economic base to align with the region's target sectors.

- *Encourage Infill Housing to Boost Housing Choice*
- *Implement Programmatic Housing Solutions*
- *Invest in Neighborhood Capacity Building*

HOUSING -Attracting and retaining talent by developing a diverse housing stock accessible at all income levels.

- *Utilize State Resources to Support Workforce Development*
- *Attract and Retain Talent*
- *Develop SWGRC's Workforce*
- *Make Informed Workforce Development Decisions*

HEALTHCARE -Ensuring mental and physical health throughout the region by supporting existing regional healthcare facilities and supporting new, community-based healthcare choices easily accessible to the entire community.

- *Develop a Workforce for the Healthcare Industry*
- *Improve Access to Healthcare*
- *Grow Preventative Health Programs*

RESILIENCE -Creating a cross-section of regional resources to absorb financial and environmental shocks.

- Overall Economic Resilience
- Natural Disaster Resilience



Colquitt, Georgia

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Implementation is about making a plan work. It includes who, what, where, how a plan is developed, and how it will work. To implement a plan successfully, all things must work. If a plan is executed poorly or moderately well, its goals are unlikely to be achieved. The Regional Plan involves many actors, and the outcome always requires funding. The region is constantly changing, and these past two years have been challenging due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Everything has shifted, and we are all living our lives differently because of the impact of this deadly virus. Our priorities and thinking have shifted to accommodate our ever-changing environment. Our local governments (cities and counties) have also changed. The implementation program describes how we will achieve the regional vision and address the regional issues and opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the regional leaders to implement the plan and guides developers, local governments, and other public agencies to help achieve the Regional Vision.

Strategies and Regional Work Program to Implement the Regional Plan

The Regional Work Program (RWP) includes several community partners working together to achieve a common goal. It takes several partners to make a strategy work. The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission collaborates with public, private partners, and community and faith-based organizations to accomplish the goals. The RWP was developed from the SWOT analysis. We also utilized the Economic Recovery and Resilience Strategic Plan. As they are used to implement the plan, these tools will help move the region forward. The RWP contains activities in Housing, Transportation, Community Facilities, Economic Development, Land Use, and Natural and Culture Resources.

The Regional Work Program will be monitored by the Regional Commission (RC) and reviewed annually. The RC will assist local governments, and other partners with the activities carried out within the five-year review period. They will provide technical support and education as needed and recommended. The RC will also review and comment on activities included in the Work Program.

The implementation measures belong to one of two categories:

PLANNING AND COORDINATION ACTIVITIES

The Regional Commission will assist local governments and other regional actors with planning and coordination of the Regional Plan.

REVIEW ACTIVITIES

Activities by other actors in the region that require review and comment by the Regional Commission. The findings from the study are advisory.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

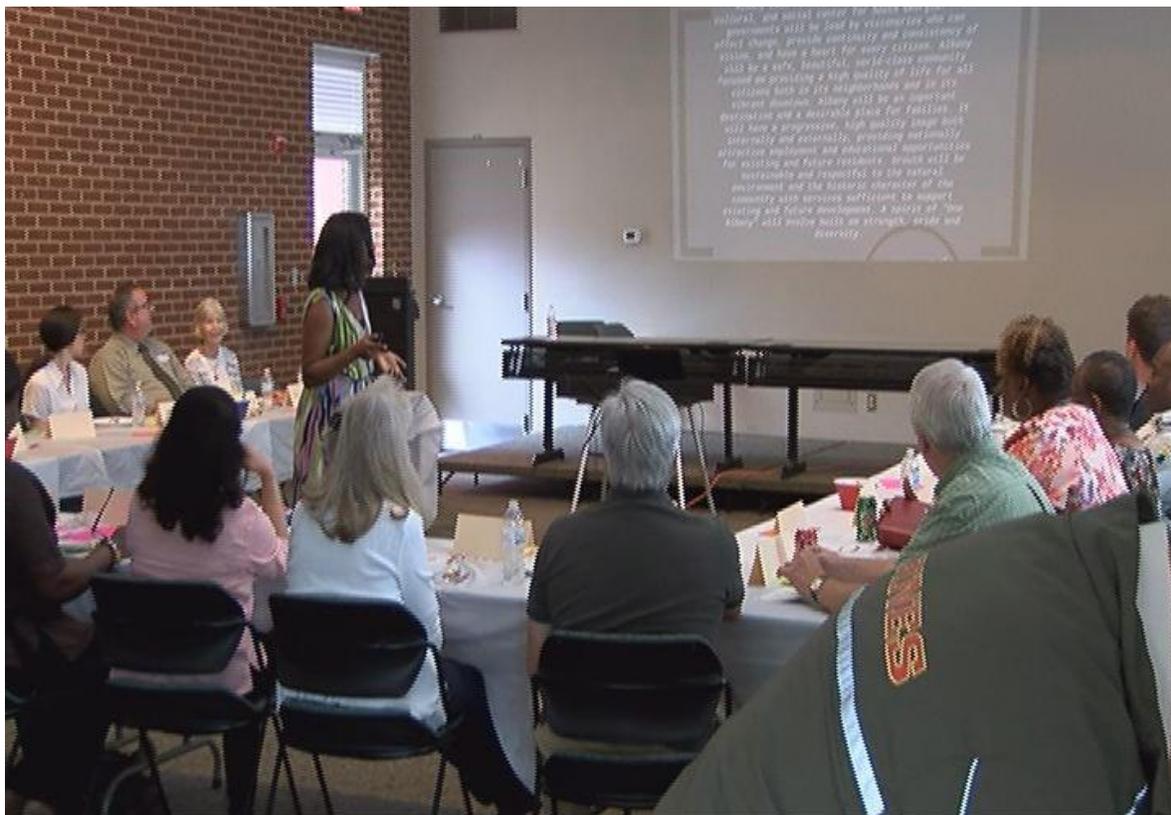
Minimum Standards

Activities local governments must undertake for consistency with the regional plan. The intent is to ensure a consistent and predictable basic level of local requirements across the region. All local governments in the region will be expected to attain the Minimum Standard within thirty months of adopting the regional plan or risk losing Qualified Local Government status.

Jurisdictions are separated into two tiers with a corresponding set of Minimum Standards. Tier 1 jurisdictions are city governments with fewer than 1,000 residents and county governments with fewer than 10,000 residents. Tier 2 jurisdictions include city governments with 1,000 residents or greater and county governments with 10,000 residents or greater.

Excellence Standard

To achieve the Excellence Standard, local governments must already have at least two standards from each of the seven areas (Community Facilities, Intergovernmental Coordination, Natural and Cultural Resources, Economic Development, Housing, Land Use, and Transportation). One standard from each of the seven (7) areas must be implemented each year to maintain this status.



Albany, Georgia

Minimum Standard for Tier 1 Governments

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
1 Our clerk has registered for or received the required training.			Copy of certification
2 Our newly elected officials are registered or received the required training.			Copy of certification
3 We do not permit development in areas not identified in the comprehensive plan's future development map.			Ordinances and Future Development Map
4 We update our service delivery strategy (SDS) as state law requires and have written agreements for these services on file and available for public review.			Copy of SDS
5 We have and enforce a public nuisance ordinance to control nuisances such as loud noises, stagnant water, abandoned vehicles, the accumulation of junk, excessively tall weeds and grass, etc.			Copy of ordinance
6 We have an approved solid waste management plan.			Copy of plan
7 We have an approved hazard mitigation plan.			Copy of plan
8 We have a website or website under construction.			Email address
9 We have a unified code of ordinances so that all ordinances and resolutions that have the effect of law are contained in one document.			Copy of ordinance

Minimum Standard for Tier 2 Governments All of the Performance Standards for Tier 1 Governments, plus the following:

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
1 We adopted the appropriate DNR Part V. Environmental Planning Criteria (Part Two of DCA's Alternative to Zoning Model Ordinance). Includes Protection of Groundwater Recharge Areas, Wetlands Protection, and River Corridor Protection			Adoption Resolution, Copy of ordinance
2 We adopted administrative procedures to enforce the state minimum standard building codes (Building, Residential, Fire, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fuel Gas, Electric, and Energy Conservation)			Copy of administrative procedures
3 We have subdivision regulations.			Copy of subdivision regulations

Community Facilities

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
1 We are a Water First Community			Georgia Department of Community Affairs approval
2 We require connection to public water and sewer systems for new construction where they are available and at the natural time of replacement when septic systems fail.			Copy of ordinance
3 We have water and sewer revenues that adequately cover the maintenance and operation of the systems (see EPA's Environmental Finance Center)			Copy of budget
4 Our police, firefighters, and paramedics are all certified.			Copy of certification
5 Our gas operators, landfill operators, and wastewater operators are all certified.			Copy of certification
6 Our downtown development directors (board members) are all certified.			Copy of certification
7 We have a written maintenance and replacement plan for infrastructure (water, sewer, electric, etc.)			Copy of plan
8 We have an adopted utility expansion plan.			Copy of plan
9 We have a written and adopted recreation plan.			Copy of plan
10 We have a searchable, up-to-date inventory of private wells and septic systems in our jurisdiction.			Copy of inventory
11 We have a capital improvement program (CIP) for improving public facilities.			Copy of CIP
12 We prioritize maintenance of existing infrastructure before extending new infrastructure into additional areas.			Copy of regulation or ordinance
13 In some cases, we allow manufactured housing to be taxed as real estate and not as personal property.			Confirmation from the tax office

Intergovernmental Coordination

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
15 We are a Plan First Community.			GA DCA designation
16 Our department heads actively review the Comprehensive Plan Community Work Program (CWP) quarterly.			Agendas, meeting minutes
17 We plan and meet with local governments outside our county at least quarterly.			Review of the comprehensive plan
18 We have a combined zoning ordinance.			Copy of ordinance
19 We share a code enforcement officer with another municipality/county.			Copy of contract or agreement
20 We have one or more combined departments for the administration of public services (fire, public work, water system)			Copy of contract or agreement
21 We have a website			Web address
22 We actively support a mentoring or leadership program such as 4-H or F.F.A.			Agendas, meeting minutes
23 We have a mutual aid agreement with another local government.			Copy of contract or agreement

Natural and Cultural Resources			
STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
24			Agendas, meeting minutes
25			Copy of ordinance
26			Adoption resolution, map of the district, Member list
27			Verification of certifying agency
28			Copy of Register listing
29			Copy of ordinance
30			Copy of waste plan or ordinance
31			Copy of guidelines
32			Copy of sub-regs or design standards
33			Copy of land-use regs
34			Copy of plan
35			Copy of inventory
36			None
37			Copy of contract or waste plan
38			Address of facility
39			Adoption resolution
40			Copy of comp plan, land use regs

Economic Development

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
41			Verification of certifying agency
42			Verification of certification by Ga Dept. of Economic Development
43			Web address
44			None
45			Meeting minutes
46			Copy of BREP
47			Copy of plan
48			Certificate of completion
49			Copy of inventory
50			Copy of inventory
51			Certification from designating authority
52			Adoption Resolution, map
53			Adoption Resolution, map
54			Copy of the plan
55			Meeting minutes
56			Police department verification, signage
57			Agenda, minutes, notifications
58			Copy of or link to code

Housing

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
59 We have a written housing plan or strategy.			Copy of the plan
60 We have completed a housing inventory or housing assessment.			Copy of the plan
61 We have a written plan for the demolition of unsafe or abandoned properties.			Copy of the plan
62 We streamline the review process or otherwise provide incentives to developers when developments include affordable housing.			Review of the approval and review process
63 We have a housing trust fund to provide a stable source of revenue reserved solely for affordable homes.			Copy of budget
64 We have tax-exempt programs for mixed-income developments and low-income homeowners.			IRS Tax-Exempt Status
65 We are a Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) alumni or program participant.			DCA verification
66 Our zoning ordinance allows very small lot sizes (1/4 acre or smaller) for single-family houses.			Copy of ordinance or resolution
67 We encourage mixed-income housing to attempt to ensure that developments contain some affordable housing.			Copy of ordinance or resolution
68 Our zoning ordinance has an inclusionary provision that requires developers to make a percentage of housing units in new residential developments available to low and moderate-income households.			Copy of ordinance or resolution

Land Use

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
69 We have a zoning ordinance.			Copy of ordinance, adoption resolution
70 Our zoning ordinance allows one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ accessory housing units by right (mother-in-law suites, carriage houses, garage apartments, etc. ▪ mixed uses (such as allowing residential and commercial together in the same district) ▪ planned unit developments (PUDS) 			Copy of ordinance(s)
71 Our zoning ordinance accommodates the reuse of closed, decommissioned, or obsolete (greyfields) uses.			Copy of ordinance
72 Our zoning ordinance includes manufactured home compatibility standards that ensure the architectural compatibility of manufactured homes with adjacent single-family residences.			Copy of ordinance
73 Our zoning ordinance has a floating or more permissive overlay zone to provide greater flexibility.			Copy of ordinance
74 Our zoning ordinance requires that new infill development is compatible with its neighborhood and maintains the harmony and character of existing areas.			Copy of ordinance
75 We have green space requirements in our subdivision regulations.			Copy of ordinance
76 We have a landscape and buffer requirement in our land-use regulations.			Copy of ordinance
77 We require sidewalks in new housing developments (subdivisions) over a certain size.			Copy of ordinance
78 We have a process or procedure to allow construction on existing substandard lots.			Copy of ordinance
79 We allow clustered subdivisions by right.			Copy of ordinance
80 We have a designated code enforcement officer.			Name of officer
81 We require new construction to be at least three feet above FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) designated floodplains.			Copy of ordinance
82 We participate in annual code enforcement training.			Certificates
83 We have a legal sign ordinance.			Copy of ordinance
84 We require our planning commissioners to attend training at least annually.			Certificates
85 We have an annual meeting of the planning commission and elected officials.			Meeting minutes
86 We have a current, approved zoning map.			Copy of map
87 We encourage road connectivity between adjacent subdivisions for better traffic flow.			Copy of ordinance
88 We have a geographic information system (GIS) available to the public and shared with other local government entities such as fire, police departments, and public works.			Demonstration
89 We participate in Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System (CRS) program to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings, and promote the awareness of flood insurance.			FEMA letter, verification of program fees
90 We analyze the financial impacts of growth before allowing residential development (subdivisions) over a certain size.			Copy of ordinance

Transportation

STANDARD	YES	NO	DOCUMENTATION
91 We encourage traffic calming measures such as raised crosswalks, narrower traffic lanes, fewer lanes, on-street parking, bump-outs, pedestrian refuges, landscaped medians, etc.			Copy of ordinance and design guidelines.
92 We have adopted a complete street policy that encourages the safe operation and design of streets for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation.			Copy of ordinance, design guidelines
93 We require connectivity between parking lots where appropriate.			Copy of ordinance, design guidelines
94 We allow shared parking in commercial areas.			Copy of ordinance, design guidelines
95 We participate in a public transit program.			Certification letter from DOT

Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Report of Accomplishments 2021-2025

Housing Priority	Lack of safe, decent, affordable housing.	
Strategy	Educate housing stakeholders in the region.	Identify housing as a goal in the Comprehensive Plan
Action	Work with housing stakeholders to plan, organize and conduct regional housing events on state and federal programs to preserve housing and increase the supply of affordable housing.	Work with housing stakeholders through community meetings to determine housing goals and priorities for inclusion in local and regional plans
Partners	SW GA HTF, GA DCA, SW GA RC, and Various housing stakeholders	SW GA HTF, GA DCA, SW GA RC, and Various housing stakeholders USDA, SOWEGA CAC
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$7,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing		Ongoing \$5,000 annually
Status	Currently underway June 2022	Currently underway 2023

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Housing Priority	Resource Development	
Strategy	Identify housing resources and other tools that build capacity and supportive housing development that meets the current need.	
Action	Work with communities to provide education to municipalities, developers, nonprofits, and community-based organizations on state and federal housing programs and grants.	Collaborate with regional, state, and federal agencies to 'provide housing information and resources on disaster relief as requested by local communities.
Partners	SW GA RC, DCA	
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$4,000	\$5,000
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing		
Status	Currently underway June 2022	Postponed, low priority

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Transportation Priority	Lack of transportation options	
Strategy	Develop a plan to improve transportation alternatives.	
Action	Work with community stakeholders to update bicycle and pedestrian plans that reflect region changes.	Work to achieve the Age-Friendly designation for the region
Partners	RC Dues, Fee For Service, DCA Contracts, GDOT Planning	RC, Counties, Cities, AARP
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$5,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	\$7,000	
Status	Currently Underway August 2022	Complete

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Transportation Priority	Lack of connectivity within the region		
Strategy	Develop and support complete street design in communities and neighborhoods.		
Action	Respond to requests from local governments for technical assistance with transit/transportation plans.	Work with local governments and other stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the coordinated transit program.	Educate local governments on complete street design and provide ordinances and best practices for infrastructure improvement
Partners	SW GA RC	SW GA RC, GA DOT, Local Subcontractors, Local agencies, and transportation providers	SW GA RC, Local governments, and other stakeholders
Short-Term (1-5 years)		\$10,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing	\$5,000	\$6,000	
Status	Currently Underway 2024		Currently underway June 2022

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Persistent Poverty	Resource and Service Coordination		
	Develop a comprehensive approach to transforming communities through partnerships with human service and health care organizations.		
Strategy	Develop a comprehensive approach to transforming communities through partnerships with human service and health care organizations.		
Action	Facilitate meetings with local governments, community-based organizations, and nonprofits to increase service coordination.	Work with stakeholders to provide education to local governments, community-based organizations, and nonprofits on health disparities in the region	Survey local community agencies, nonprofits, and other stakeholders to develop a regional resource directory
Partners	Southwest GA RC, Local Governments, Community Health, Horizons Solutions	Department of Public Health, Community Health, Horizons Solutions, Local Hospitals	SWGA RC, Local Governments, Nonprofits, Community/ Faith-based organizations, Stakeholders
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$2,000		\$6,000
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing			
Status	Currently Underway	Postponed staffing issues	Completed

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Persistent Poverty	Lack of Public and Private Community Investment	
Strategy	Provide public and private stakeholders education on best practices in community development/ community investment	
Action	Provide technical and educational assistance to local governments to develop resources and other tools to address growth and development	Provide technical assistance, information, and resources to communities to address issues and opportunities identified in local/comprehensive plans.
Partners	SW GA RC, Local governments	SW GA RC, Local governments \$6,000
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$2,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		\$15,000
Ongoing		
Status	Postponed lack of funding	Currently Underway

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Economic Vitality Priority	Lack of jobs that pay a living wage
Strategy	Connect employers with skilled and dedicated employees
Action	Work with communities to publish materials to educate local governments on the incentives available for business expansion and start-up.
Partners	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$5000
Long-Term (6-10 years)	
Ongoing	\$3,000 Annually
Status	Postponed, staffing issues, funding

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Economic Vitality Priority	Economic Mobility	
Strategy	Develop and build human capital and capacity to meet job market demand.	
Action	Host regional events to address economic development and leadership opportunities for youth.	Provide training and education to local governments and community organizations to increase capacity to undertake projects that encourage and stimulate economic development and agritourism
Partners	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA, Various local, regional, and state organizations	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA, Various local, regional, and state organizations
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$10,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	\$5,000 Annually	
Status	Postponed due to COVID 19	

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Economic Resiliency

Disaster Preparedness

Strategy	Work with governments Inclusion of disaster preparedness in local plans	Provide technical assistance to ensure recovery, restoration, and strengthening of infrastructure, housing, and a stable economy
Action	Provide technical assistance to municipalities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the most significant risks	Work with communities to develop a system and coordinate local, state, and national resources
Partners	SW GA RC, Governments, State/ Federal Agencies	
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	\$50,00	\$10,000
Status	Complete	postponed; low priority

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Education Priority	Lack of digital access	
Strategy	Work with governments to develop a method for sharing information and resources between local governments.	
Action	Conduct quarterly meetings with City and county leaders and managers to share best practices and exchange information	Include broadband element as a part of the Comprehensive Planning Process
Partners	Local Governments, SWGA RC	Local Governments, SWGA RC, DCA
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	\$10,000	
Status	Currently underway 2026	Currently underway 2027

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Education Priority	Lack of trained leadership		
Strategy	Promote opportunities for leadership training		
Action	Conduct annual meetings with designated governments to review performance standards to ensure minimum standards are being met	Provide training, information, and resources to governments not meeting the minimum standards or as requested.	Work with local government officials to identify training opportunities to enhance leadership skills and meet and achieve performance standards.
Partners	Local Governments, SW GA RC	Local Governments, SW GA RC, UGA (Carl Vinson), GMA, ACCG, GA DCA	Local Governments, SW GA RC, UGA (Carl Vinson), GMA, ACCG, GA DCA
Short-Term (1-5 years)			
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing	\$5,000	\$2,000	
Status	Currently underway 2022	Currently underway 2023	

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Education Priority	Lack of collaboration	
Strategy	Regional Approach to collaboration	
Action	Educate local governments, nonprofits, schools, and businesses on the Regional Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and how these tools can be utilized in service provision and community development.	Work with local governments to collaborate with nonprofits, businesses, healthcare agencies, and local school systems in service provision and planning for growth and development.
Partners	Local Governments, RC, Nonprofits, Schools, Businesses	
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	Annually \$5,000	Annually \$3,000
Status	Currently underway 2023	Postponed, low priority

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Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Regional Work Program 2022-2026

Housing Priority	Lack of safe, decent, affordable housing.	
Strategy	Educate housing stakeholders in the region.	Identify housing as a goal in the Comprehensive Plan
Action	Work with housing stakeholders to plan, organize, and conduct regional housing events on state and federal programs to preserve housing and increase the supply of affordable housing.	Work with housing stakeholders through community meetings to determine housing goals and priorities for inclusion in local and regional plans
Partners	SW GA HTF, GA DCA, SW GA RC, and Various housing stakeholders	SW GA HTF, GA DCA, SW GA RC, and Various housing stakeholders USDA, SOWEGA CAC
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	Ongoing \$5,000 annually	Ongoing \$5,000 annually

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Housing Priority	Resource Development	
Strategy	Identify housing resources and other tools that build capacity and supportive housing development that meets the current need.	
Action	Work with communities to provide education to municipalities, developers, nonprofits, and community-based organizations on state and federal housing programs and grants.	Collaborate with regional, state, and federal agencies to 'provide housing information and resources on disaster relief as requested by local communities.
Partners	SW GA RC, DCA	
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$4,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		\$5,000
Ongoing		

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Housing Priority	Economic Development
Strategy	Develop a diverse housing stock accessible to all incomes
Action	Encourage cities to identify their priorities for housing development using a housing plan, housing assessment, or community revitalization plan
Partners	SW GA RC, Local Governments
Short-Term (1-5 years)	
Long-Term (6-10 years)	\$10,000
Ongoing	

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Transportation Priority	Lack of transportation options	
Strategy	Develop a plan to improve transportation alternatives.	
Action	Work with community stakeholders to update bicycle and pedestrian plans that reflect region changes.	Incorporate Age-Friendly Activities in the local comprehensive plan during the 5-year update
Partners	RC Dues, Fee For Service, DCA Contracts, GDOT Planning	RC, Counties, Cities, AARP
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$6,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		\$5,000
Ongoing		

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Transportation Priority	Lack of connectivity within the region		
Strategy	Develop and support complete street design in communities and neighborhoods.		
Action	Respond to requests from local governments for technical assistance with transit/transportation plans.	Work with local governments and other stakeholders to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the coordinated transit program.	Educate local governments on complete street design and provide ordinances and best practices for infrastructure improvements.
Partners	SW GA RC	SW GA RC, GA DOT, Local Subcontractors, Local agencies, and transportation providers	SW GA RC, Local governments, and other stakeholders
Short-Term (1-5 years)			\$10,000
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing	\$5,000 Annually	\$6,000 Annually	

