

# Lessons Learned in Rural Engagement



October 8, 2021



SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION

Waycross - Valdosta

# Agenda

Introductions

Regional Descriptions

Regional Priorities

Challenges to Effective Public Engagement in Rural Areas

Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

PlanFirst and Main Street Correlation to Successful Plan  
Implementation and CDBG Applications

Q & A

# WHAT IS A REGIONAL COMMISSION?

A Regional Commission is a quasi-governmental regional planning organization created and managed under Georgia law by their member local governments.

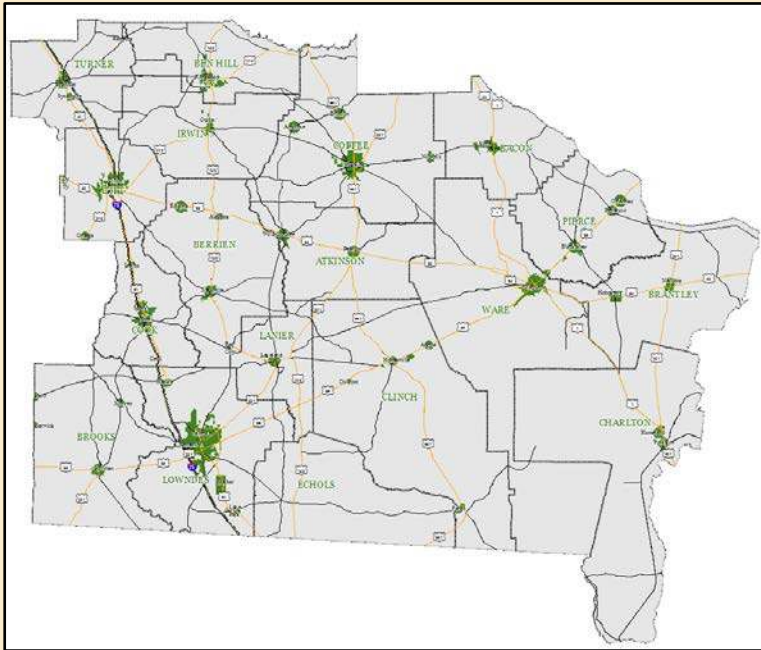
Georgia's RCs perform many functions, but essentially develop, promote, and provide comprehensive planning and development services that seek to make Georgia and its many local communities better places to live and work.

Georgia has 12 Regional Commissions. They provide professional technical assistance to state and federal agencies as well as quality growth and development.



# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC

Southern Georgia Regional  
Commission:  
18 Counties, 45 Municipalities



Valdosta Office



*SGRC Comprehensive Plan Workshop*

## REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC

Established in 1963, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission is a regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency which serves 45 municipalities and 18 counties in Southern Georgia.

Our Mission is to develop, promote, and provide services that make the Southern Georgia region a better place to live and work.

- We provide professional technical assistance to state and federal agencies.
- We partner with local businesses and governments to train and recruit a diverse workforce.
- We provide services for the region's older adults and individuals.
- We develop, promote, and provide comprehensive planning and development services to help make Southern Georgia and its many local communities better places to live and work.
- We have dedicated staff that partners with local governments to increase the prosperity and quality of life in our region.

# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC

## Departments:

Lending

Information Technology

Community & Economic Development

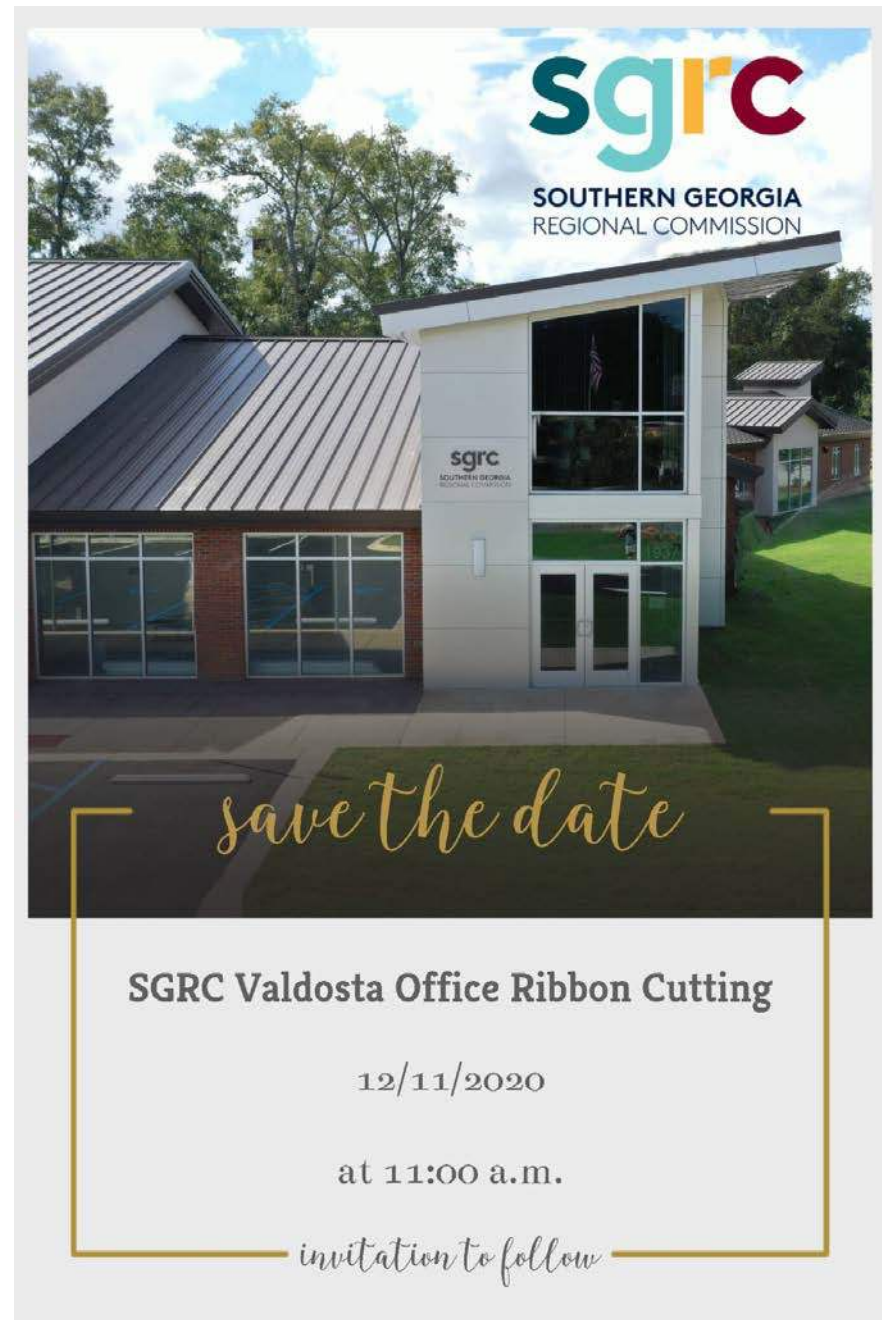
Local Government Services

Transportation & Environmental

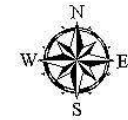