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Persistent Poverty	Resource & Service Coordination		
Strategy	Develop a comprehensive approach to transforming communities through partnerships with human service and health care organizations		
Action	Facilitate meetings with local governments, community-based organizations, and nonprofits to increase service coordination.	Work with stakeholders to provide education to local governments, community-based organizations, and nonprofits on health disparities in the region	Update Regional Resource Directory
Partners	Southwest GA RC, Local Governments, Community Health, Horizons Solutions \$1,000	Department of Public Health, Community Health, Horizons Solutions, Local Hospitals \$2,000	SWGA RC, Local Governments, Nonprofits, Community/ Faith-based organizations, Stakeholders
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$6,000
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing			

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Persistent Poverty	Lack of public and private community investment	
Strategy	Provide public and private stakeholders education on best practices in community development/ community investment.	
Action	Provide technical and educational assistance to local governments to develop resources and other tools to address growth and development.	Provide technical assistance, information, and resources to communities to address issues and opportunities identified in local/comprehensive plans.
Partners	SW GA RC, Local governments \$2,000	SW GA RC, Local governments \$6,000
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$2,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		\$15,000
Ongoing		

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DOT / GDOT – Georgia Department Of Transportation
GMA – Georgia Municipal Association
HPD – Historic United States Department Of Agriculture

RPN – Regional Partners Network Inc.
SBA – Small Business Administration
SOWEGA CAC – Southwest Georgia Community Action Council
SWGA HTF – Southwest Georgia Housing Task Force
SWGRC/RC – Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
UGA- University Of Georgia
USDA - United States Department Of Agriculture

Economic Vitality Priority	Lack of jobs that pay a living wage
Strategy	Connect employers with skilled and dedicated employees
Action	Work with communities to publish materials to educate local governments on the incentives for business expansion and start-up.
Partners	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA
Short-Term (1-5 years)	
Long-Term (6-10 years)	
Ongoing	\$3,000 Annually

AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
ACCCG – Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
DCA / GA DCA –Georgia Department of Community Affairs
EDA – Economic Development Administration
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Economic Vitality Priority	Economic Mobility	
Strategy	Develop and build human capital and capacity to meet job market demand	
Action	Host regional events to address economic development and leadership opportunities for youth	Provide training and education to local governments and community organizations to increase capacity to undertake projects that encourage and stimulate economic development and agritourism
Partners	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA, Various local, regional, and state organizations	SW GA RC, EDA, DCA, Various local, regional, and state organizations
Short-Term (1-5 years)	\$10,000	
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing		\$5,000 Annually

AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
ACCCG – Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
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Economic Resiliency	Disaster Preparedness	
Strategy	Work with governments Inclusion of disaster preparedness in local plans	Provide technical assistance to ensure recovery, restoration, and strengthening of infrastructure, housing, and a stable economy
Action	Provide technical assistance to municipalities to prevent, protect, mitigate, respond to and recover from the threats and hazards that pose the most significant risks	Work with communities to develop a system and coordinate local, state, and national resources.
Partners	SW GA RC, Governments, State/ Federal Agencies	
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	\$50,000	\$100,000

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ACCCG - Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
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Education Priority	Lack of Digital access	
Strategy	Work with governments to develop a method for sharing information and resources between local governments.	
Action	Conduct quarterly meetings with City and county leaders and managers to share best practices and exchange information	Include broadband element as a part of the Comprehensive Planning Process
Partners	Local Governments, SWGA RC	Local Governments, SWGA RC, DCA
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	Annually \$10,000	Annually \$10,000

AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
ACCCG - Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
DCA / GA DCA –Georgia Department of Community Affairs
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Education Priority	Lack of trained leadership		
Strategy	Promote opportunities for leadership training		
Action	Conduct annual meetings with designated governments to review performance standards to ensure minimum standards are being met	Provide training, information, and resources to governments not meeting the minimum standards or as requested.	Work with local government officials to identify training opportunities to enhance leadership skills and meet and achieve performance standards.
Partners	Local Governments, SW GA RC	Local Governments, SW GA RC, UGA (Carl Vinson), GMA, ACCG, GA DCA	
Short-Term (1-5 years)			
Long-Term (6-10 years)			
Ongoing	Annually \$5,000	Annually \$2,000	Annually \$2,000

AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
ACCCG - Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
DCA / GA DCA –Georgia Department of Community Affairs
EDA – Economic Development Administration
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Education Priority	Lack of collaboration	
Strategy	Regional Approach to collaboration	
Action	Educate local governments, nonprofits, schools, and businesses on the Regional Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and how these tools can be utilized in service provision and community development.	Work with local governments to collaborate with nonprofits, businesses, healthcare agencies, and local school systems in service provision and planning for growth and development.
Partners	Local Governments, RC, Nonprofits, Schools, Businesses	Local Governments, RC, Nonprofits, Schools, Businesses
Short-Term (1-5 years)		
Long-Term (6-10 years)		
Ongoing	Annually \$5,000	Annually \$3,000

AARP – American Association of Retired Persons
ACCCG - Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
DARTS – Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study
DCA / GA DCA –Georgia Department of Community Affairs
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GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Guiding principles are not values, as values are behaviors. And they're not actions. They are guidelines that help decision-making. Principles give us direction if we follow them. Local leaders must allow the decisions to be made with these principles at the forefront of the process. The Regional Plan will guide local leaders and give them direction to make day-to-day decisions for their communities. Many tools can assist in this process, and technology is woven into nearly every facet of our lives. Leaders should stay informed, educated, and flexible because things often change quickly. We see the best example of this with the COVID 19 pandemic. Communities that were not positioned to move and respond soon struggled. If nothing else, the pandemic has taught us to be prepared!

Guiding Principles for :

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

Housing Guiding Principles

- Expand state and local funding for affordable housing preservation and production, including housing trust funds.
- Develop local strategies for de-concentrating public and assisted housing.
- Improve and expand services for residents of particular projects, including work readiness, job training, and job retention services.
- Participate in implementing local public housing demolition and redevelopment projects, so they enhance the well-being of current and future residents.
- Support state and local initiatives that make low-wage workers better able to afford housing, including minimum wage laws and supplemental earned income tax credits.
- Create, adopt, and regularly update an affordable housing strategy that examines the tools and mechanisms to facilitate affordable housing. The strategy should be developed in partnership with local citizens and developers and should be implemented and monitored.

Housing Guiding Principles

- Promote a wide range of housing choices and dwelling types in all neighborhoods.
- Allow mother-in-law suits by right.
- Develop in areas already served by municipal or regional infrastructure.
- Update zoning ordinances to allow mixed uses where appropriate.
- Adequately fund code enforcement for local governments
- Implement design standards for manufactured housing.
- Tax manufactured housing as real estate where appropriate.
- Utilize federal and state rehabilitation programs, loans or grants assistance programs for maintenance assistance, home equity conversion mortgage programs, shared housing, and smaller affordable low and moderate-income housing units to meet housing challenges.

Transportation Guiding Principles

- Locate new development in already developed areas so that activities are close together. The effect will reduce average trip distances and encourage walking, cycling, and transit travel.
- Concentrate activities where possible. Encourage pedestrian and transit travel by creating “nodes” of high-density, mixed development linked by convenient transit services. Concentrate commercial activities in these areas. Retain robust downtowns and central business districts.
- Encourage shared parking.
- Create a network of well-connected streets and paths with short blocks and minimal cul-de-sacs. Keep streets as narrow as possible, particularly in residential and commercial centers. Use traffic management and calming measures to minimize vehicle impacts rather than dead-ends and cul-de-sacs.
- Improve sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks, protection from fast vehicular traffic, and provide street amenities (trees, awnings, benches, pedestrian-oriented lighting, etc.). Improve connections for non-motorized travel, such as trails that link dead-end streets.

Transportation Guiding Principles

- Provide traffic calming and other measures that lower automobile speeds, improving walking, bicycling, and transit conditions in residential areas.
- Participate in and support the Transportation Investment Act.
- Participate in and support the regional transit system.
- Identify potential transportation programs to meet public transportation needs.

Community Facilities Guiding Principles

- Identify and pursue infrastructure and expansion needed to support future demands.
- Regularly update comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances (if applicable).
- Regularly update Hazard Mitigation Plans to help ensure public health and safety protection.
- Identify and secure funding for infrastructure improvement projects.
- Ensure that utility rates adequately cover maintenance and replacement needs by service providers.
- Maintain, upgrade, or expand existing facilities to support and encourage growth in desired areas.
- Develop recreation plans.
- Support after-school youth programs.
- Add additional recycling centers.

Intergovernmental Coordination Guiding Principles

- Regularly update the Service Delivery Strategy to help ensure the efficient delivery of services.
- Share information between local governments for greater efficiency.
- Train local government officials through opportunities offered by the Carl Vinson Institute, Georgia Municipal Association, Association County Commissioners of Georgia, or others to enhance their leadership abilities.

Economic Development Guiding Principles

- Facilitate communication between businesses, public agencies, residents, and economic development entities to create an environment that supports retention and expansion of the industry.
- Promote the importance of agriculture to the local economy and the maintenance of farming as a viable industry.
- Support local economic and workforce development entities.
- Periodically review the strategies outlined in the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).
- Support and promote Chambers of Commerce activities.
- Seek regional program grants or other resources that could be utilized for business expansion, infrastructure, etc., needed to develop the region.
- Develop and implement various strategies to make the region attractive to retirees.
- Participate in Quick Start, Georgia Work Ready, and other training programs.

Land Use Guiding Principles

- Adopt appropriate Part V. environmental ordinances
- Soil erosion, sedimentation, and pollution control measures and practices shall conform to the minimum requirements outlined by the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Service.
- Regularly update the comprehensive plan and zoning ordinances (if applicable).
- Require sidewalk connectivity in new development.
- Encourage and support innovative design practices that preserve open space.
- Promote mixed-use development and redevelopment.
- Development design guidelines and make them available to developers. These guidelines, in some cases, should be mandatory.

Natural and Cultural Resources Guiding Principles

- Follow Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs) to protect streams and lakes.
- Adopt appropriate Part V. Environmental ordinances.
- Ensure soil erosion, sedimentation, and pollution control measures and practices conform to the minimum requirements outlined by the **Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Service** should be promoted.
- Require parks and open space requirements in new developments.
- Preserve historical and cultural sites
- Work with local planning commissions, the Southwest Georgia Historic Preservation Advisory Committee, Georgia Trust, SHPO, and private property owners to designate historic properties and scenic byways.
- Promote Adopt-A-Stream activities on all streams not meeting water quality standards.
- Support and promote funding to study the region's surface and groundwater resources.
- Participate in the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Work with GEMA in the development of Hazard Mitigation Plans.

EVALUATION MONITORING

According to the Georgia Regional Planning requirements, the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission must ensure that the Regional Plan is successfully implemented and accomplishes the desired results.

The RC will conduct quality growth assessments to determine the effectiveness of implementing the performance standards described in the Regional Plan. During the Plan Implementation Assessment Meetings (PIA), conducted every thirty months, each local government will conduct a quality growth effectiveness assessment.

The RC presents the following procedures as one way to conduct monitoring and evaluation. These procedures are based on the planning requirements as described in the Regional Plan.

The RC will provide the Georgia Department of Community Affairs with an annual monitoring report as a part of the yearly update of the Regional Work Program that will include: a description and results of the monitoring activities and evaluation procedures undertaken over the previous year and an identification of any modifications or amendments needed to enhance the Plan's effectiveness resulting from the evaluation and monitoring findings.

RC staff will review the performance standards, Comprehensive Plan, and other mandated items under the Georgia Planning Act. At that time, local governments will be informed about the minimum and excellence standards requirements. Local governments may at any time elect to pursue the excellence standards. Still, they will be told that all governments must meet the minimum standards or may risk losing their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status.

RC staff has developed a checklist that includes the performance standards and acceptable evidence that the standard has been met. The checklist will be used to prepare a "snapshot" of the local programs, and the finding will serve as documentation that the review process was held. In addition, RC staff has developed a checklist of other topics discussed during the assessment (See Attached).

After the review, a copy of the performance standards checklist will be provided to the local government and available to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (upon request). The checklist will include the performance standards, a description of what is required to meet the minimum or excellence standard, the review strategy, the compliance standard, whether or not the standard was completed, and the reason standard was not met. An additional checklist will include other planning topics discussed and require signatures of those present. This will also serve as additional documentation. Copies of both lists are included in the appendix.

For governments that cannot meet the minimum performance standard requirement, RC staff will provide technical support and recommend any training necessary to be completed by specific deadlines.

RC staff will prepare a letter concerning its findings and recommendations for local government to ensure follow-up and compliance with performance standards.

As a part of the annual update of the Regional Work Program, any changes and developments in the region will be reported at that time. This information will be forwarded to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs as part of the annual update of the Regional Work Program. Local governments will be encouraged to share the outcome of the Plan Implementation meetings on their local website or through the local newspaper or media.

Those local governments meeting the excellence standards will be recognized locally and regionally in monthly newsletters and other RC social media platforms and publications.



Climax, Georgia

APPENDIX

- Resolution to Transmit
- Public Hearing Information
 - Listening Sessions
 - Attendance Sheets
- Maps
 - Areas Requiring Special Attention
 - Projected Development Map
 - Broadband Regional Service Map
- Flyers/Websites/Social Media Information
- Survey Information
 - Regional Survey Analysis
 - Constant Contact Survey
- Plan Implementation Assessment (PIA) Meeting Checklist
- Schedule for Regional Plan Update
- Regional Statistics
- Economic Resilience Strategic Plan
<https://www.swgrcplanning.org/strategic-plan.html>
- Regional Plan Virtual Meeting PowerPoint Presentation
https://www.swgrcplanning.org/uploads/6/1/8/4/61849693/a11_1_virtual_meeting_powerpoint_zoom_03-28-2022_03-30-2022.pdf

A Resolution by the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission to Transit the Regional Plan Draft to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

WHEREAS, the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission (RC) is required to update the Regional Plan every ten years and;

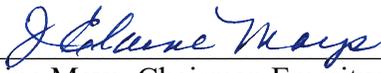
WHEREAS, a copy of the Southwest Georgia RC's Regional Plan must be updated and submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review; and

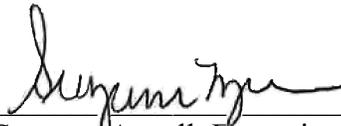
WHEREAS, the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is required to conduct a kick-off meeting and public hearing and allow for public comment; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Commission Council is required to officially adopt the Regional Plan after its approval by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission does hereby approve the transmittal of a draft copy of the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission's Regional Plan for 2022 – 2027 to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for review and directs that the document be presented to the Council for final approval after the DCA review is complete.

This 28th day of April 2022

By: 
Elaine Mays, Chairman Emeritus

Attest: 
Suzanne Angell, Executive Director

DIRTY HARRY CHIMNEY SWEEP
333 Chimney Cleaning/Sweeping

To Advertise
Your Business Call

396 Painting

396

Regional Plan Development Kick-off Meetings
The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is inviting all LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS & OTHER STAKEHOLDERS to a virtual meeting to create a clear vision for the 14 cities and 43 counties that make up the southwest Georgia region. The kick-off meeting is to brief the public on the process to be used to develop the Regional Plan. This meeting will also discuss regional issues that will be included in the plan. The Regional Commission staff will provide information on these issues and more. An accurate overall assessment of the region requires input from Southwest Georgia Residents. Log in to our virtual kick-off meetings on Date: Wednesday, March 17, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86528901087?pwd=MkpuZDh0cWw0aU9WbWpScU9GbnR1b09> or Dial Phone #: 1-301-716-6592
Or
Date: Friday, March 19, 2021 Time: 10:00 a.m. Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86528901087?pwd=MkpuZDh0cWw0aU9WbWpScU9GbnR1b09> or Dial Phone #: 1-301-716-6592
Contact the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission with any questions or comments at 229-522-3552 or brad@swgrc.org

916 Name Change

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF DOUGHERTY COUNTY STATE OF GEORGIA
in re the name change of
Taurus Tremayne Sutton, Petitioner
Civil Action File No. 21CV301-3
NOTICE OF PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
I, Taurus Tremayne Sutton, filed a petition in the Superior Court of Dougherty County, Georgia on the 10th day of March, 2021 to change my name from Taurus Tremayne Sutton to Taurus Tremayne Daniels. Any Interest

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7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES	SOLUTIONS
1 when to retire (7)	_____
2 old-fashioned illumination (11)	_____
3 Phil's acting daughter Lily (7)	_____
4 gets under the skin (4)	_____
5 stealing (8)	_____
6 deserted (9)	_____
7 "creative" payments (9)	_____

COL	BE	KS	DLE	NG
ABA	THI	ME	TIES	LINS

© 2021 Blue Ox Family Games, Inc. Dist. by Andrews McMeel

Notice of Public Hearing for Regional Plan

Please be advised that the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission will host a regional public hearing to brief the public on the contents of the Regional Plan and Regionally Important Resources Plan, and to allow the public to make final suggestions, additions, or revisions.

The public hearing will be held from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Thursday, April 28th in the Conference Center at: Southwest Georgia Regional Commission 181 East Broad St, Camilla, GA 31730

Instructions to attend virtually, as well as, copies of the Regional Plan and Regionally Important Resources Plan, are located on our planning website under the EVENTS tab. Visit us at www.swgrcplanning.org

Please feel free to contact Barbara Reddick at (229) 522-3552 Ext: 102 or email at: breddick@swgrc.org, if there are any questions or comments.

RAID

From A1

who was handpicked to lead a bombing raid against Tokyo and several other Japanese cities. The crew had to learn to rev the engines up

to previously unimaginable RPMs, with the plane shaking violently, before releasing the brakes and attempting to take off on a runway so short. Returning to the carrier was not an option, so there was no turning back.

All hopes of success for this mission were dashed when the carrier was unable to land on the Chinese coast.

Doolittle decided they had to launch immediately. All 16 B-25s successfully took off from the Hornet and skimmed at a low altitude just over the waves to avoid radar and visual sighting as they headed for Japan. Once they passed a crash landing, and the one plane lowest on fuel chose a shorter route to land in the

visits in the U.S. It is estimated that pain and discomfort from acid reflux impact more than 80 million Americans at least once per month. The standard recommendations for symptomatic GERD patients include lifestyle changes (e.g., diet, scheduled eating times and sleeping positions) and escalating doses of prescription medications for prolonged periods of time.

SURGERY

From A1

the natural, physiological anatomy to prevent GERD.

Because the procedure is incisionless, there is reduced pain, reduced recovery and no visible scar. Often, patients also need hiatal hernia surgery. In those cases, typical surgery will still be

as more general surgeons and gastroenterologists perform this new procedure.”

GERD is a chronic condition in which the gastroesophageal valve allows gastric contents to reflux (wash backwards) into the esophagus, causing heartburn and possible injury to the esophageal lining. GERD is the most common gastrointestinal-related diagnosis made by physicians during clinical

visits in the U.S.

It is estimated that pain and discomfort from acid reflux impact more than 80 million Americans at least once per month. The standard recommendations for symptomatic GERD patients include lifestyle changes (e.g., diet, scheduled eating times and sleeping positions) and escalating doses of prescription medications for prolonged periods of time.

DRILL

From A1

Reasonable accommodations will be made for volunteer requests to the best of the airport's abilities, and volunteers who feel uncomfortable with these situations may discontinue

Photos and video may be taken of participants and used by responding agencies in a variety of media distributions. By volunteering for the exercise, individuals acknowledge and understand the elements to which they may be exposed and agree to hold harmless the city of Albany, the Southwest Georgia Regional Airport, and

all participating emergency response agencies for reasonable actions related to their roles in the exercise. Volunteers under the age of 18 must have signed permission of a parent or guardian before being allowed to participate. To volunteer or obtain more information, contact scookson@albany.ga.

Soviet Union, where they were interned by the Soviets.

Miraculously, 77 of the Raiders survived the mission. Eight were captured by the Japanese, of whom 4 died in their brutal captivity. Chinese peasants were crucial in helping the American island of Midway, a mission, Richard Cole, of Com-fort, Texas, died in 2019 at the age of 103. He was Doolittle's and was the day we knew we could win.

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Please feel free to contact Barbara Reddick at (229) 522-3552 Ext: 102 or email at: breddick@swgcr.org, if there are any questions or comments.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Public Listening Session – Southwest Georgia Regional Plan

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Is Inviting all:

LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS, ELECTED OFFICIALS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS

To a listening session addressing the issues listed below and other regional issues:

Housing, Transportation, Community and Economic Development, Southwest Georgia Strengths and Weaknesses

The Regional Commission staff is updating the Southwest Georgia Regional Plan. The Regional Plan helps communities consider regional issues, opportunities, and resources as they grow and develop. The input you give will be incorporated in the Regional Plan and submitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for approval. The current plan expires on June 30, 2022. The public listening session information is below:

- DECATUR, GRADY & THOMAS COUNTIES -

Grady County Roddenberry Library
320 N. Broad Street
Cairo, Georgia 39828

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please go to our website (www.swgrc.org) and complete the survey or click this link [_____](#). You can also contact the Southwest Georgia Regional Commission with any questions or comments at 229-522-3552 or breddick@swgrc.org

We will adhere to the CDC guidelines of wearing masks and social distancing.

Grady County Listening Sessions 11/3/21

	Name	Agency/Organization	Title	Phone #	Email Address
17	Carole White	DCSS/DHS	PAC Coordinator	229-583-2880	Carole.White@DSSAA.GOV
18	Barbara Reddick	SWARC	Manager	229-522-3571	BReddick@swgrc.org
19	Samika Tombs	SWGA PC	Admin Asst.	229-522-3354	Stombs@swgrc.org
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Worth County Listening Session Sign In Sheet

Date: November 4, 2021 - 10AM

Facilitator:

Worth County

	Name	Agency/Organization	Title	Phone #	Email Address
1	Markesha Bivens	City of Sylvester	City Clerk	229.776.8505	mbivens@cityofsylvester.com
2	Babun Redden	SWGA RC	Planing Director	229.520-3552	bradden@swgarc.org
3	Sameka Tombs	SWGA RC	Admin Asst.	(229) 522-3557	stombs@swgarc.org
4	Blaise Stephens	City of Sylvester	Comm. Dev. Dir.	229-776-4574	gstephens@cityofsylvester.com
5	Karen Singletary	City of Sylvester	Main Street Mgr.	229.288-1685	ksingletary@cityofsylvester.com
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Mitchell County Listening Session Sign In Sheet

Date: November 4, 2021 - 2PM

Facilitator:

Mitchell County

	Name	Agency/Organization	Title	Phone #	Email Address
1	HELVIN OWENS	CAMILLA	MAYOR	229-328-3384	KEVIN.OWENS@CITYOFSAMRUA
2	Barbara Braddock	SW GA RE	Program Director	229-522-3522	braddock@swgrc.org
3	Stanley Stombs	SWGA RC ASP		229-522-3552	Stombs@swga.org
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Terrell County Listening Session Sign In Sheet

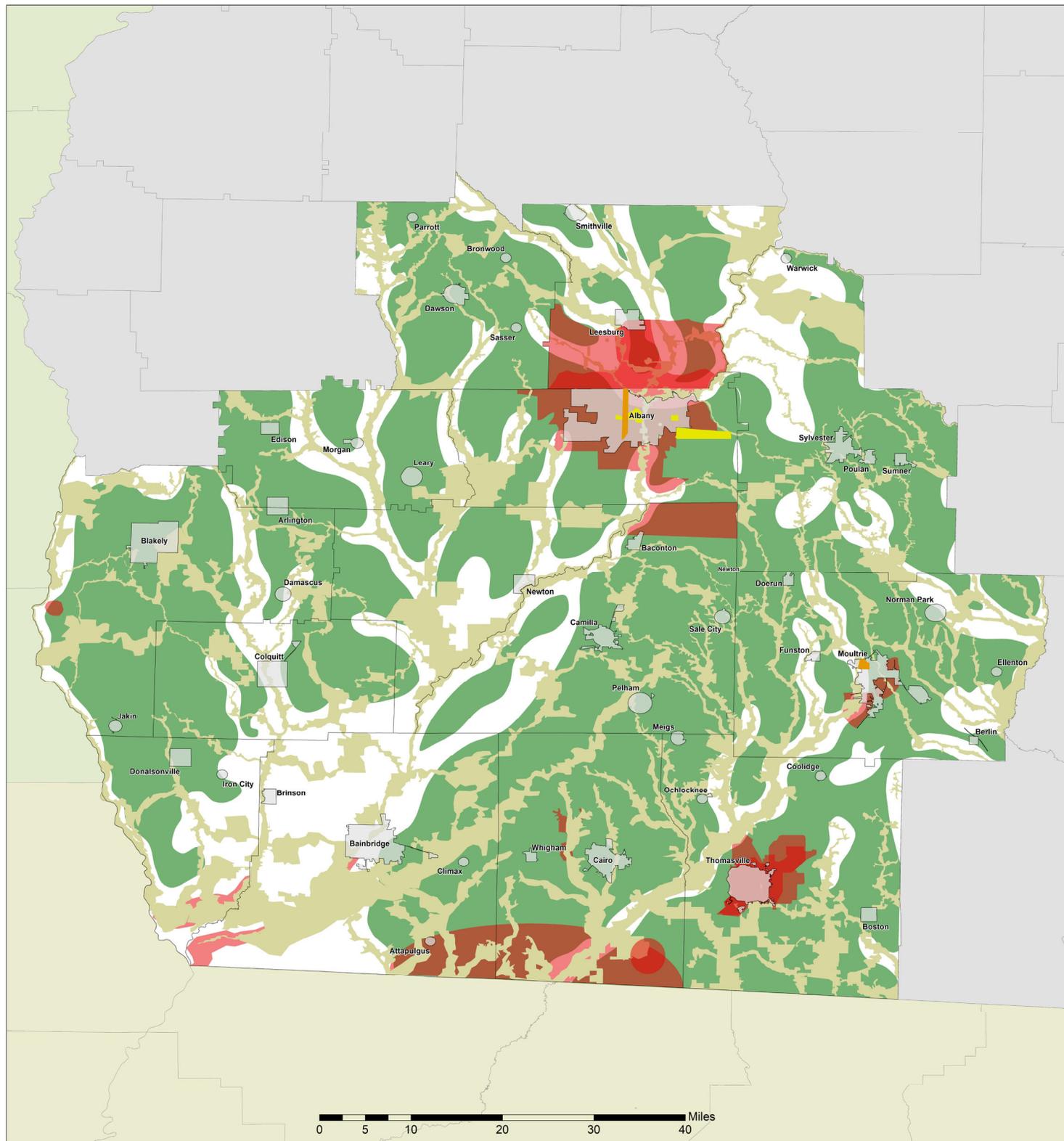
Date: November 5, 2021 - 10AM

Facilitator:

Terrell County

	Name	Agency/Organization	Title	Phone #	Email Address
1	Sandra O'Stean	Terrell Co BOC	CherK	229-995-4416	Sandraob@windstream.net
2	Samkia Gonds	SWGA RC	ASP	229-522-3552	Stamboga@swgrc.org
3	Barbara Fredrick	SWGA RC	Planning Director	229-522-3552	bfredrick@swgrc.org
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Areas Requiring Special Attention



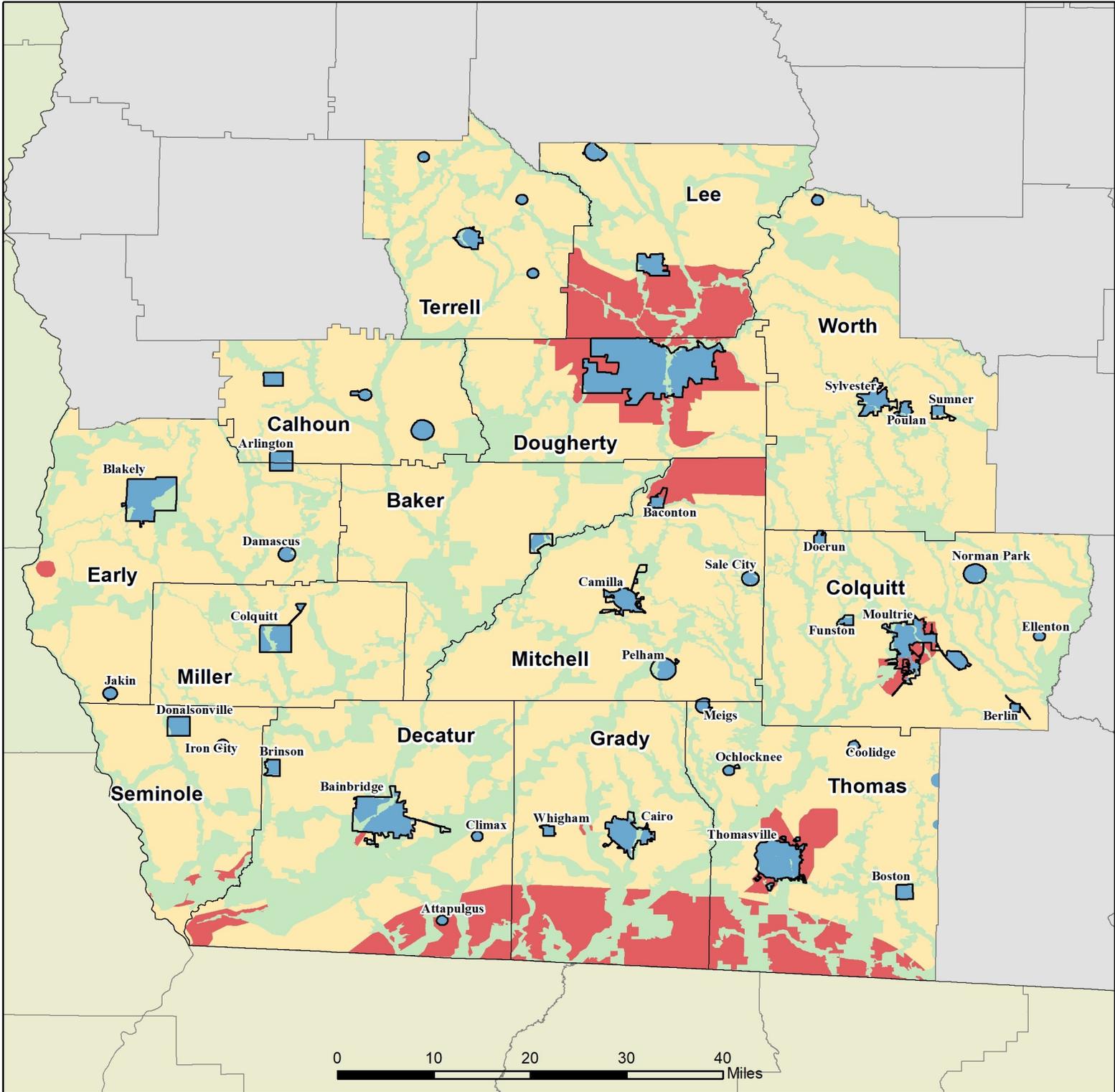
Legend

- Areas needing Redevelopment
- Areas of Significant Infill
- Prime Farmland
- Conservation Area
- Areas of Rapid Development

0 5 10 20 30 40 Miles



Projected Development Patterns

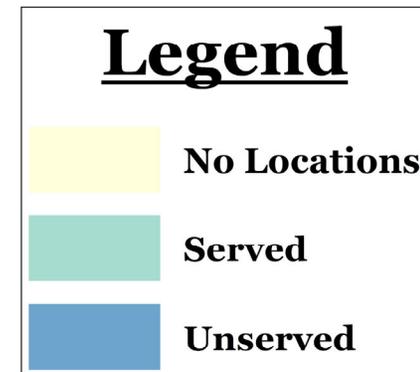
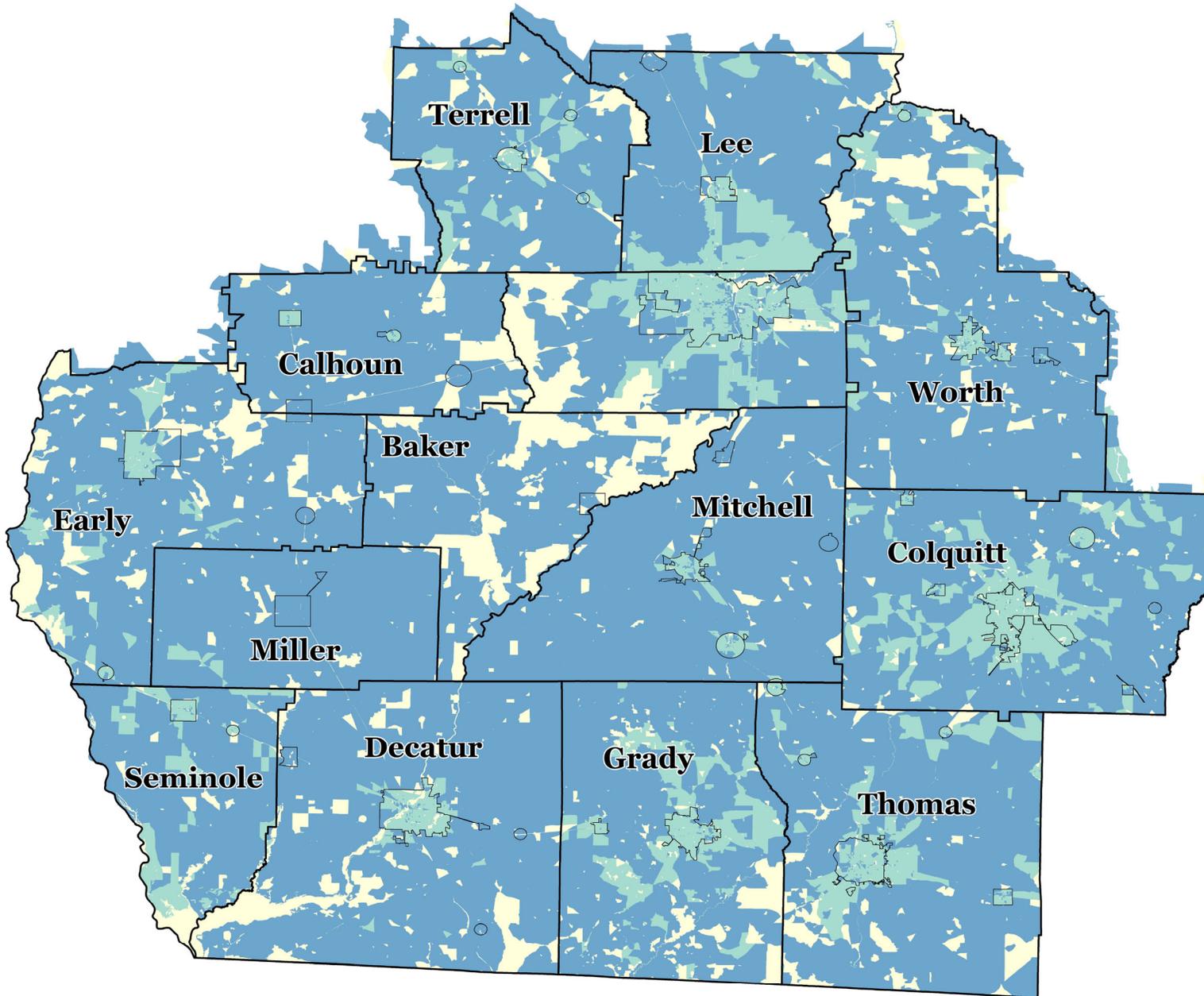


Legend

- CONSERVATION AREA
- RURAL AREA
- DEVELOPED AREA
- DEVELOPING AREA



Broadband Service Map



Terrell, Lee, and Calhoun
Counties

Governmental Building

Address: 955 Forrester Dr.
Dawson, GA

Date : November 5, 2021

Time : 10 AM

Miller, Seminole, and Early Counties

Colquitt State Theater

Address: 152-A South First Street Colquitt, GA

Date: November 1, 2021

Time: 2 PM

Grady, Thomas, and Decatur
Counties

Rodenberry Memorial Library

Address: 320 North Broad
Street Cairo, GA

Date: November 3, 2021

Time: 10 AM

Mitchell and Baker Counties

Southwest Georgia Regional Com-
mission Conference Room

Address: 181 E. Broad Street
Camilla, GA

Date : November 4, 2021

Time: 2 PM

Public Listening Sessions

The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission invites you to a Public Listening Session. We are soliciting your views on housing , transportation, economic development and other regional issues. Attend a multi-county meeting!

Who is invited?

- Residents
- Elected Officials
- Business Stakeholders
- Community Representatives
- Other Leaders



Your input is valuable to the development of the
Regional Plan

Click Here to take our survey :

<http://www.swgrcplanning.org/swga-regional-plan.html>

For more information, contact Barbara Reddick at
229-522-3552 or breddick@swgrc.org

Worth, Colquitt, and Dougherty Counties

City of Sylvester Train Depot

Address: 102 South Main Street Sylvester, GA

Date : November 4,2021

Time: 10 AM

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THE SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION INVITES YOU TO JOIN OUR PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION.
ATTEND A MULTI-COUNTY MEETING ON THE REGIONAL PLAN!



Get updated on our **NEXT** Public Meeting Session

* Indicates required field

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County	Date	Time	Location	Address
Baker	November 4, 2021	2:00 p.m.	Southwest Georgia Regional Commission Conference Room	181 E. Broad Street Camilla, GA
Calhoun	November 5, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Governmental Building	955 Forrester Dr. Dawson, GA
Colquit	November 4, 2021	10:00 a.m.	City of Sylvester Train Depot	102 South Main Street Sylvester, GA
Decatur	November 3, 2021	10:00 a.m.	Rodenberry Memorial	320 North Broad

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[HOME](#)
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CONTACT

Early	November 1, 2021	2:00 p.m.	Colquitt State Theater	152-A South First Street Colquitt, GA
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Notice of Public Hearing for Regional Plan

Upcoming Events

Public Hearing for Regional Plan

The public hearing will be held from 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM on Thursday, April 28th in the Conference Center at: Southwest Georgia Regional Commission 181 East Broad St, Camilla, GA 31730

Please feel free to contact Barbara Reddick at (229) 522-3552 Ext: 102 or email at breddick@swgrc.org, if there are any questions or comments.

REGIONAL PLAN

REGIONALLY IMPORTANT RESOURCE PLAN



ZOOM LINK

Attend Public Hearing Virtually
click the Zoom link

REGIONAL PLAN

**Southwest Georgia Regional Commission
Regional Plan**

The Regional Plan involves all segments of the region to develop a plan to guide jointly decisions-making for government officials and other regional leaders. The Southwest Georgia Regional Commission is currently working on the regional plan. The plan will examine regional issues and solutions.

The plan will be completed in 2022 and will be available on our website at www.swgcrplanning.org/regional-plan/

What do you want in your new plan? Tell us your thoughts! Please contact Regional Planner, **Kimberly McMillan** at 229-522-3552 or kemc@swgcr.org or **Deputy Director, Barbara Reddick** at 229-522-3552 or breddick@swgcr.org

BENEFITS OF THE PLAN

REGIONALISM

- Create strong vital communities that preserve their small town character while pursuing economic growth that respects our agriculture heritage, improves quality of life, and supports the dreams of future generations.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

- Encourage business and industry to develop or expand in a community and be suitable for the community in terms of job body demands, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects of expansion and creation of higher skill job opportunities.

HOUSING OPTIONS

- Allow a mix of housing, sizes, types, and income levels within neighborhoods.
- Support development patterns that encourage walkability and transit-oriented living.
- Grant developers additional incentives (i.e. density increased in exchange for the provision of amenities such as affordable housing units, public space, cultural facilities, improvements, or green space).

EFFICIENT LAND USE

- Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.

COMMUNITY HEALTH

- Support programs that educate communities on healthy lifestyles, chronic disease prevention and management.
- Increase opportunities for physical activity and work with schools to increase physical education classes.
- Encourage development of Neighborhood Plans that promote health and access to safe, clean neighborhood and good work opportunities.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

- Encourage and support alternatives to transportation by automobiles, including walking, cycling, and transit, employing traffic calming measures throughout the community and increase connectivity.
- Promote sidewalks, bike lanes and shoulder buffers and barrier-arms to safe traffic, and encourage walkability.









Regional Plan Draft

2022 DRAFT

2017-2022 Regional Agenda

[VIEW](#)

Regional Important Resource Plan

[VIEW](#)

For any questions or comments please submit them below. Barbara Reddick can also be reached at 229-522-3552 x102.

* Indicates required field

Name *

Email *

Comment *

REGIONAL PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Melody Piece, WorkSource Southwest Georgia, Executive Director
- Debra Bell-Dison, USDA Area Director
- Rhonda Gordon, Executive Director Golden Triangle RC&D
- Sharon Edwards, Executive Director, Community Outreach Training Center
- Randy Weldon, CEO of Southwest Georgia Community Action Council
- Jami Harper Community Program Manager, SOWEGA Council on Aging
- Jessica Jennings, Baker/Mitchell Family Connection
- Lisa Rigsby, Director, De Soto Trail Regional Library
- Pate Council, Assistant Director, De Soto Trail Regional Library

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

HOME

WHAT WE DO

PLANS AND DOCUMENTS

GRANTS

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CONTACT

Commissioner Charlie Williams
Councilman Darryl Warren
Mrs. Benny Flowers – Private Sector

Colquitt County
Commissioner Paul Nagy
Mayor Ferrell Ruis
Ms. Johnsie Handfield – Private Sector
Ms. Barbara Grogan – Additional Member

Decatur County
Commissioner Steve Brock
Councilman Gregg Close
Mrs. Revonn Miller – Private Sector
Mr. Billy Poppell – Additional Member

Dougherty County
Commissioner Anthony Jones
City Commissioner John Howard
Dr. Charles Ochie – Private Sector
Mr. Raymond Breaux – Additional Member
Mr. Casawn-Lhuillier Yheyis – Additional Member

Early County
Commissioner Charlie Sol
Councilman Al Hutchins, Jr.
Mr. Freddie Speight – Private Sector

Commissioner John Wheaton
Councilman Dwight Hickman
Mr. Chad Griffin – Private Sector
Mr. Jason Scott - Additional

Miller County
Commissioner Gregg Freeman
Councilman Carlos Williams
Ms. Jayme Smith – Private Sector

Mitchell County
Commissioner Benjamin Hayward
Councilman Danny Palmer
Mr. Nathaniel Keaton – Private Sector

Seminole County
Commissioner Brenda Peterson
Councilman Mitchell Blanks
Mrs. Tracie Beard – Private Sector

Terrell County
Commissioner Earnest Johnson
Councilman Sondra Walker
Mr. Doug Powell – Private Sector

Worth County
Commissioner Kemp Willis
Councilman Christopher Wheeler
Mr. Melvin Harris, Sr. – Private Sector

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- [HOME](#)
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SCHEDULE FOR REGIONAL PLAN UPDATE

MONTH	MEETINGS	WORKFLOW
January 2021	None	<p>Prepare for Planning Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify regional stakeholders & steering committee
February	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft stakeholder involvement plan Draft Initial List Needs & Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Required data/map analysis - QCO Analysis Review other regional & statewide plans
March	Regional Public Hearing #1 & Kick-Off Meeting Steering Committee	<p>Plan process overview, schedule, review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process overview & schedule Overview, current conditions- baseline information from the above analyses Review Existing Regional Vision Components: General Vision Statement, Regional Development Map/ARSA, Issues, and Opportunities
April	None	Develop Regional Survey
May	None	Publish Regional Survey on website www.swgrcplanning.org and social media outlets
June	Steering Committee	<p>Public and Steering Committee Input on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Goals Needs and Opportunities - SWOT Analysis
July	None	Developing materials for public listening sessions, securing

September

None

Educating Steering Committee on previous and upcoming meeting schedules during Regional Commission Council Meeting

October

None

Preparing for and promoting upcoming public listening sessions
Begin drafting the plan

November

Public Listening Session
(Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth)

(5) Multi-county Public Listening Sessions held
Continue drafting the plan

December

None

Continue Drafting Plan and Developing Maps

January 2022

None

Continue Drafting Plan – Target additional Regional Stakeholders

February

None

Prepare for additional virtual meetings

March

Conduct (2) Virtual Meetings

Review the Regional Plan components of Regional Work Program Items, SWOT Analysis, Implementation Strategies
Continue Drafting Plan

April

Public Hearing #2

Draft Complete Regional Draft Plan with Steering Committee
Review Draft of Plan
Ensure consistency with Statewide and Regional Plan
Transmit to DCA for review
DCA Completeness check and notification of interested parties

May/June

None

DCA Review
DCA provides comments to Regional Commission
Regional Commission Council adopts DCA approved plan
Regional Commission notifies DCA of adoption

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SOUTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM

The Southwest Regional Commission, under the requirements set forth by the Department of Community Affairs establishes a Community Work Program of programs, tools, opportunities, and resources that guide our Planning efforts during the Program time frame. There are currently seven areas of focus for the Southwest Georgia Regional Work Program.

Economic Development

Housing

Land Use

Transportation

Natural and Cultural Resources

Community Facilities

Intergovernmental Coordination

Report of Accomplishments

2020-2024

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW ACCOMPLISHMENTS](#)

Regional Work

Program

2021-2025

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW WORK PROGRAM](#)

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Southwest Georgia
Regional Commission

REGIONAL PLANNING

-Virtual Meetings-



zoom

Zoom link will be
posted on our Website
and Facebook page

Monday & Wednesday
March 28th March 30th

TIME:

10:00AM

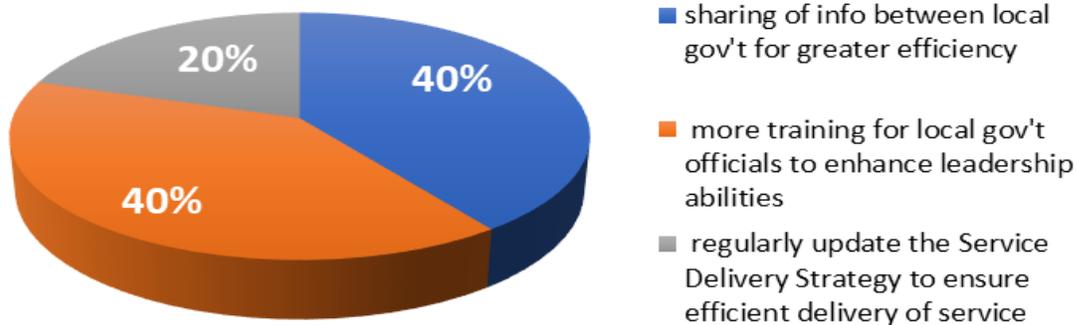
- TOPICS:
- Regional Goals & Projects
 - Regional Community Development
 - Regional Strengths/Weaknesses
Opportunities/ Threats

Your input is needed to address critical regional issues and opportunities

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO TAKE THE SURVEY : WWW.SWGRCPLANNING.ORG

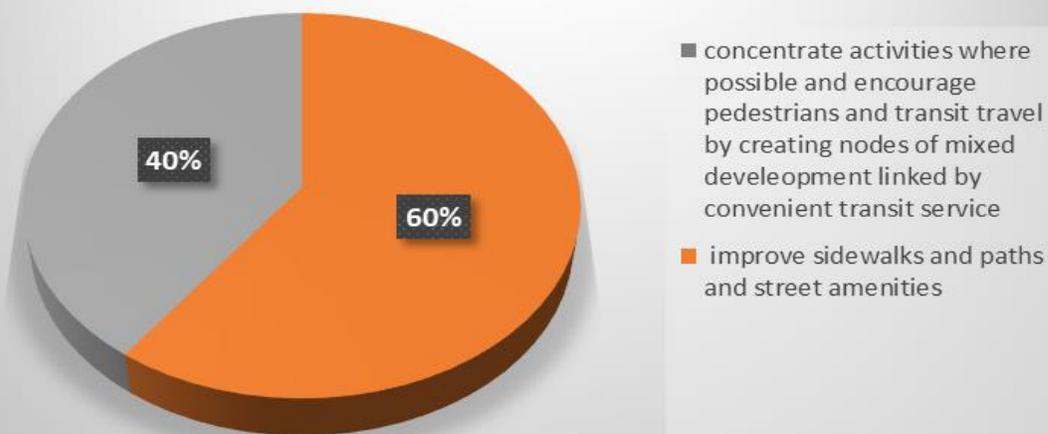
REGIONAL ANALYSIS SURVEY

Intergovernmental Coordination

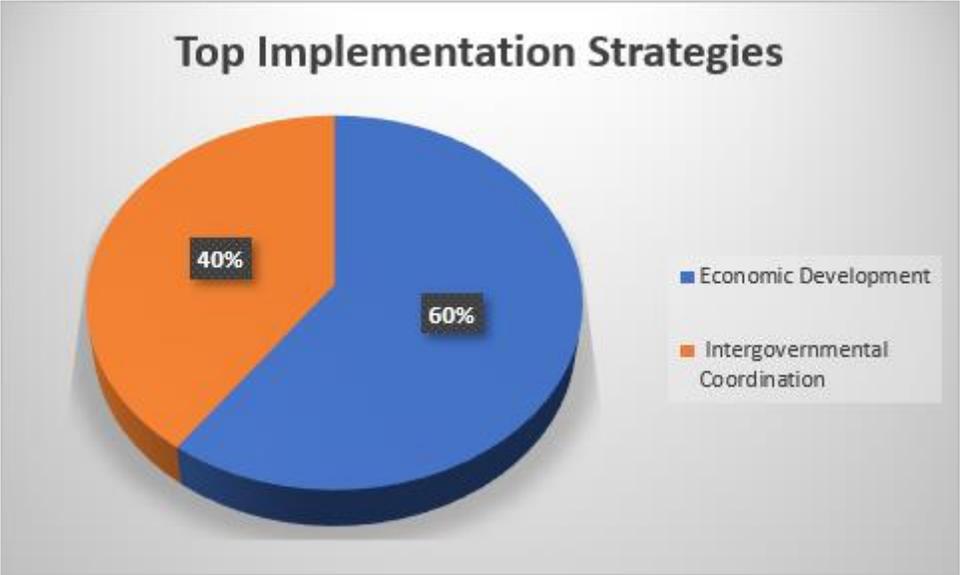


40% of survey participants reported the best strategy to solve problems with intergovernmental coordination is sharing information between local governments for greater efficiency. 40% of participants reported more training for local government officials is needed so they may enhance their leadership abilities. 20% of participants think the best strategy is to regularly update the Service Delivery Strategy to help ensure the efficient delivery of service.

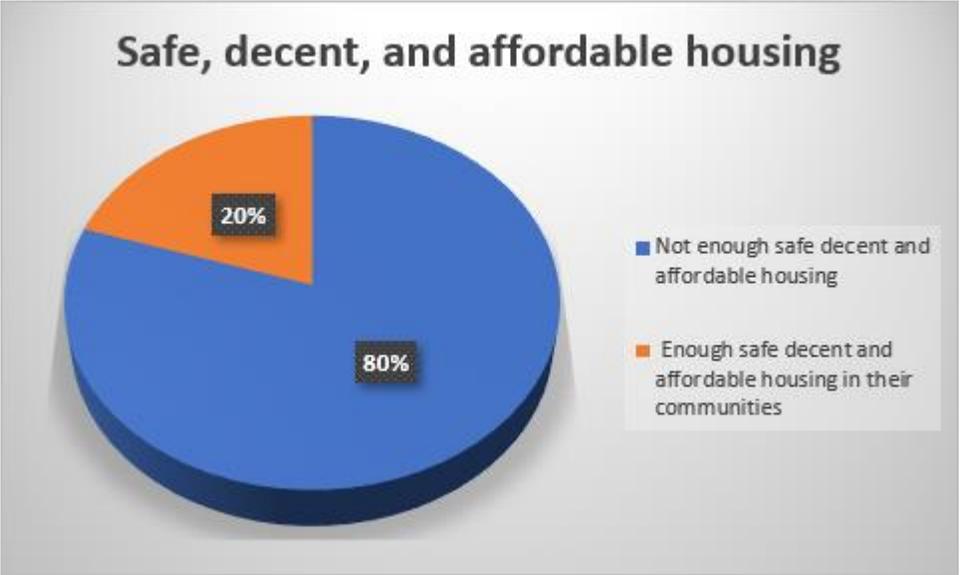
Transportation Strategy



60% of participants of the survey believe the best strategy to solve problems with transportation in the community is to improve sidewalks, paths, crosswalks, protection from fast vehicular traffic, and provide street amenities (trees, benches, pedestrian-oriented lighting, etc.). 40% of participants of the survey think the best strategy is to concentrate activities where possible and encourage pedestrians and transit travel by creating "nodes" of high density, mixed development that are linked by convenient transit service.

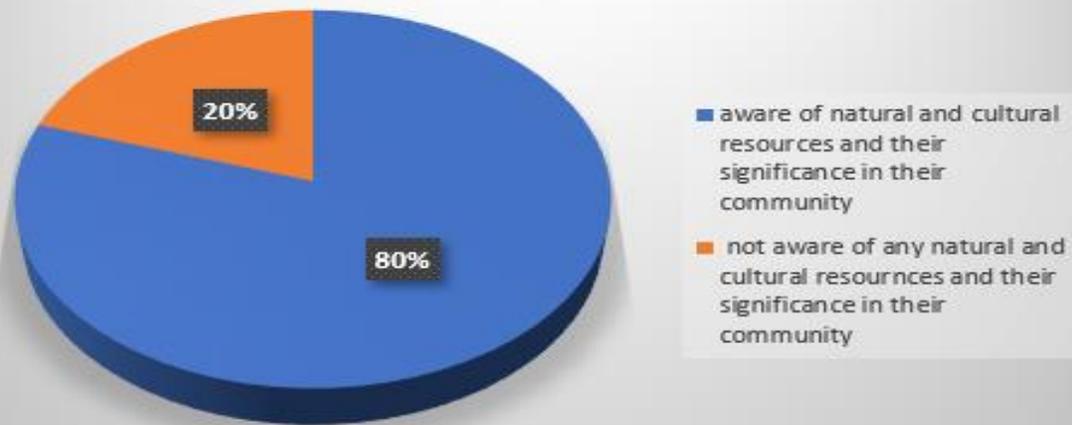


60% of participants voted that economic development was the top implementation strategy. 40% of participants voted that intergovernmental coordination was the top implementation strategy.



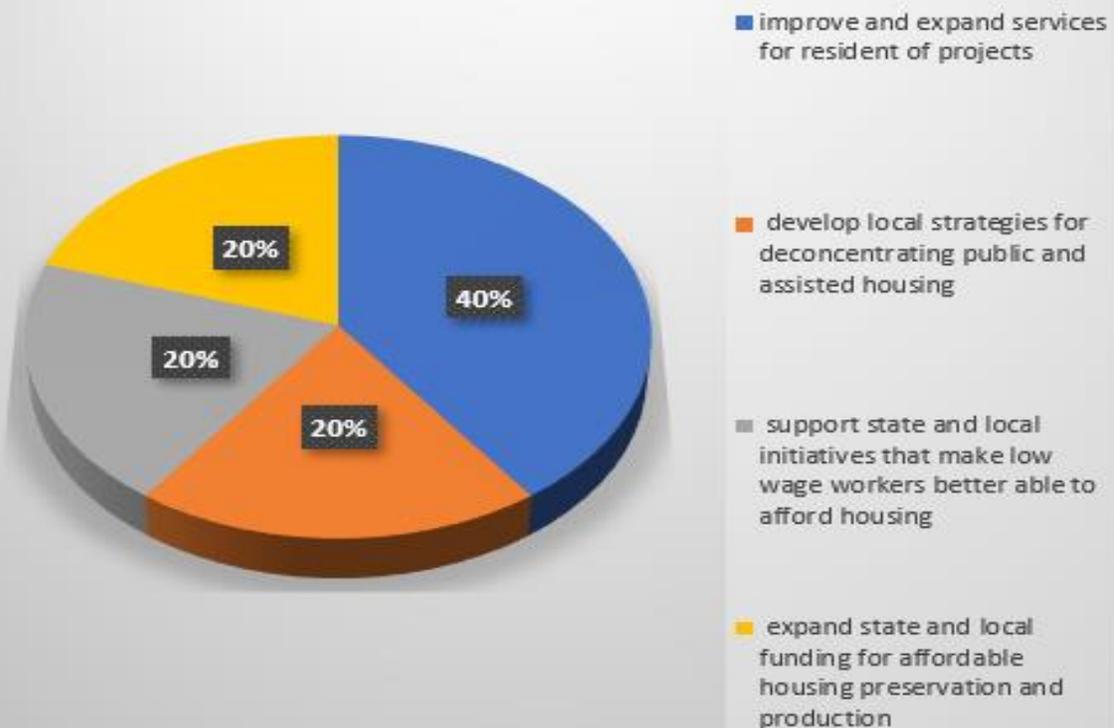
20% believe there is enough safe, decent and affordable housing in their communities. On the other hand, 80% do not think there is enough safe, decent and affordable housing in their communities

Natural and Cultural Resources

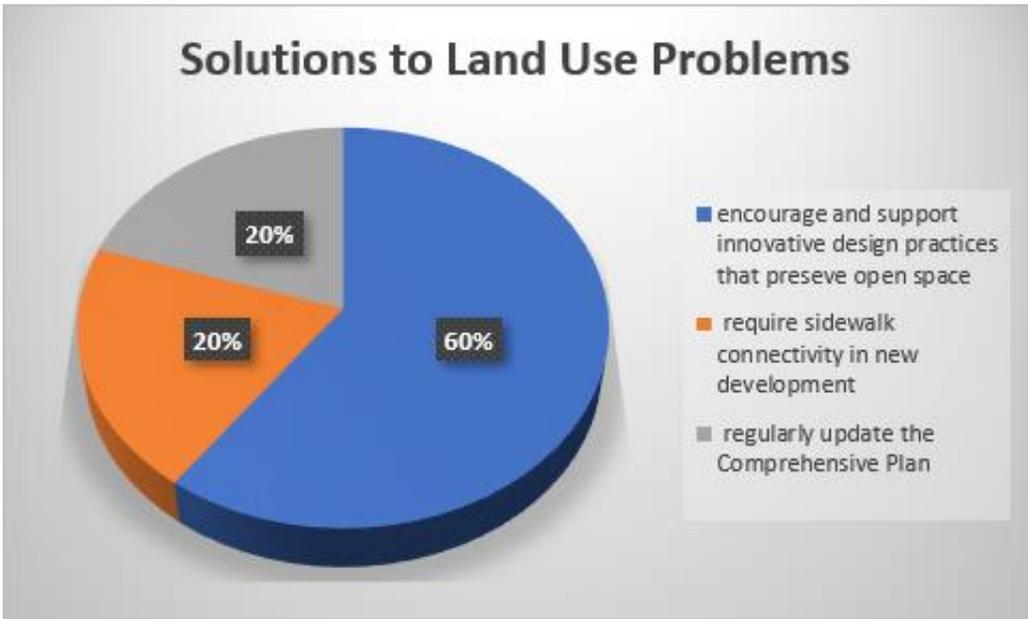


80% of participants are aware of natural and cultural resources and their significance in their community. 20% of participants are not aware of any natural and cultural resources and their significance in their community. Participants are aware of the following natural and cultural resources: Flint River, Kinchafoonee Creek, Trails, parks and lake in Thomasville.

Solutions to Housing Problems



40% of participants believe the strategy to best solve problems with housing in their communities is to improve and expand services for residents of projects, including work readiness, job training, and job retention services. 20% of participants think the best strategy is to develop local strategies for de-concentrating public and assisted housing; 20% of participants believe the best strategy is to support state and local initiatives that make low wage workers better able to afford housing, including minimum wage laws and supplemental earned income tax credits. 20% think the best strategy is to expand state and local funding for affordable housing preservation and production.

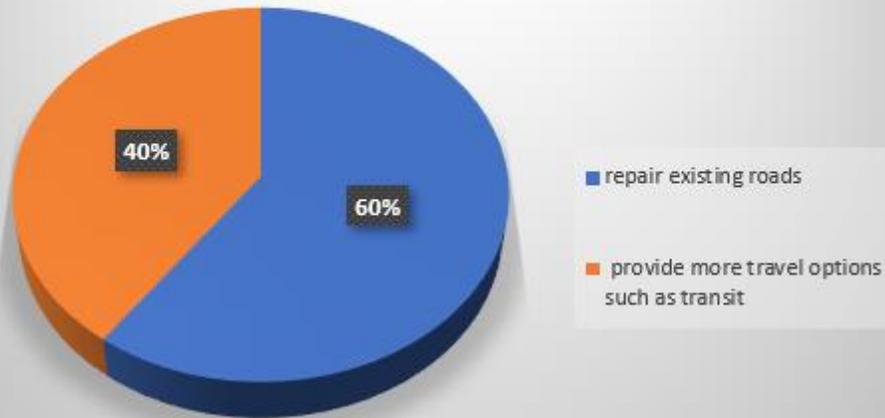


60% of participants believe the best strategy to solve problems with land use in their communities is to encourage and support innovative design practices that preserve open space. 20% of participants believe the best way to solve problems with land use is to require sidewalk connectivity in new development. 20% of participants believe the best way to solve problems with land use is to regularly update the Comprehensive Plan and zoning ordinances (if applicable).



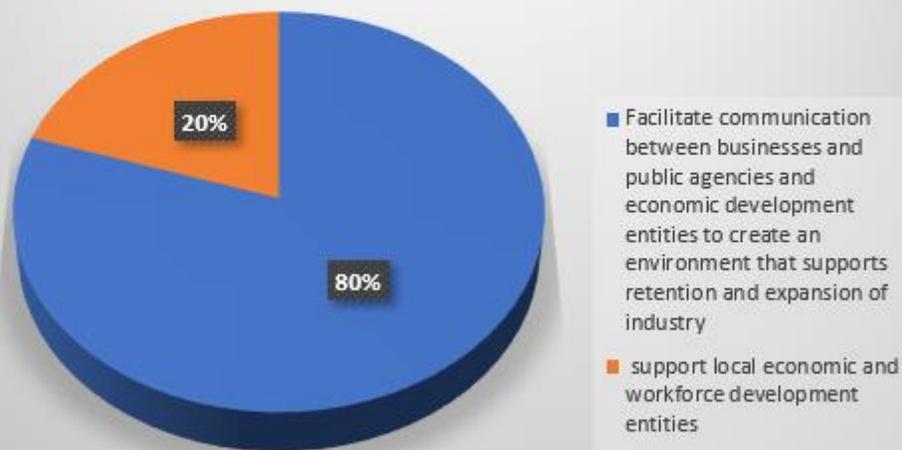
100% of participants believe their local government and authorities collaborate effectively and work well together.

Most Critical Transportation Need



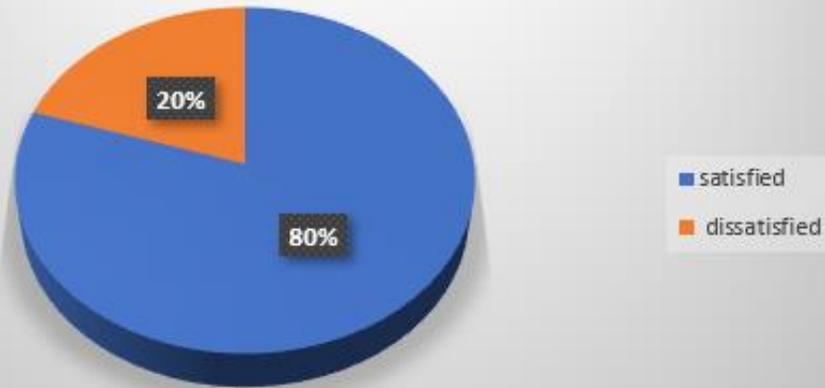
60% of respondents voted for the repair of existing needs. 40% of respondents voted to provide more travel options such as transit.

Best Strategy to Solve Problems with Economic Development



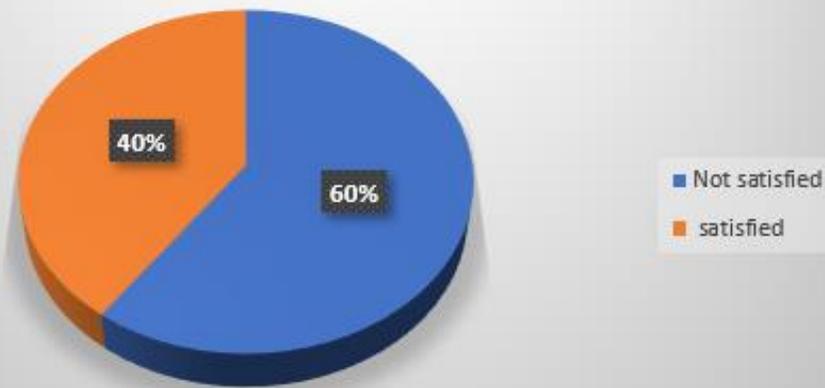
80% of participants believe the best strategy to solve problems with economic development is to facilitate communication between businesses, public agencies, residents and economic development entities to create an environment that supports retention and expansion of industry. 20% of participants think the best strategy to solve economic development problems is to support local economic and workforce development entities.

Satification of Current Economic Activities



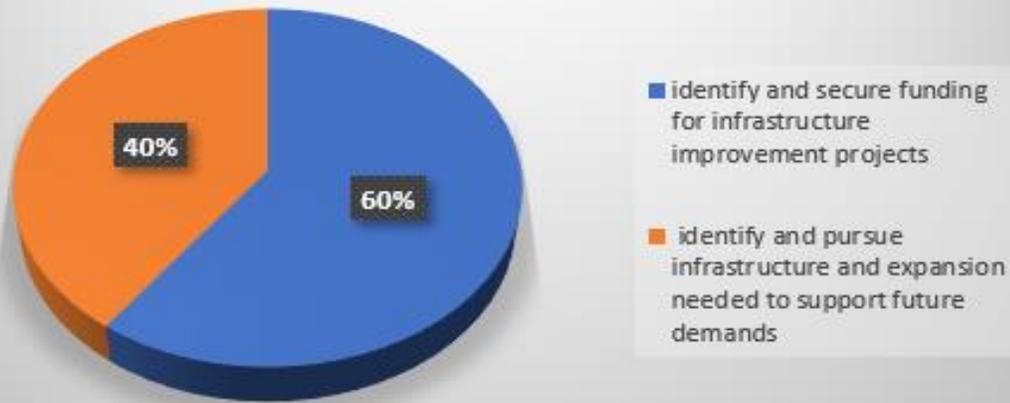
80% of participants are satisfied with the current economic activities in their community. 20% of participants are dissatisfied with the current economic activities in their community.

Satisfaction of the Development Throughout the Community



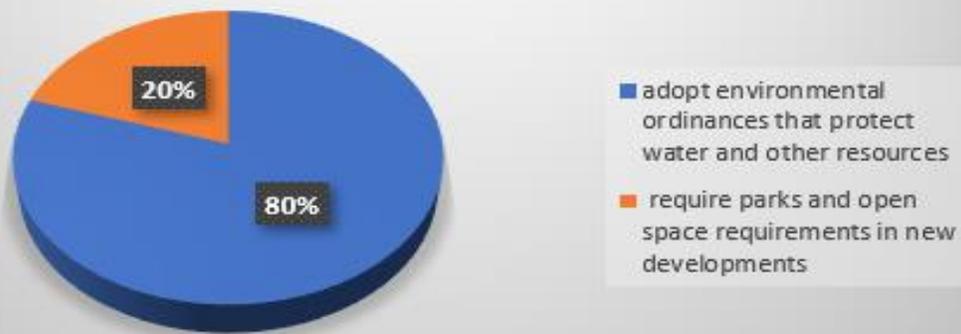
60% of participants are not satisfied with the development throughout their community. They also dislike the huge solar farms and believe they are an eye sore .40% of participants are satisfied with the development and believe there is almost no development in the rural part of the county.

Best Strategy to Solve Problems with Community Facilities

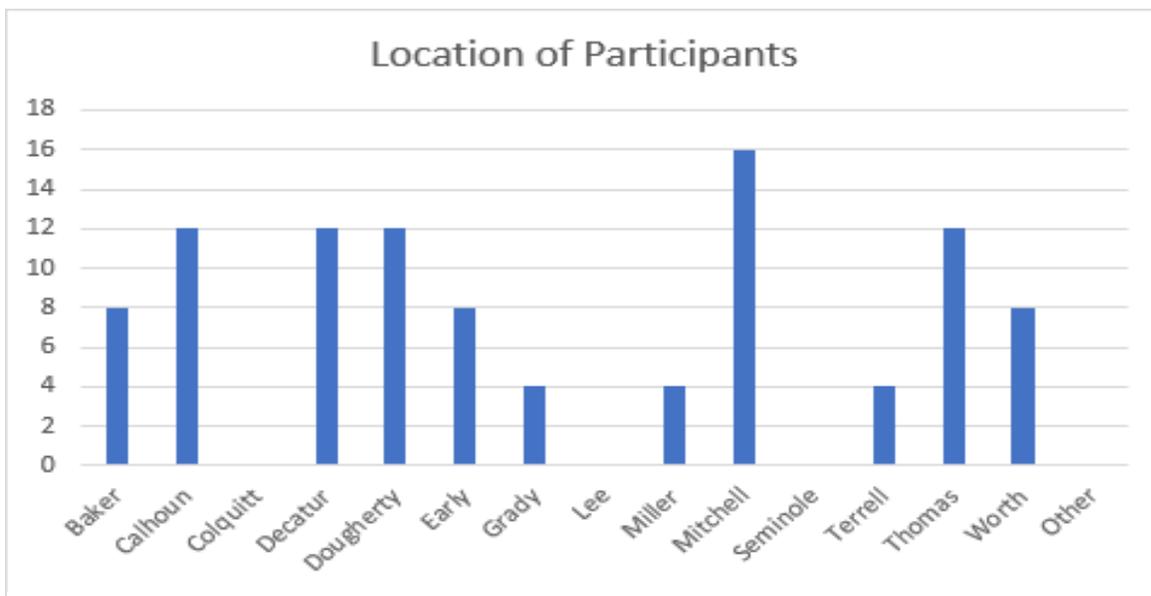


60% of the participants believe the best strategy to solve problems with community facilities is to identify and secure funding for infrastructure improvement projects. 40% of participants believe the best strategy to solve problems with community facilities is to identify and pursue infrastructure and expansion needed to support future demands.

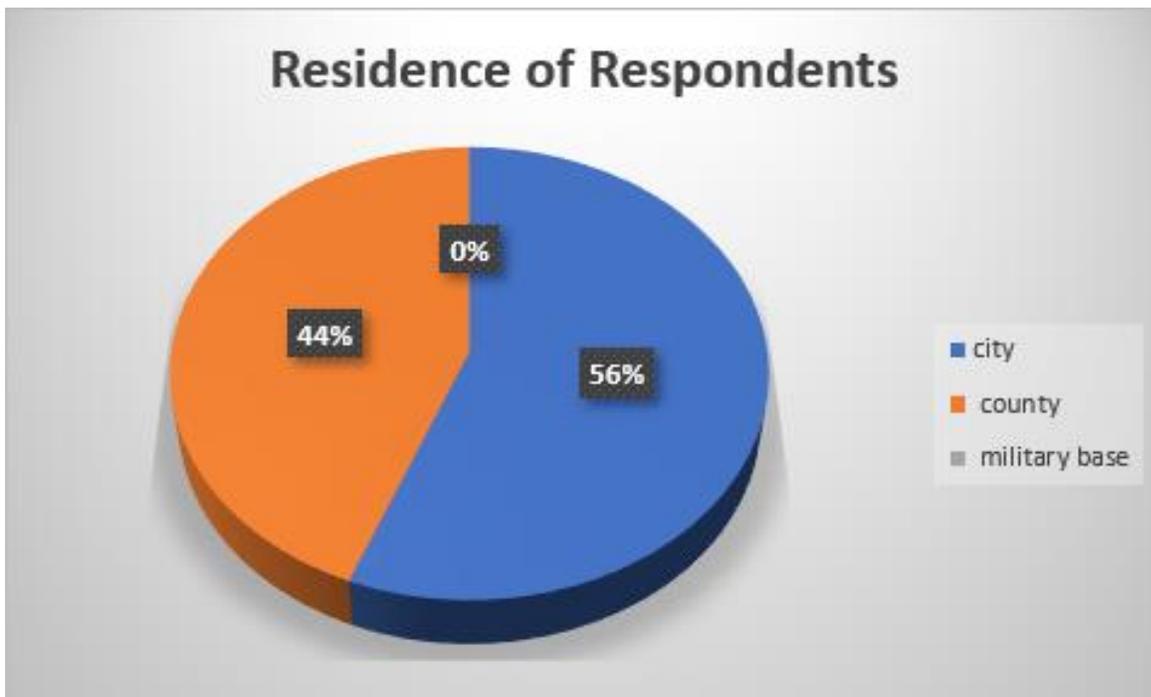
Solutions to Solve Issues with Natural and Cultural Resources in the Community



80% of participants believe the best strategy to solve problems with natural and cultural resources in their community is to adopt environmental ordinances that protect water and other resources. 20% of participants believe the best strategy is to require parks and open space requirements in new developments.

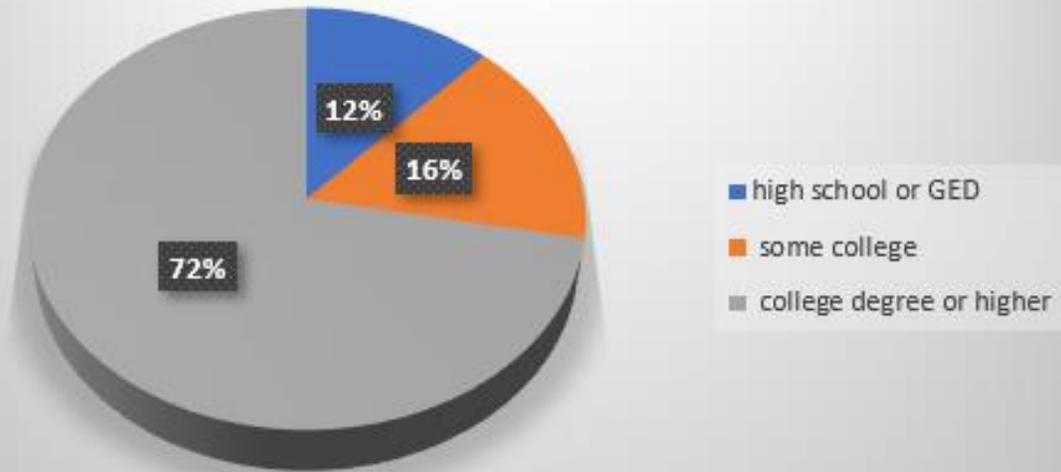


The county with the most respondents is Mitchell County. The counties with the least participants include Grady, Miller, and Terrell.



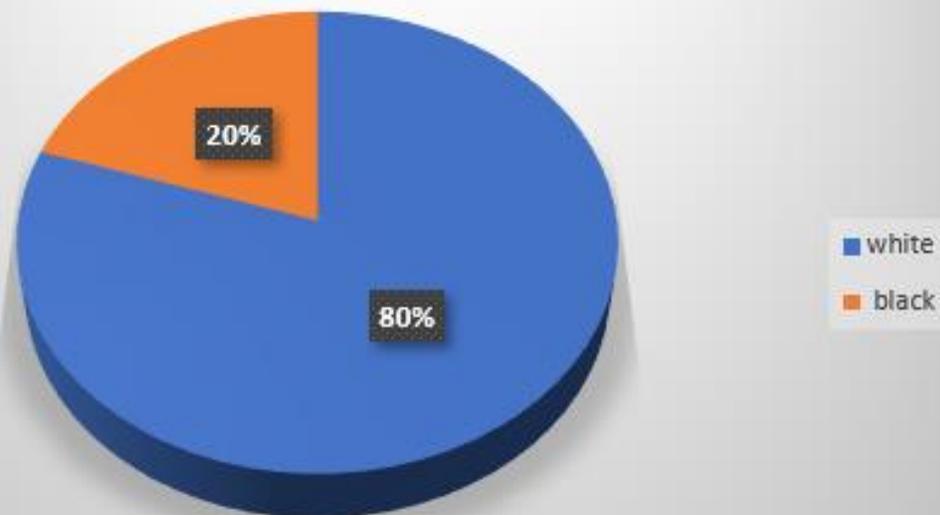
Most participants reside in the city limits, and 44% of the participants were county residents.

Level of Education



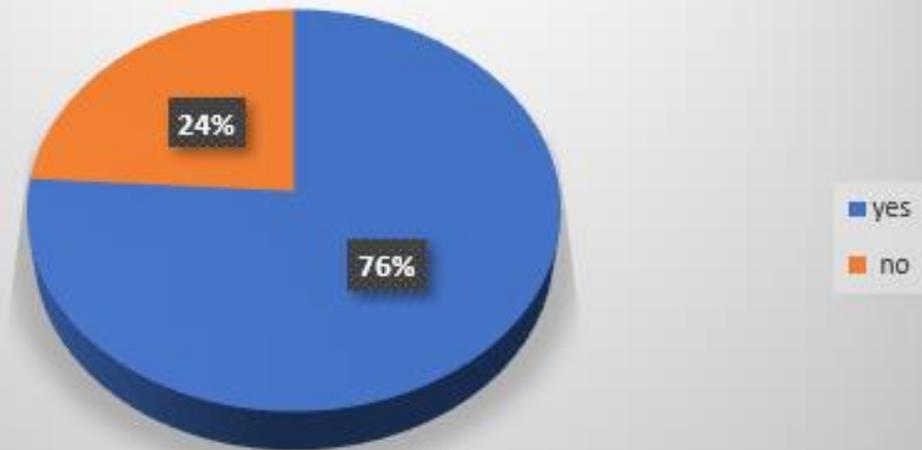
72% of respondents had a college degree or higher. 16% of the respondents only have some college level of education while 12% had a high school or GED level of education.

Race/Ethnicity



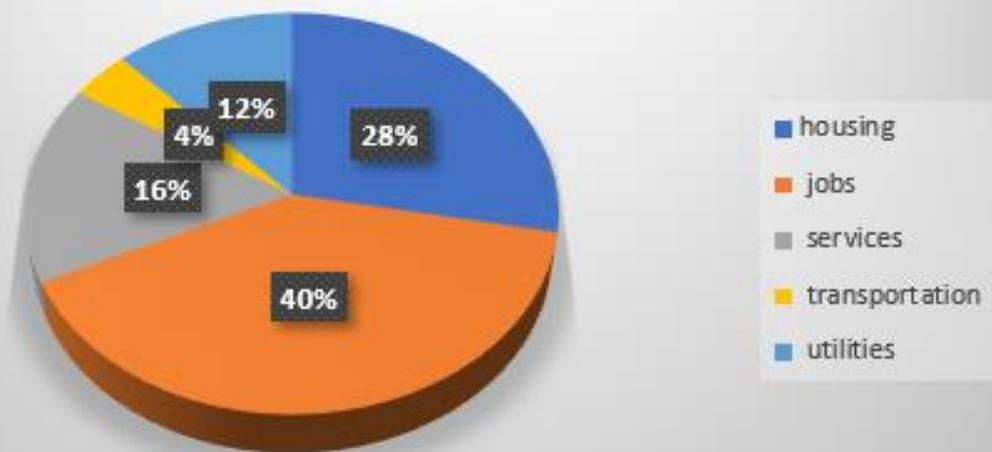
80% of the respondents were black, and 20% of the respondents were white.

Is your city/county a good place to do business?



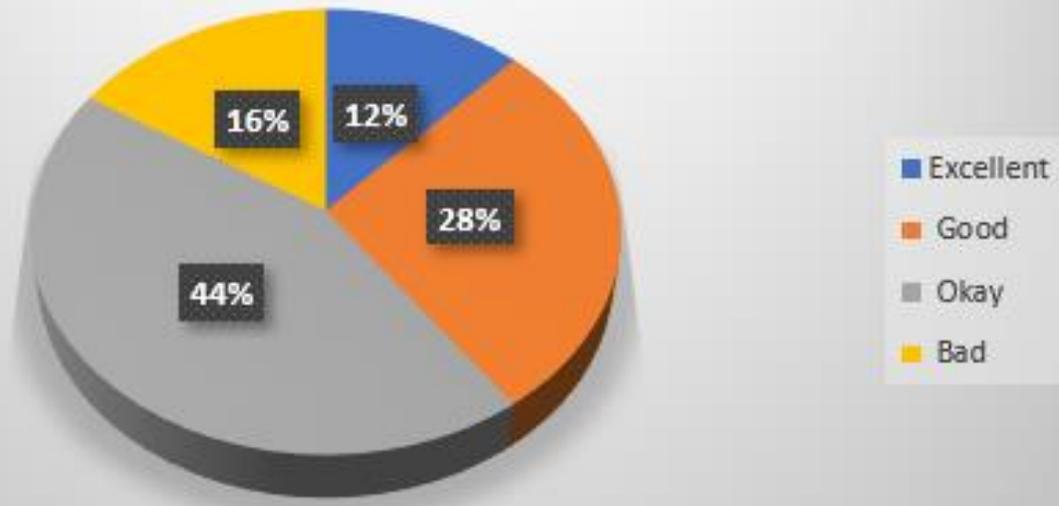
76% of the respondents consider their city/county a good place to do business, and 24% voted that their city/county was not a good place to do business.

What would you like to see your community prioritize?



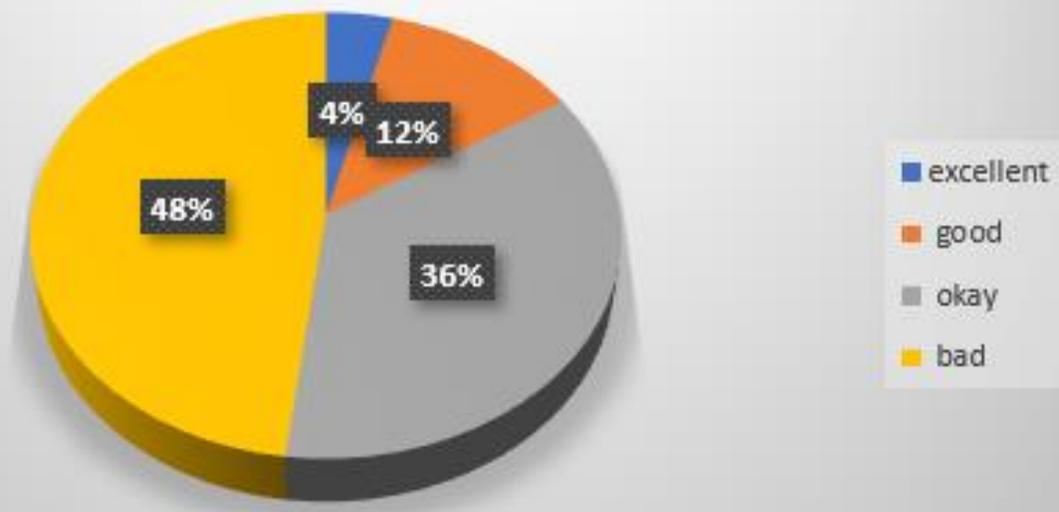
40% of the respondents voted they would like to see their community prioritize jobs, 28% of respondents voted they would like to see their community prioritize housing, 16% of respondents voted they would like their community to prioritize services, 12% voted they would like to see utilities prioritized and 4% of the respondents voted to see transportation prioritized.

Quality of Restaurants in the Community



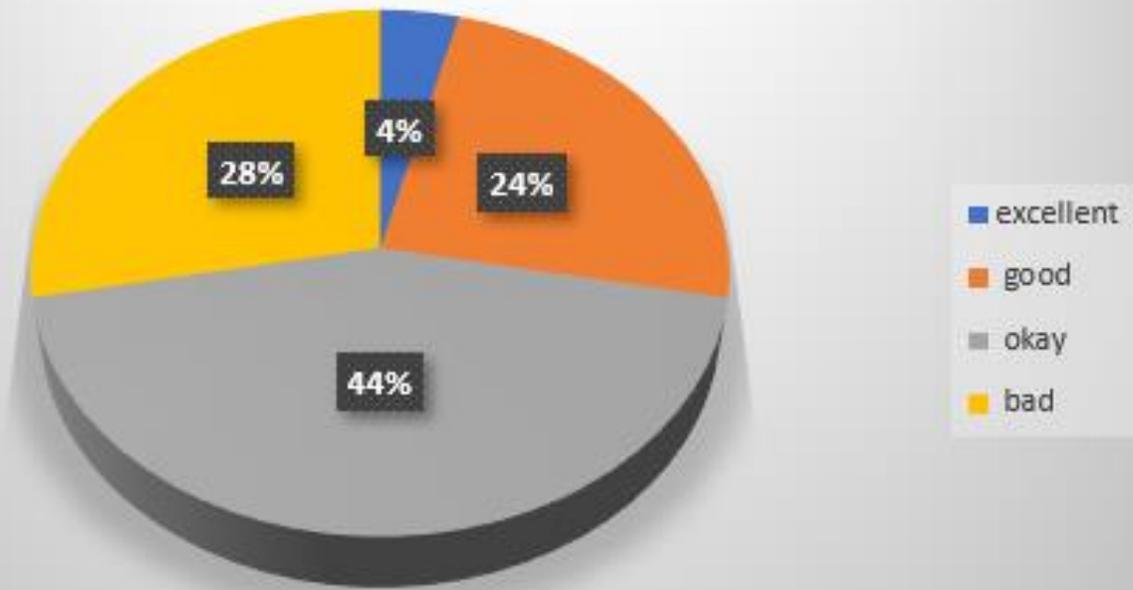
44% of the respondents voted that the quality of restaurants in the community was okay, 28% of the respondents voted that the quality was good, 16% voted that the quality of the restaurants was bad, and 12% voted that the quality of the restaurants in the community was excellent.

Access to clothing and shoe stores in the community



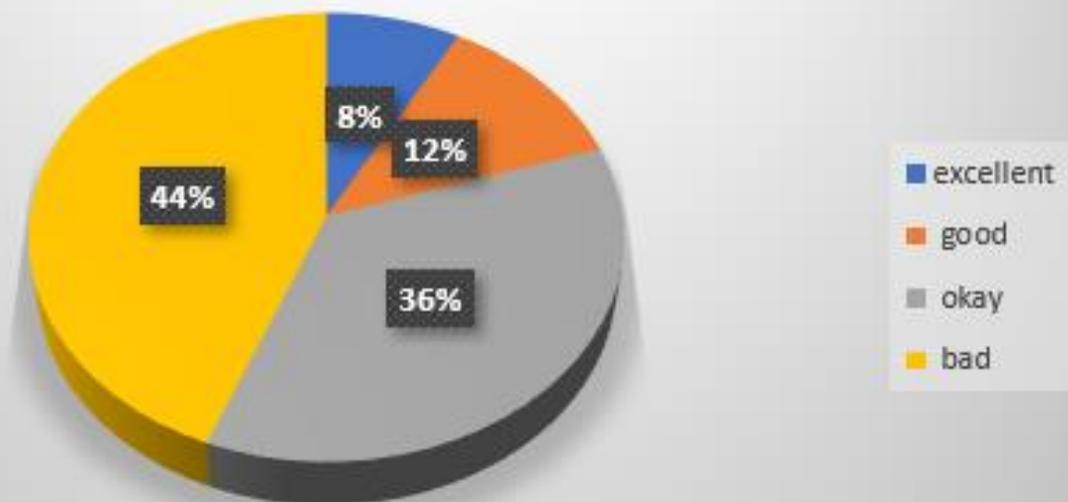
48% of respondents voted that access to clothing and shoe stores in their community was poor, 36% voted that it was okay, 12% voted it was good, and 4% voted they were excellent.

Personal Services in the Community



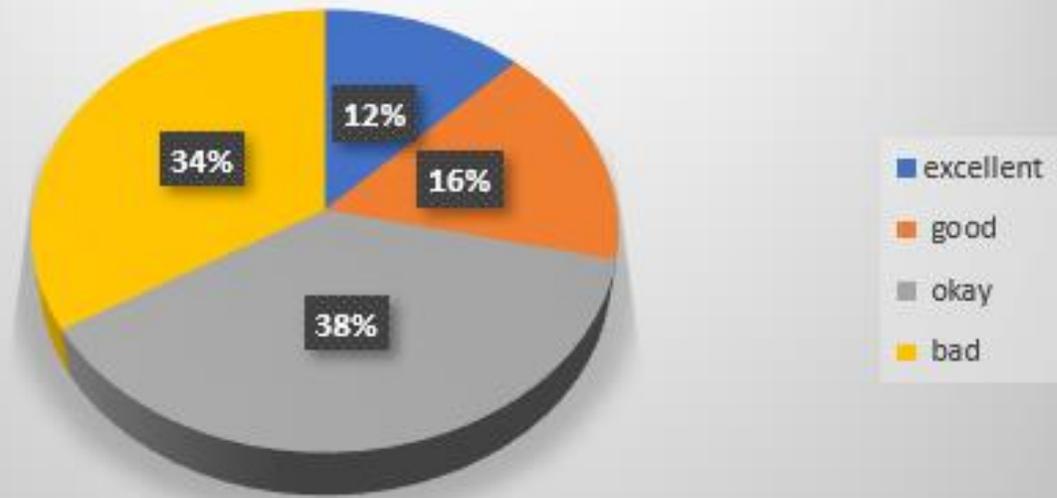
44% of respondents voted that personal services in the community were okay, 28% of respondents voted that personal services in the community were bad, 24% of respondents voted they were good, and 4% voted they were excellent.

Cultural activities and entertainment options in the community



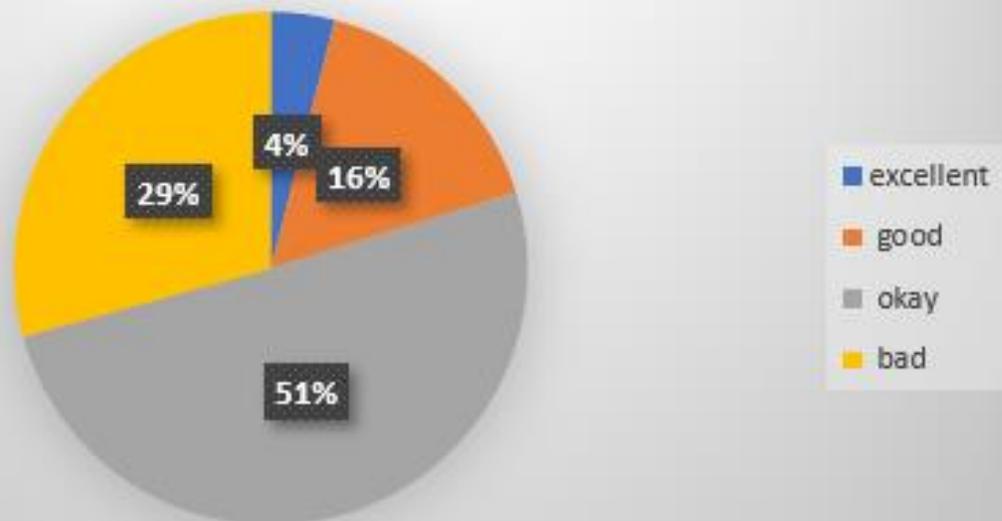
44% of respondents voted that cultural activities and entertainment options in the community were bad, 36% voted they were okay, 12% voted they were good, and 8% voted they were excellent.

Highspeed internet/ broadband in the community



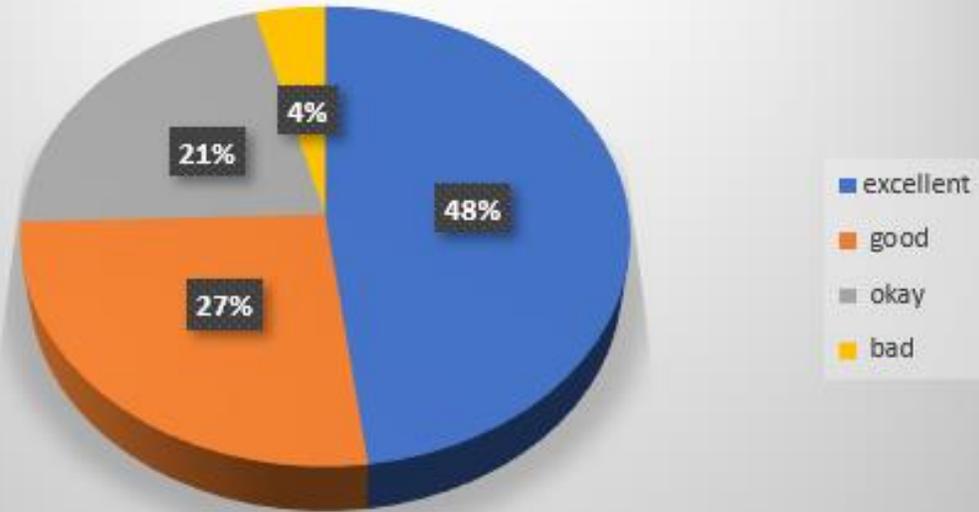
38% of respondents voted that highspeed internet in the community was okay, 34% voted it was bad, 16% voted it was good, and 12% of respondents voted it was excellent.

cable/phone service in the community



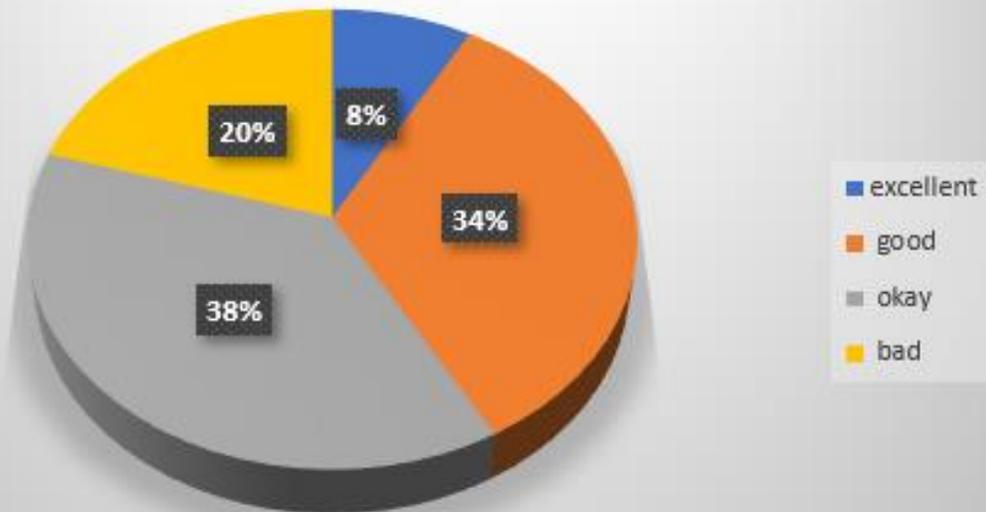
51% of respondents voted that cable/phone service in the community was okay, 29% voted that it was bad, 16% voted that it good, and 4% voted that it was excellent.

Electrical service in the community



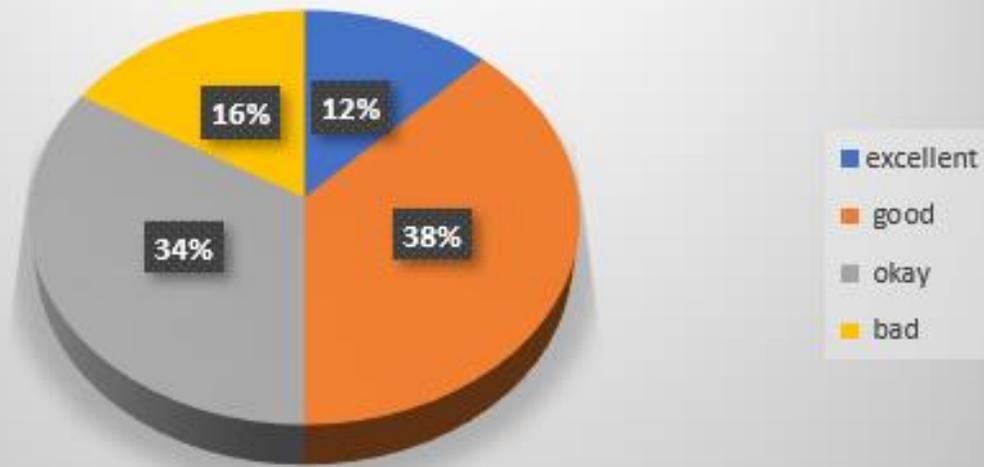
48% of respondents voted that electrical service in the community was excellent, 27% voted that it was good, 21% voted that it was okay, and 4% voted that it was bad.

Road conditions in the community



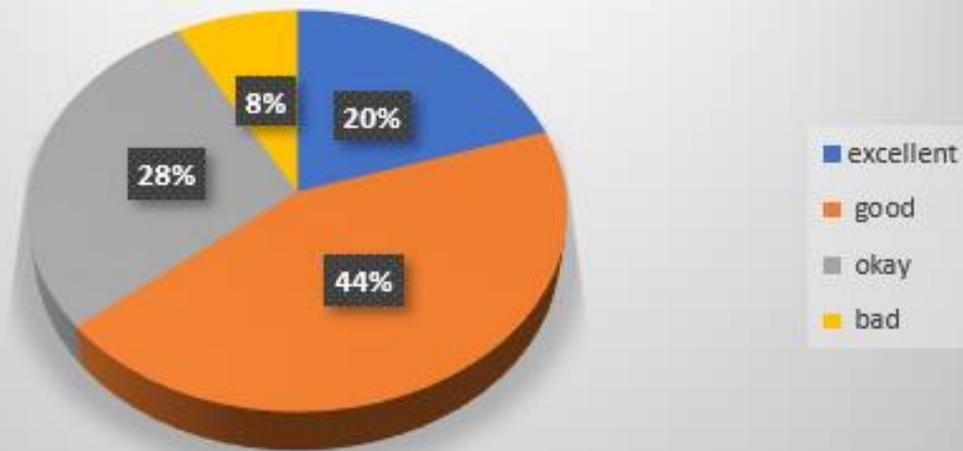
38% of respondents voted that road conditions in the community were okay, 34% voted they were good, 20% voted that they were bad, and 8% voted that they were excellent.

Police/sheriff services in the community



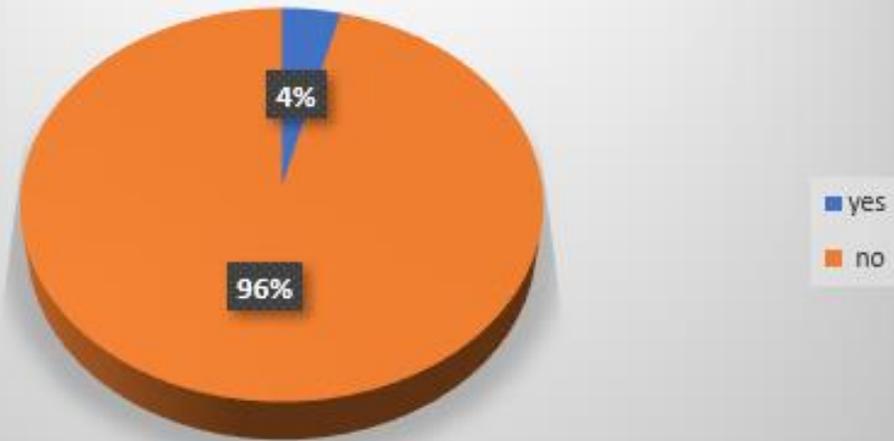
38% of the respondents voted that police/sheriff services in the community were good, 34% voted they were okay, 16% voted they were bad, and 12% voted they were excellent.

Fire/Emergency services in the community



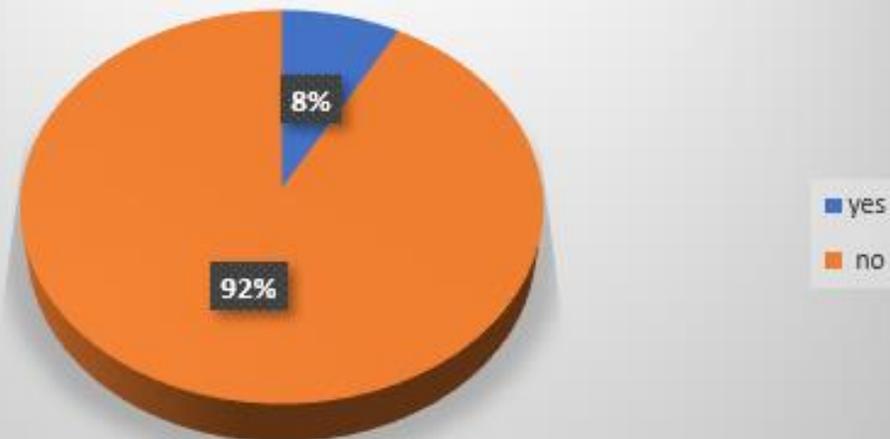
44% of the respondents voted that fire/emergency services in the community were good, 28% voted they were okay, 20% voted they were excellent, and 8% voted they were bad.

Have you experienced property damage from flash flooding?



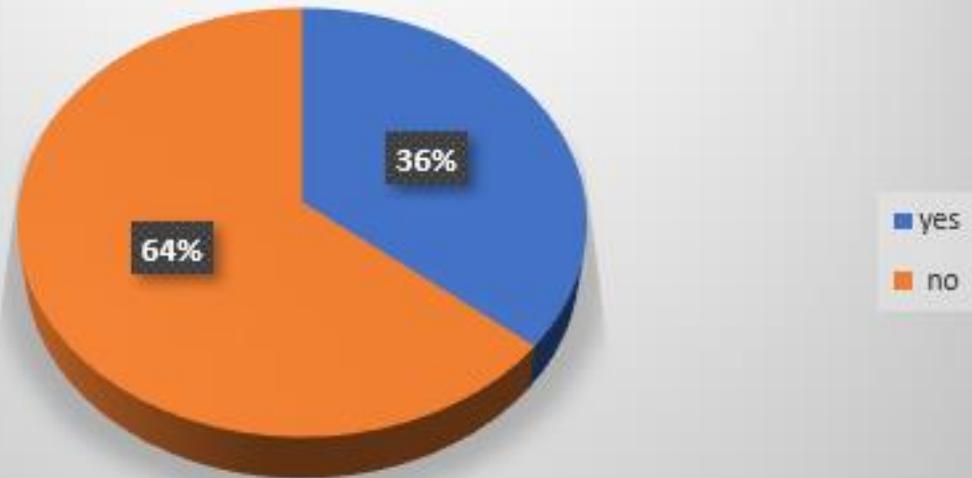
96% of the respondents have not experienced property damage from flash flooding and 4% of the respondents have.

Have you experienced property damage from flooding?



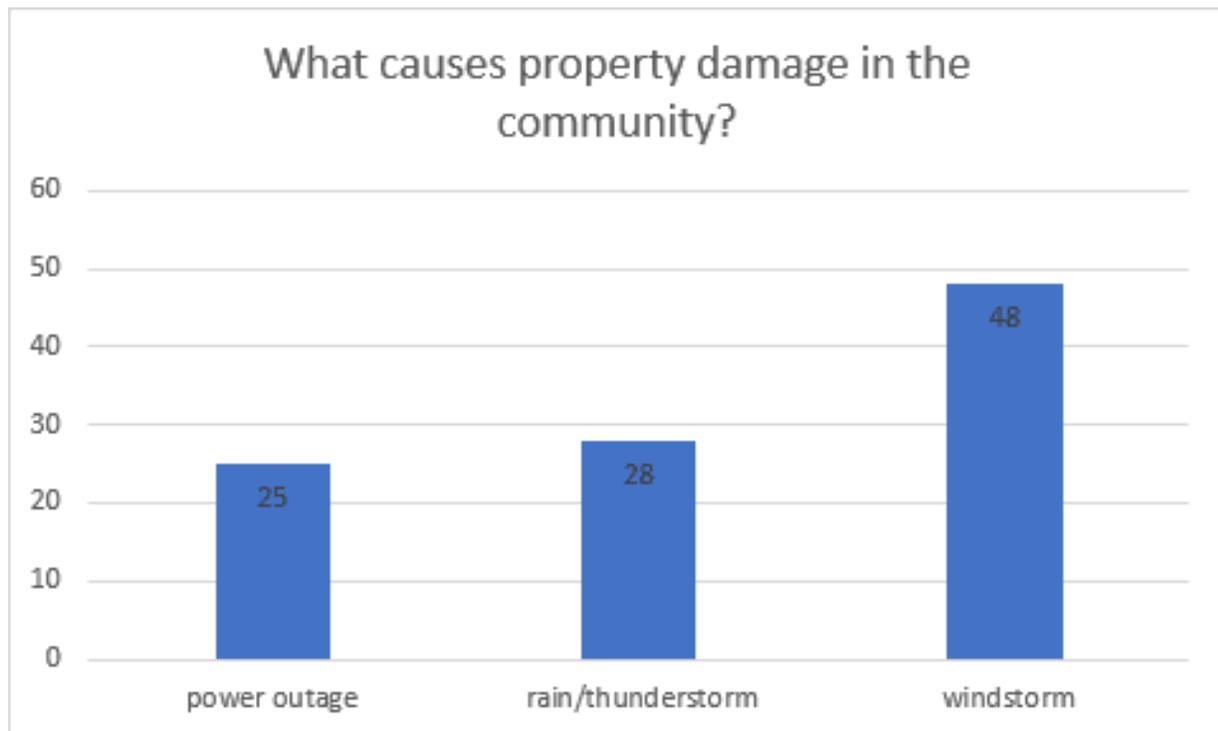
92% of the respondents have not experienced property damage from flooding, and 8% have experienced it.

Have you experienced property damage from lightning?

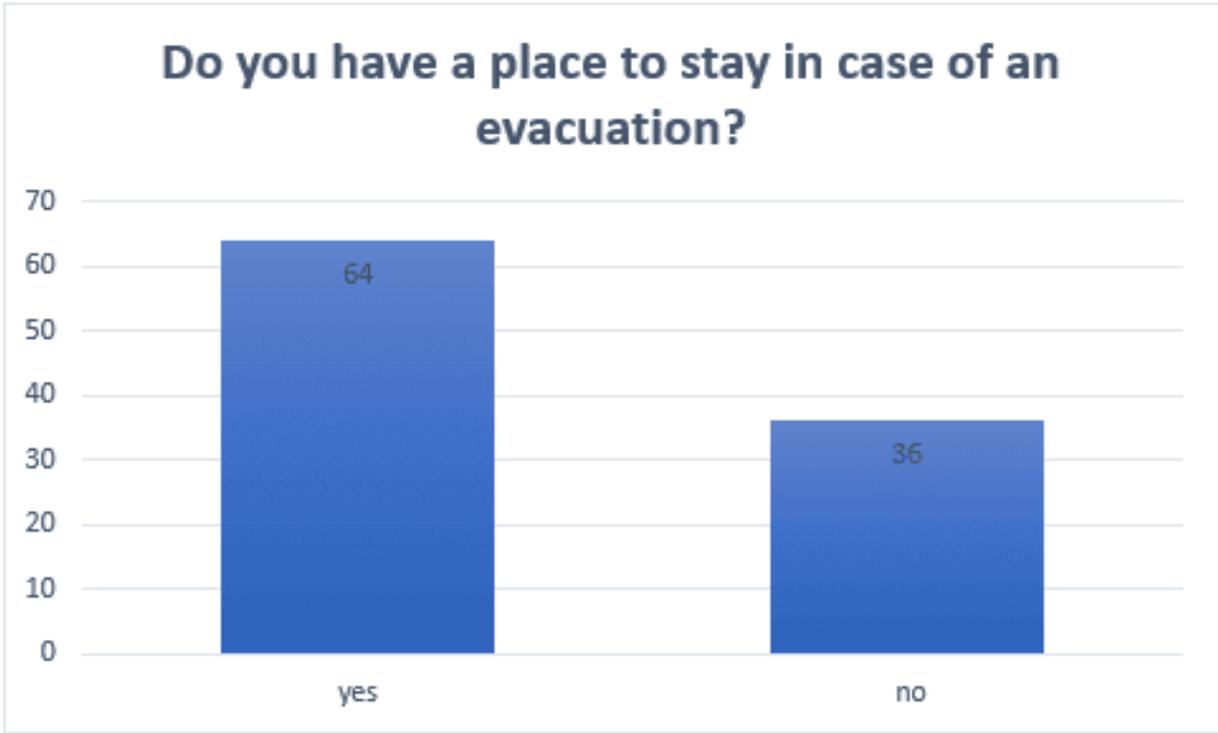


64% of the respondents have not experienced property damage from lightning, but 36% have experienced it.

What causes property damage in the community?



48% of respondents voted windstorm as the cause of property damage in the community, 28% voted rain/thunderstorm was the cause, and 25% voted that power outages were the cause.

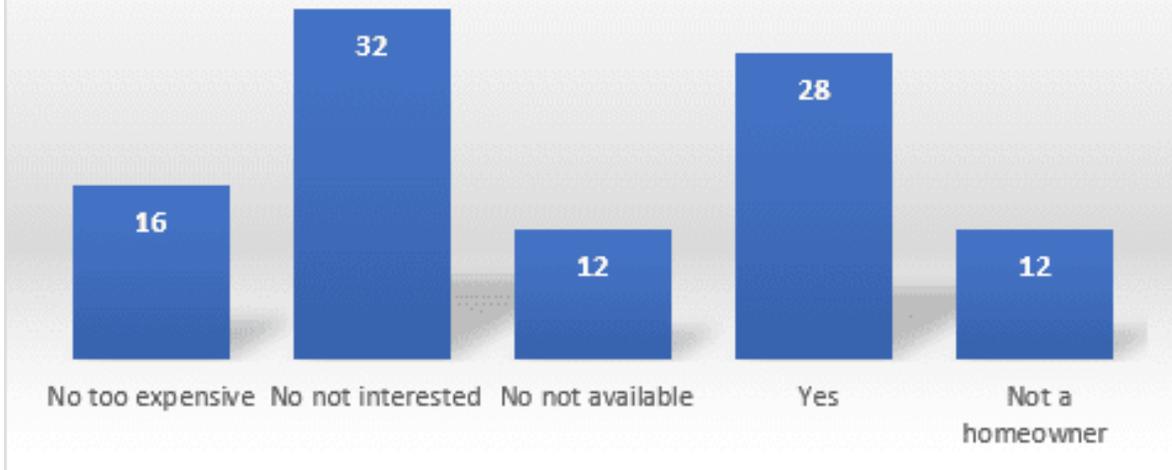


64% of the respondents voted they have a place to stay in case of an evacuation, and 36% voted they do not have a place to stay in case of an evacuation.



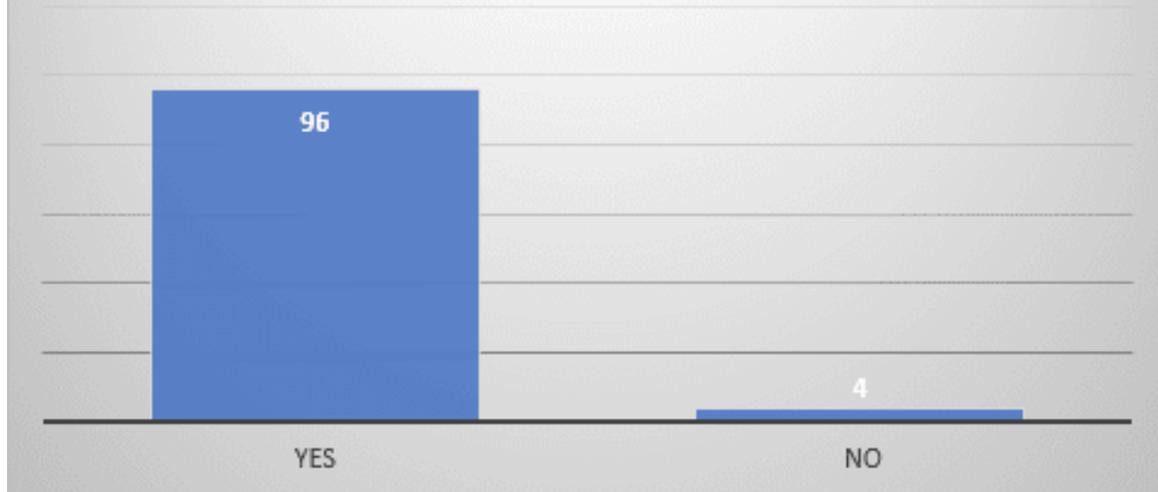
56% of respondents voted they have an evacuation plan, and 44% of respondents voted they have no evacuation plan.

Homeowner, do you have flood insurance?



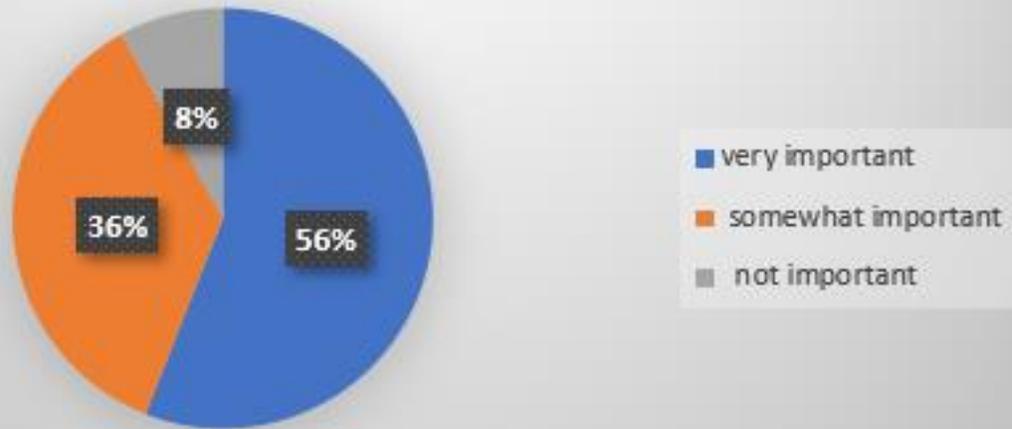
32% of respondents voted they have no flood insurance because they are not interested. 28% of respondents voted they have flood insurance. 16% of respondents have no flood insurance because it is too expensive. 12% do not have it because it is not available. The other 12% of respondents are not homeowners.

Do you like living in Southwest Georgia?



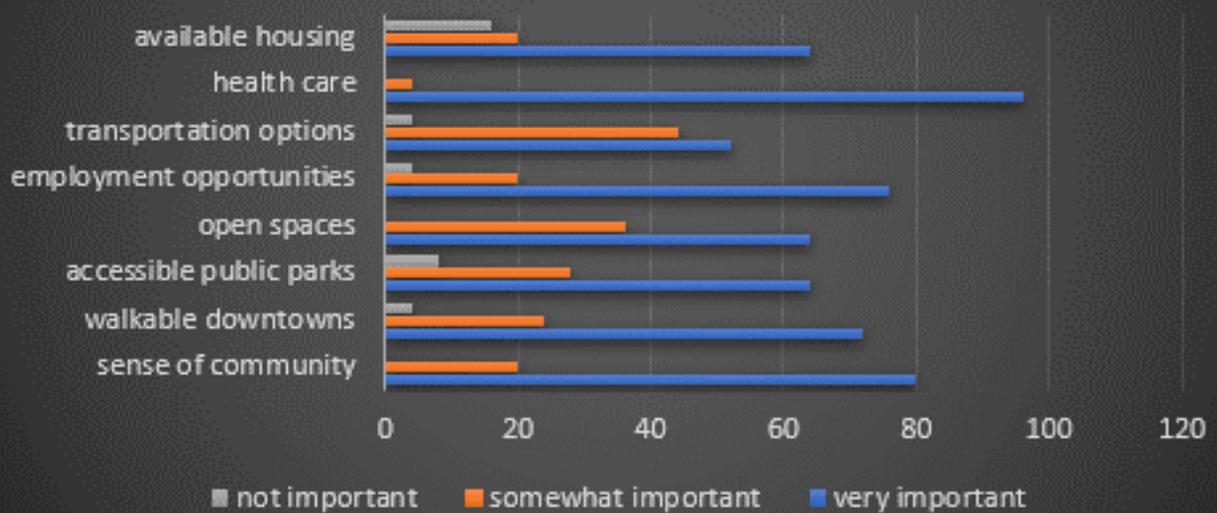
96% of respondents like living in Southwest Georgia, and 4% of the respondents did not.

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are culture and history to you?

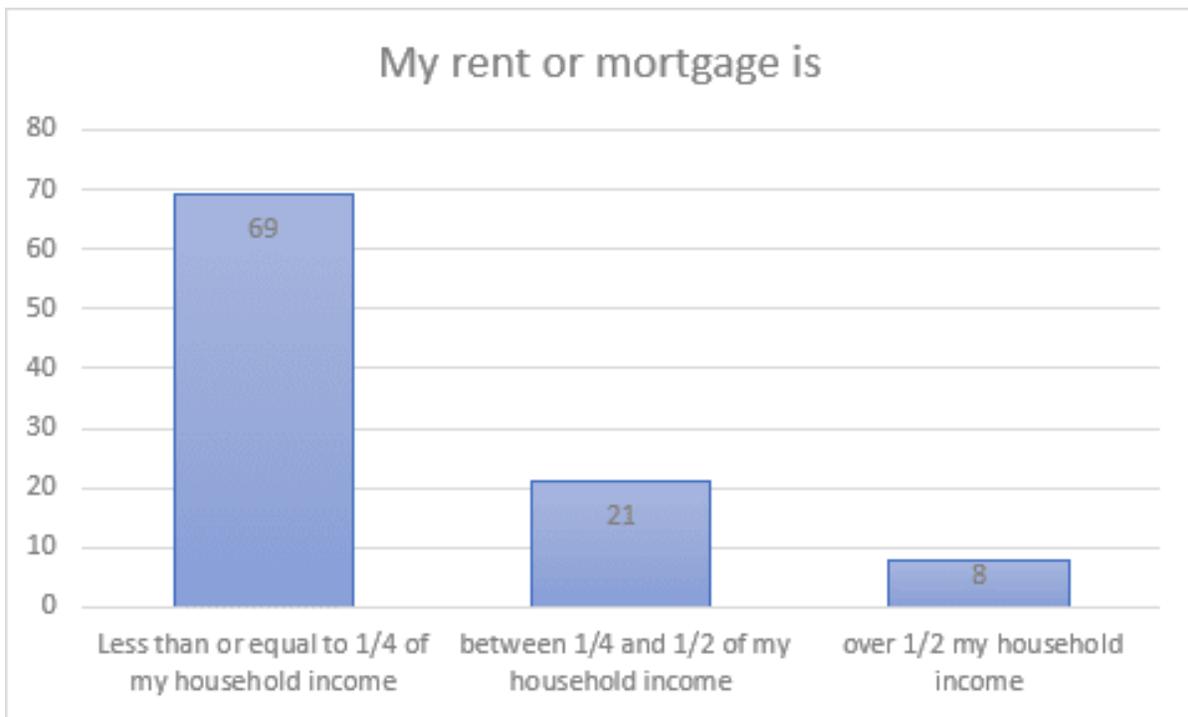


56% of respondents stated that culture and history were very important to them, 36% of the respondents stated they were somewhat important, and 8% stated they were not important.

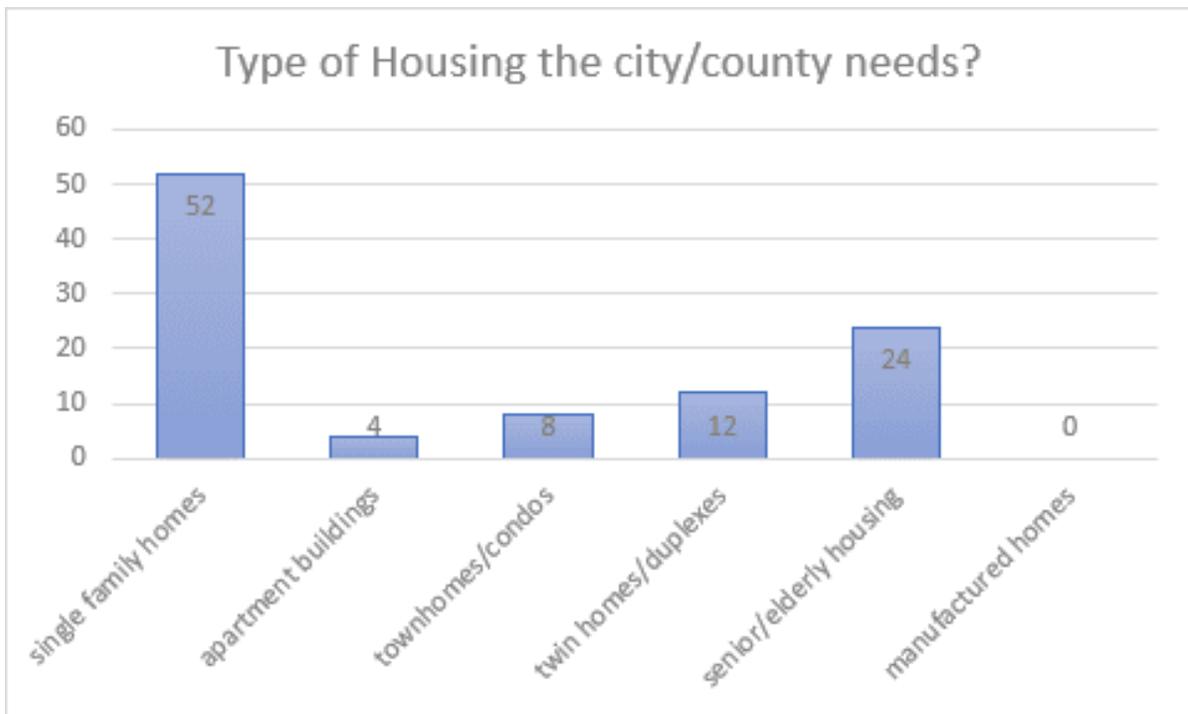
As a resident of Southwest GA, what's important to you?



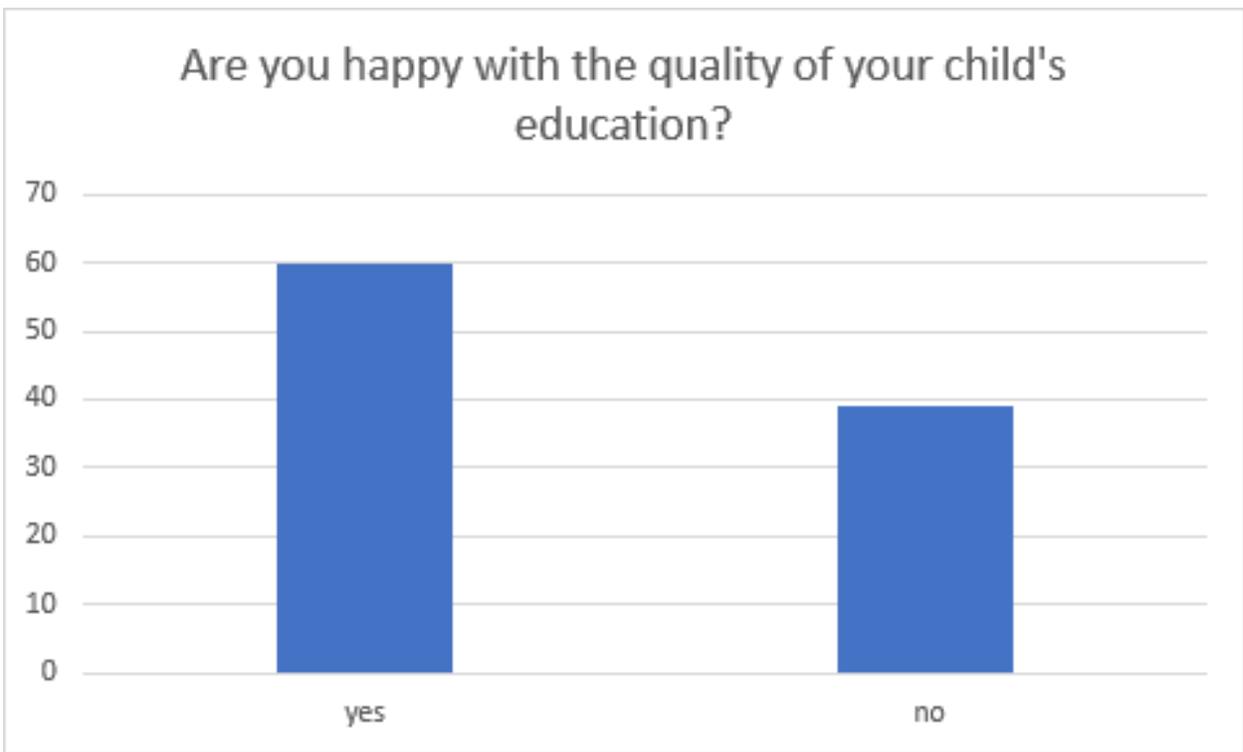
Respondents voted health care as most important.



69% of the respondents voted that their rent or mortgage was less than or equal to $\frac{1}{4}$ of their household income, 21% of the respondents voted that their rent or mortgage was between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ of their household income, and 8% of the respondents voted that their rent or mortgage was over $\frac{1}{2}$ their household income.



52% of the respondents voted the city/county needs single family homes, 24% voted their city/county needs senior/elderly housing, 12% voted for twin homes or duplexes, 8% voted for townhomes or condos, and 4% voted for apartments.

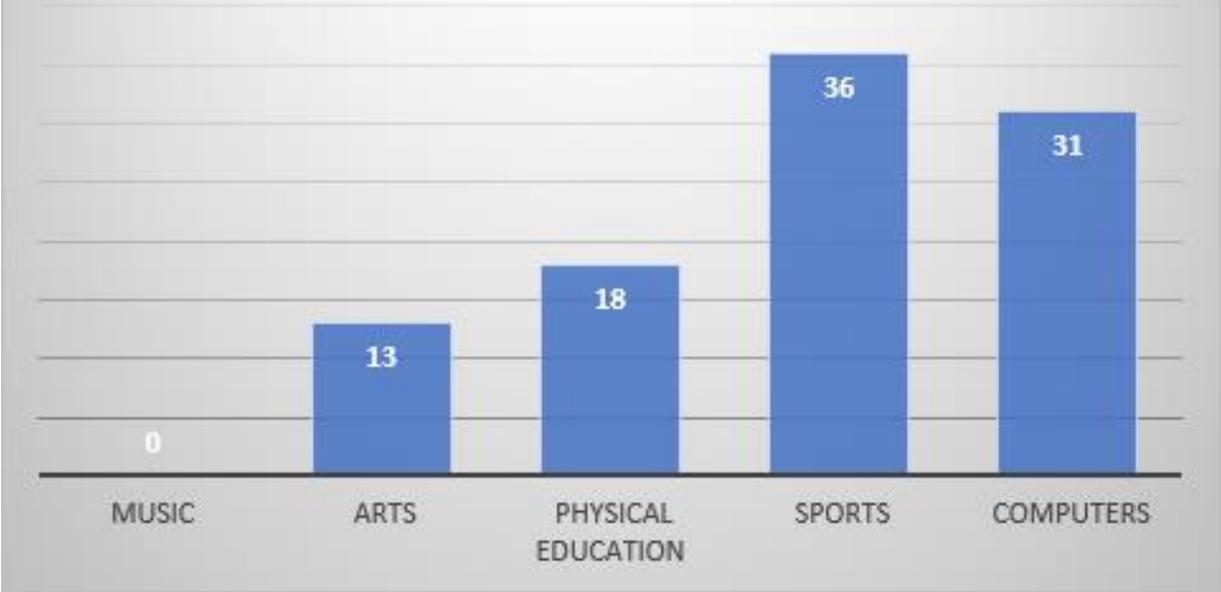


60% of the respondents were happy with the quality of their child's education, and 40% were not.



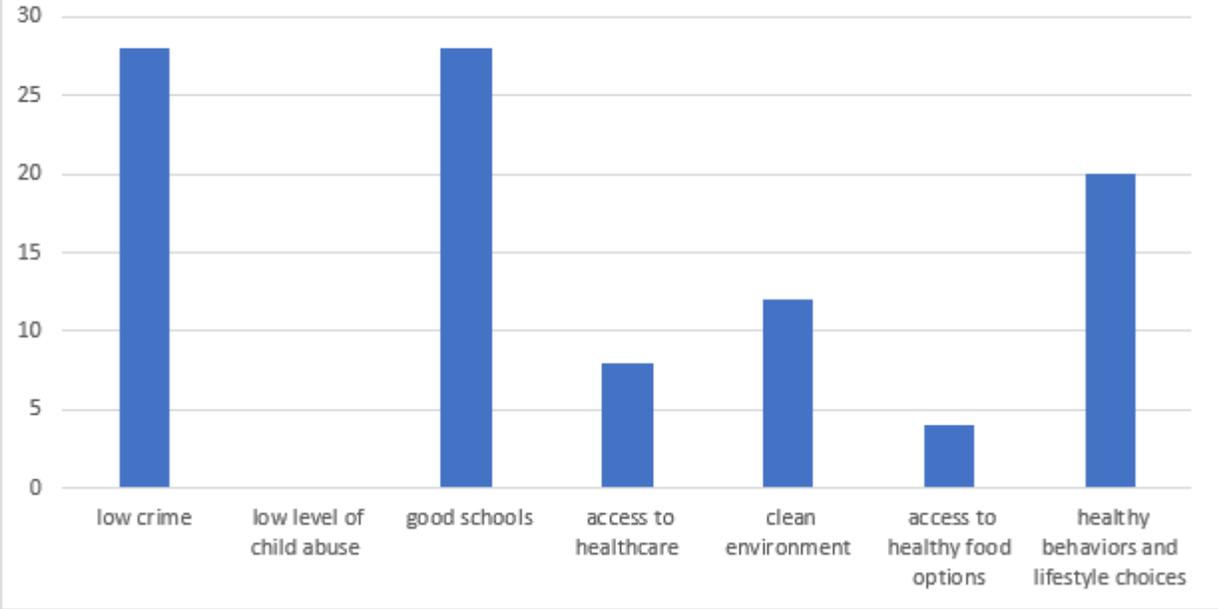
70% of the respondents were satisfied with their child's school campus security. 30% of the respondents were not.

Does your child's school offer...



36% of the respondents stated their child's school offered sports, 31% voted that computers were offered, 18% voted physical education was offered, 13% voted arts were offered.

What makes up a "Healthy Community?"



28% voted low crime makes up a healthy community, the other 28% voted good schools make up a healthy community, 20% voted healthy behaviors and lifestyle choices make up a healthy community, 12% voted for a clean environment, and 8% voted for access to healthcare, and 4% voted for access to healthy food options.

Constant Contact Survey Results

Campaign Name: Community Member Regional Survey

Survey Starts: 66

Survey Submits: 25

Export Date: 04/08/2022 08:04 AM

MULTIPLE CHOICE

What county do you live in?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Baker County			2	8%
Calhoun Count			3	12%
Colquitt County			0	0%
Decatur County			3	12%
Dougherty County			3	12%
Early County			2	8%
Grady Coutny			1	4%
Lee County			0	0%
Miller County			1	4%
Mitchell County			4	16%
Seminole County			0	0%
Terrell County			1	4%
Thomas County			3	12%
Worth County			2	8%
other			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Which best describes you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
City Resident			14	56%
County Resident			11	44%
Military Base Resident			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

What is your level of education?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Less than High School			0	0%
High School or GED			3	12%
Some College			4	16%
College Degree or Higher			18	72%
Total Responses			25	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Have you completed a trade school?

yes

no

No

Female

female

Female

21 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Please list your race/ethnicity

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
White			20	80%
Black/African American			5	20%
native American/American Indian			0	0%
Asian American			0	0%
Hispanic/Latinx			0	0%
I prefer not to say			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Is your city/county a good place to do business (check one)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			19	76%
No			6	24%
Total Responses			25	100%

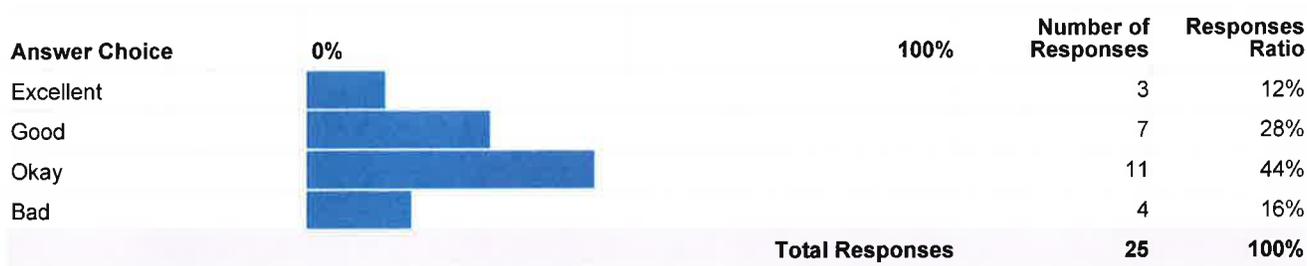
MULTIPLE CHOICE

What would you like to see your community prioritize?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Housing			7	28%
Jobs			10	40%
Services (parks, community facilities)			4	16%
Schools			0	0%
Transportation			1	4%
Utilities (power, gas, broadband internet, telephone services)			3	12%
Total Responses			25	100%

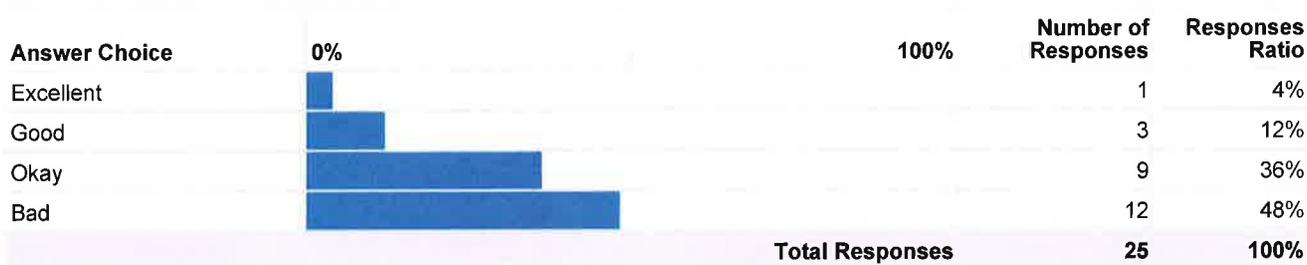
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Quality of restaurants in your community



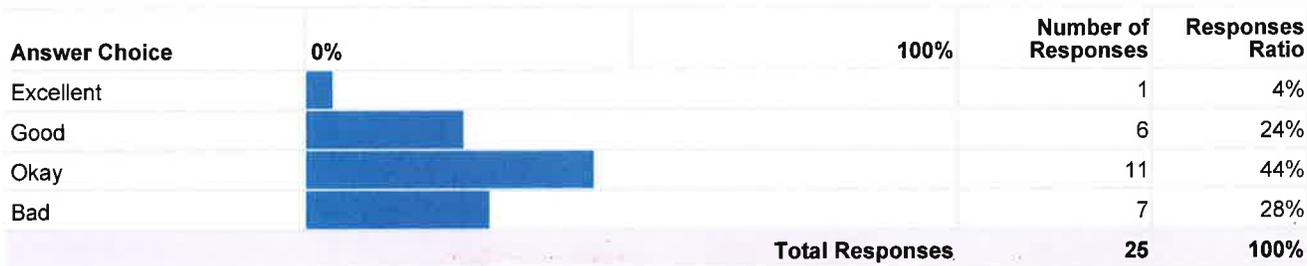
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Access to clothing and shoe stores in my community



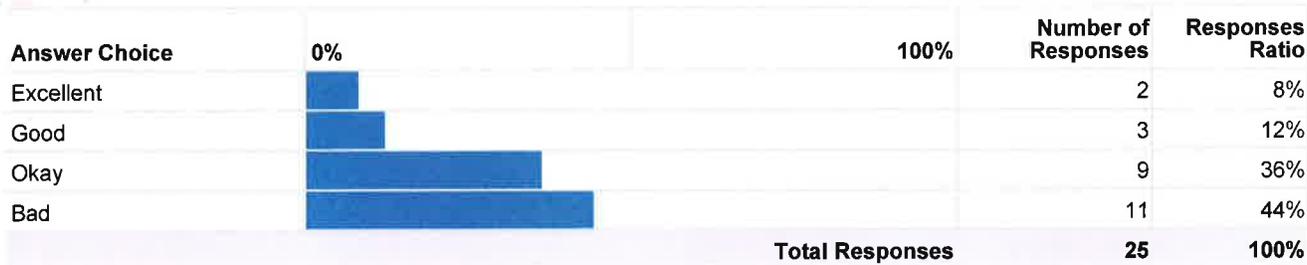
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Personal Services in your community



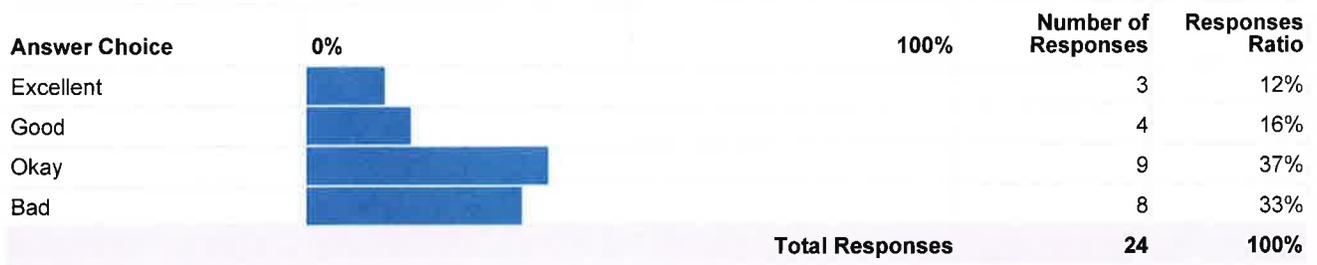
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Cultural activities and entertainment options in your community



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Highspeed internet/broadband in your community is



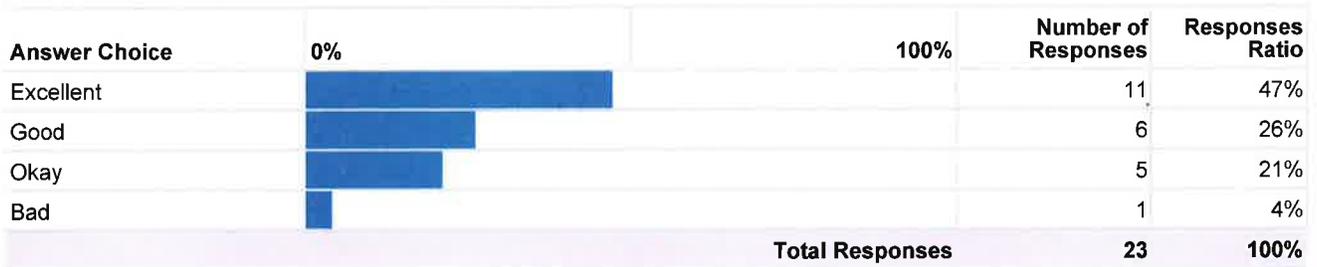
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Cable/Phone service in your community



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Electrical Service in your community



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Road conditions in your communitiy



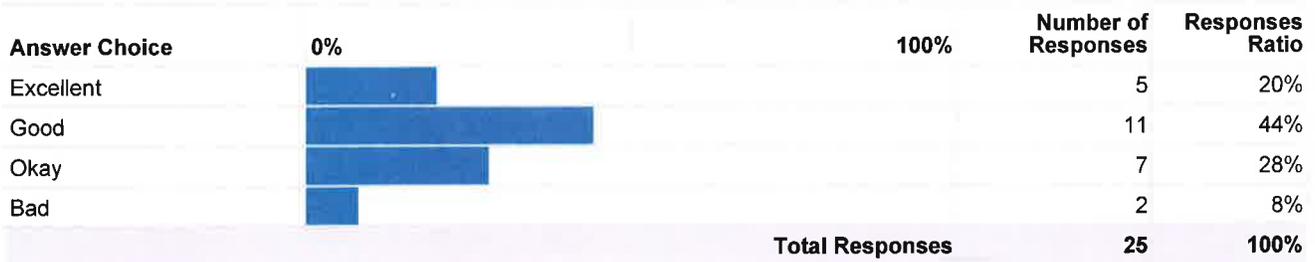
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Police/Sheriff services in your community



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Fire/Emergency services in your community



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from flash flooding?



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from flooding?



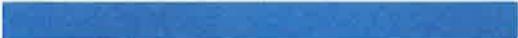
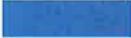
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from fire?



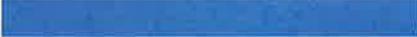
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from hurricane?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			19	79%
No			5	20%
Total Responses			24	100%

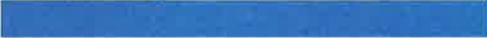
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from lightning?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			9	36%
No			16	64%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from power outage?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			6	25%
No			18	75%
Total Responses			24	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from rain/thunderstorm?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			7	28%
No			18	72%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Have you experienced property damage from windstorm?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			12	48%
No			13	52%
Total Responses			25	100%

OPEN QUESTION

Please explain if you answered yes to any of the property damage questions.

Hurricane Michael downs trees, shutters, and shingles. House has been hit by lightning twice once causing electrical problems second time hit outdoor plumbing and traveled into the house. The property sits on the edge of a flood zone. Water under the house causing floor damage.

Hurricane Michael--damage to property included down trees--roof damage--flooded rooms, etc.
 Lightening Hit pump
 Thunderstorm/wind damage in the fall caused leaves to pile up and a leak occurred
 Wind storm pulled tin from barn roof and caused flooding

1/2/17 Trees fell on my house

Hurricane Michael took out trees and storage building.

trees down

Just a few shingles came off the roof from Hurricane. We were able to get back on easily.

12 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Are you still dealing with property damage from a natural disaster?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			2	8%
No			23	92%
Total Responses			25	100%

OPEN QUESTION

If you are still dealing with property damage from a natural disaster, please explain...

From flooding replacing floors, little by little. Michael did not do enough damage for a claim but damage and time speed up roof replacement.

Many trees along the pasture fence are still down.

2 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Do you have an evacuation plan?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			14	56%
No			11	44%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Do you have a place to stay in case of an evacuation?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			16	64%
No			9	36%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Homeowner, do you have flood insurance?



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Do you like living in Southwest Georgia?



OPEN QUESTION

If you answered no, please explain why...

I moved from Florida where the focus is on major attractions, entertainment, arts, and culture. Even in the small town where I lived in Florida, I was only an hour or two from museums, theaters, beaches, camp grounds, etc. And, most of the attractions were quality places. It is disappointing to travel to some well advertised, hyped-up event and then discover that it seemed to be thrown together. Local people know to skip them but out of towners don't so I quit going to anything.

BORN HERE 87 YEARS AGO.

2 Response(s)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Do you plan to stay a resident of Southwest Georgia?



MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are Culture and History to you?



MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important is Sense of Community to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			20	80%
Somewhat Important			5	20%
Not Important			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are walkable downtowns to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			18	72%
Somewhat Important			6	24%
Not Important			1	4%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are Accessible Public Parks to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			16	64%
Somewhat Important			7	28%
Not Important			2	8%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are Open Spaces to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			16	64%
Somewhat Important			9	36%
Not Important			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are Employment Opportunities to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			19	76%
Somewhat Important			5	20%
Not Important			1	4%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important are Transportation Options to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			13	52%
Somewhat important			11	44%
Not Important			1	4%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important is Health Care to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			24	96%
Somewhat Important			1	4%
Not Important			0	0%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

As a resident of Southwest Georgia, how important is Available Housing to you?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Very Important			16	64%
Somewhat Important			5	20%
Not Important			4	16%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

My rent or mortgage is (mark one)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Less than or equal to 1/4 of my household income			16	69%
Between 1/4 and 1/2 of my household income			5	21%
Over 1/2 my household income			2	8%
Total Responses			23	100%

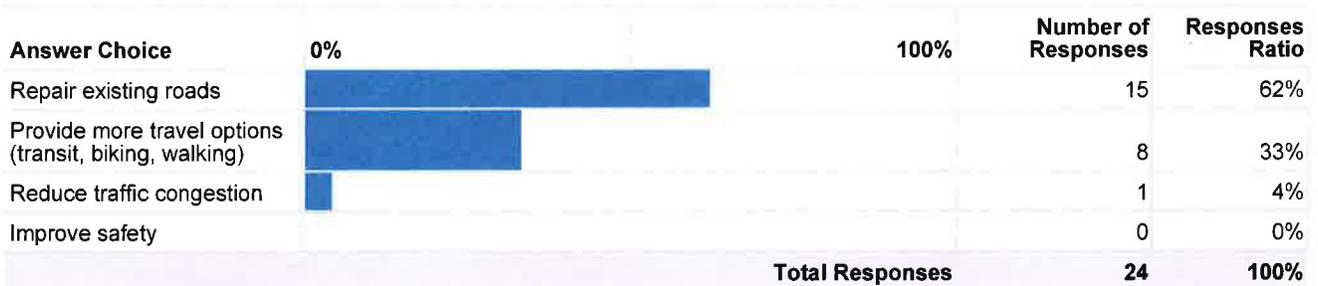
MULTIPLE CHOICE

What type of housing do you think the city/county needs?



MULTIPLE CHOICE

What do you think is the most critical transportation need in our region today?



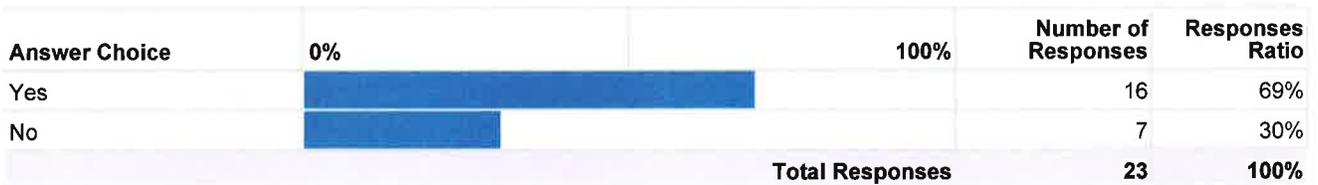
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Are you happy with the quality of education your children receive? (please choose one)



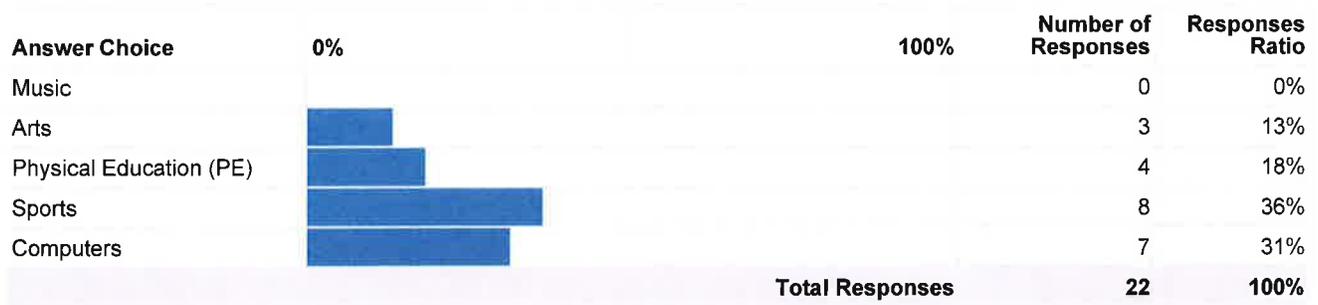
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Are you satisfied with your children/ child's school campus security? (choose one)



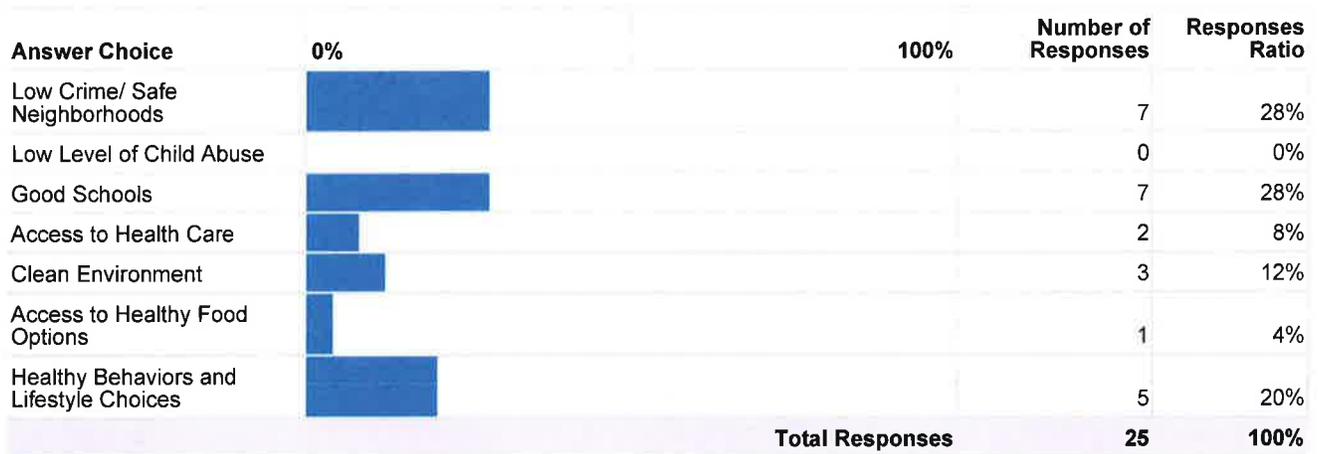
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Does your children/ child's school offer...



MULTIPLE CHOICE

What makes up a "Healthy Community?" Check as many as apply.



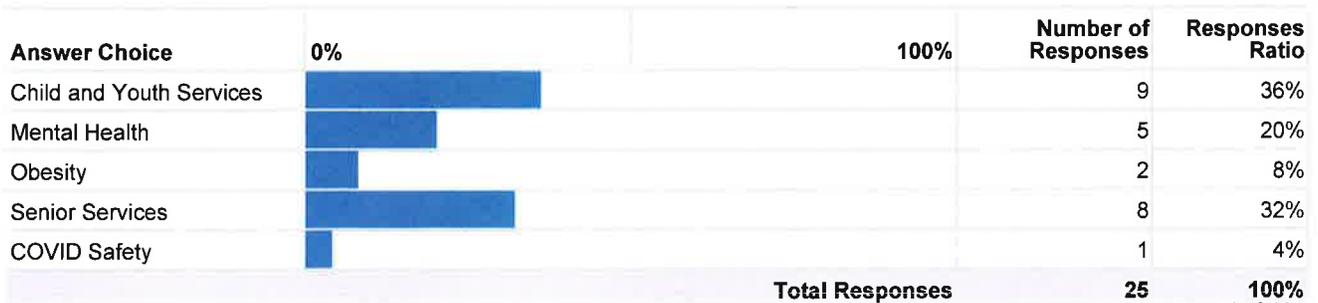
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Based on the last question, is your community healthy? (choose one)



MULTIPLE CHOICE

Would you like your community to increase focus on which of the following (choose each that apply)



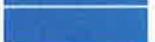
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Are you receiving the information you need on COVID-19 and strategies to slow the spread? (choose one)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			23	92%
No			2	8%
Total Responses			25	100%

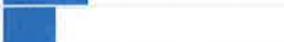
MULTIPLE CHOICE

Has the COVID-19 Coronavirus negatively impacted these areas of your life? (check each that apply)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Wages and Employment			3	13%
Medical and Health			5	22%
Education and Schooling			5	22%
Family Well-Being			7	31%
Housing Stability			2	9%
Transportation			0	0%
Total Responses			22	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

What are your biggest concerns right now regarding COVID-19? Mark all that apply.

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Members of my household becoming infected			3	13%
My underlying health issue(s) increase my risk of contracting COVID-19			5	21%
The emotional health of my household			3	13%
Access to food			2	8%
Access to personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies			0	0%
The safety of my community			10	43%
Total Responses			23	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Are you satisfied with the health care system in your community (choose one answer)

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			12	48%
No			13	52%
Total Responses			25	100%

MULTIPLE CHOICE

Is your community a good place to grow old?

Answer Choice	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Responses Ratio
Yes			18	72%
No			7	28%
Total Responses			25	100%

www.swgrc.org
30 West Broad Street
PO Box 346
Camilla, GA 31730
229-522-3552
229-522-3558(fax)



Plan Implementation Meeting Checklist

Municipality: _____ Date: _____

RC Staff: _____

In order to facilitate effective local and regional planning and implementation of those plans the following required activities should be performed and communicated regularly with local governments in the region as reference in DCA Rules (Chapters 110-12-04; Chapter 110-12-6):

- Regional Plan (Performance Standards)
- Regionally Important Resources (Best Practices)
- Local Comprehensive Plan & Implementation (Updates ~ PlanFirst Designation)
- Local Government Issues & priorities / State Issues and Priorities
- Regional Success Stories/Best Practices
- Assistance with planning implementation & upcoming deadlines
- Regional Work Program
- Housing
- Mapping & GIS needs
- Economic Development
- Transportation
- Environmental
- Community Development Tools & Grant Resources

Signatures & Titles of Attendees:

Serving all of Southwest Georgia

Baker.Calhoun.Colquitt.Decatur.Dougherty.Early.Grady.Lee.Miller.Mitchell.Seminole.Terrell.Thomas.Worth

Schedule for a Regional Plan Update

Month	Meetings	Workflow
January 2021	None	Prepare for Planning Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify regional stakeholders & steering committee
February	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft stakeholder involvement plan Draft Initial List Needs & Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Required data/map analysis QCO Analysis Review other regional & statewide plans
March	Regional Public Hearing #1 & Kick-Off Meeting Steering Committee	Plan process overview, schedule, review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process overview & schedule Overview, current conditions- baseline information from the above analyses Review Existing Regional Vision Components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> General Vision Statement, Regional Development Map/ARSA, Issues, and Opportunities
April	None	Develop Regional Survey
May	None	Publish Regional Survey on website www.swgrcplanning.org and social media outlets
June	Steering Committee	Public and Steering Committee Input on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Goals Needs and Opportunities - SWOT Analysis
July	None	Developing materials for public listening sessions, securing locations, and advertising.
August	None	Educating Steering Committee on the process and upcoming meeting schedules during Regional Commission Council Meeting
September	None	Educating Steering Committee on previous and upcoming meeting schedules during Regional Commission Council Meeting
October	None	Preparing for and promoting upcoming public listening sessions Begin drafting the plan

November	Public Listening Session (Baker, Calhoun, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Seminole, Terrell, Thomas, and Worth)	(5) Multi-county Public Listening Sessions held Continue drafting the plan
December	None	Continue Drafting Plan and Developing Maps
January 2022	None	Continue Drafting Plan – Target additional Regional Stakeholders
February	None	Prepare for additional virtual meetings
March	Conduct (2) Virtual Meetings	Review the Regional Plan components of Regional Work Program Items, SWOT Analysis, Implementation Strategies Continue Drafting Plan
April	Public Hearing #2	Draft Complete Regional Draft Plan with Steering Committee Review Draft of Plan Ensure consistency with Statewide and Regional Plan Transmit to DCA for review DCA Completeness check and notification of interested parties
May/June	None	DCA Review DCA provides comments to Regional Commission Regional Commission Council adopts DCA approved plan Regional Commission notifies DCA of adoption

County/ City	Population	Percentage of Growth Since 2020	Unemp. Rate	Median Household Income 2019	Less than High School Graduate	% Individuals Below Poverty Level	# Housing Units 2020	Owner Occupied	Per Capita Income 2019 (est.)
Baker County	2,876	-16.66%	3.4%	\$32,917	19.4%	22.9%	1,447	1,187	\$22,525
Newton	602	-7.95	3.6%	\$22,727	15.7%	36.3%	282	228	\$14,994
Calhoun County	5,573	-16.74%	2.4%	\$34,167	27.1%	27.3%	2,020	1,671	\$14,005
Arlington	1,209	-18.25%	22.4%	\$33,025	23.4%	36.6%	549	465	\$14,582
Edison	1,230	-19.66%	9.4%	\$22,800	22.8%	33.1%	567	490	\$15,010
Leary	524	-15.21%	7.8%	\$35,250	47.4%	11.0%	290	233	\$20,151
Morgan	1741	625.41%	1.7%	\$25,469	67%	43.3%	110	95	\$3,265
Colquitt County	45,898	0.87%	2.1%	\$36,435	25.3%	24.9%	19,105	17,172	\$20,529
Berlin	511	-7.25%	3.5%	\$38,750	29.5%	17.3%	231	204	\$17,908
Doerun	738	-4.65%	4.5%	\$26,815	17.3%	27.9%	378	329	\$19,637
Ellenton	210	-25.26%	10.8%	\$46,458	67.5%	23.5%	93	68	\$17,302
Funston	402	-10.46%	5.2%	\$33,750	51.9%	31.5%	169	142	\$16,813
Norman Park	963	-0.92%	7.2%	\$44,219	2.6%	25.3%	399	375	\$18,999
Decatur County	29,367	5.47%	2.0%	\$41,481	17.5%	24.3%	13,036	11,466	\$21,568
Attapulgus	454	1.11%	2.4%	\$32,604	1.4%	28.5%	194	174	\$15,983
Brinson	217	0.93%	8.3%	\$44,750	25%	11.3%	104	98	\$25,199
Climax	276	-1.42%	4.8%	\$43,750	14.9%	17.2%	135	119	\$22,092
Bainbridge	14,468	13.94%	7.6%	\$37,985	9.4%	27.4%	6,327	5,566	\$19,025
Dougherty County	85,790	-9.27%	3.5	\$35,062	20.4%	27.2%	40,560	35,252	\$21,768
Albany	69,647	-10.05%	3.6	\$31,397	21.4%	31.0%	33,290	28,640	\$18,462
Early County	10,854	-1.39%	3.1%	\$30,640	10.2%	30.5%	4,918	4,312	\$19,026
Blakely	5,371	5.97%	12.8%	\$22,276	18.2%	44.3%	2,199	2,007	\$13,435
Damascus	212	-16.53%	2.4%	\$18,636	30.8%	24.6%	115	90	\$18,702
Jakin	131	-15.48%	3.9%	\$33,542	12.5%	24.8%	71	59	\$18,802
Grady County	26,236	4.89%	2.1%	\$43,531	14.7%	22.4%	11,539	10,316	\$22,543
Cairo	10,179	5.95%	4.7%	\$33,418	6.5%	33.2%	4,363	3,932	\$19,388
Whigham	428	-9.12%	13.9%	\$37,431	44.2%	13.7%	193	165	\$18,424
Lee County	33,163	17.19%	2.1%	\$69,280	28.0%	12.8%	12,709	11,971	\$29,348
Leesburg	3,480	20.16%	12.4%	\$61,389	45.3%	21.4%	1,344	1,249	\$21,920
Smithville	593	3.13%	15.5%	\$24,514	50.0%	39.6%	263	235	\$18,928
Miller County	6,000	-2.04%	2.1%	\$44,542	24.3%	21.7%	2,851	2,537	\$23,870
Colquitt	2,001	0.45%	13.4%	\$29,677	16.1%	30.7%	925	820	\$18,250
Mitchell County	21,755	-7.41%	3.0	\$38,116	28.7%	23.1%	9,036	8,156	\$18,619
Baconton	856	-6.44%	8.8%	\$42,813	28.2%	18.7%	363	305	\$17,352
Camilla	5,187	-3.22%	19.9%	\$34,143	7.8%	39.6%	2,304	2,077	\$17,343
Pelham	3,507	-10.03%	14.7%	\$31,173	37.7%	24.80%	1,516	1,354	\$16,085
Sale City	354	-6.84%	1.1%	\$40,938	32.0%	25.5%	154	139	\$17,360
Seminole County	9,147	4.78%	5.2%	\$33,357	32.7%	23.7%	5,048	3,798	\$29,614
Donalsonville	2,833	6.90%	4.8%	\$29,075	23.1%	35.9%	1,290	1,088	\$14,835

Iron City	312	0.64%	7.3%	\$46,875	14.2%	12%	146	130	\$25,025
Terrell County	9,185	-1.39%	3.9%	\$34,768	22.4%	32.4%	4,243	3,664	\$20,045
Bronwood	334	48.44%	6.4%	\$32,500	20.8%	41.6%	150	141	\$18,648
Dawson	4,414	-2.77%	9.2%	\$31,272	28.2%	39.4%	2,042	1,749	\$17,337
Parrott	120	-24.05%	49.1%	\$33,750	28.4%	11.5%	71	57	\$22,107
Sasser	287	2.86%	6.8%	\$34,167	15.8%	23.9%	143	122	\$17,057
Thomas County	45,798	2.41%	6.2%	\$47,133	18.4%	19.2%	20,668	18,440	\$27,937
Boston	1,207	-8.21%	7.8%	\$34,079	10.8%	26.7%	597	518	\$22,270
Coolidge	528	0.57%	1.0%	\$28,333	0.0%	26.2%	233	222	\$23,566
Meigs	928	-10.33%	17.40%	\$30,234	37.20%	36.3%	388	350	\$12,593
Ochlocknee	672	-0.59%	9.20%	\$42,237	39.7%	24.6%	300	258	\$20,042
Thomasville	18,881	2.54%	4.70%	\$32,378	14.6%	25.0%	8,874	7,849	\$25,218
Worth County	20,784	-4.12%	2.5	\$45,398	12.6%	19.0%	9,244	8,183	\$26,533
Poulan	760	-10.69%	4.10%	\$47,228	6.5%	19.3%	378	315	\$22,695
Sumner	445	4.21%	5.20%	\$46,607	37.5%	20.2%	171	153	\$17,232
Sylvester	5,644	-8.79%	7.70%	\$30,570	14.2%	32.1%	2,459	2,182	\$24,422
Warwick	504	19.14%	22.70%	\$24,821	12.8%	30.0%	231	200	\$15,678

Based on 2020 US Census Bureau, GA Department of Labor

County	Total Population	Race			Persons 62 years +	% of Persons Age 62 +
		Black	White	Other Races		
Baker	2,876	1,130	1,536	73	1,071	34.70%
Calhoun	5,573	3,581	1,783	102	1,270	20.20%
Colquitt	45,898	10,068	27,248	4,808	8,405	18.50%
Early	10,854	5,562	4,864	60	2,337	22.90%
Decatur	29,367	12,241	14,558	1,198	5,120	19.30%
Dougherty	85,790	59,988	20,976	1,401	17,455	19.70%
Grady	26,236	7,336	15,065	2,104	5,242	21.20%
Lee	33,163	7,375	22,985	370	4,860	16.30%
Miller	6,000	1,751	3,986	55	1,488	26.00%
Mitchell	21,755	10,114	10,273	619	4,706	21.30%
Seminole	9,147	2,995	5,658	127	2,209	26.90%
Terrell	9,185	5,565	3,237	58	1,914	22.10%
Thomas	45,798	16,343	26,375	724	9,835	22.10%
Worth	20,784	5,273	14,529	173	4,722	23.20%
Totals	352,426	149,322	173,073	11,872	70634	314.40%

Based on 2020 US Census Bureau

Age of Housing	Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady	Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth
Built 2014 & Later	76	3	267	295	479	46	471	647	98	73	32	32	762	185
Built 2010 - 2013	13	101	229	495	657	18	181	306	150	262	81	75	957	211
Built 2000 - 2009	264	234	3250	1571	4674	608	2329	2519	308	896	515	345	2901	1561
Built 1990 - 1999	262	357	3419	2907	4793	1007	2327	3814	373	1840	946	716	4230	2084
Built 1980 - 1989	274	280	3067	2028	5734	857	1427	1770	408	1538	945	647	2600	1645
Built 1970-1979	241	412	3212	2020	7801	741	1459	1211	479	1479	1214	597	2546	1306
Built 1960-1969	346	265	1689	688	6537	619	1038	621	423	954	616	477	2572	812
Built 1950-1959	113	242	1451	855	5714	370	793	168	175	786	224	364	1558	456
Built 1940 - 1949	95	228	823	578	2490	278	379	48	211	530	134	112	617	482
Built 1939 or earlier	157	276	1293	781	1693	435	497	242	134	728	138	798	2039	620
Totals Units	1,841	2,398	18,700	12,218	40,572	4,979	10,901	11,346	2,759	9,086	4,845	4,163	20,782	9,362

Based on 2020 US Census Bureau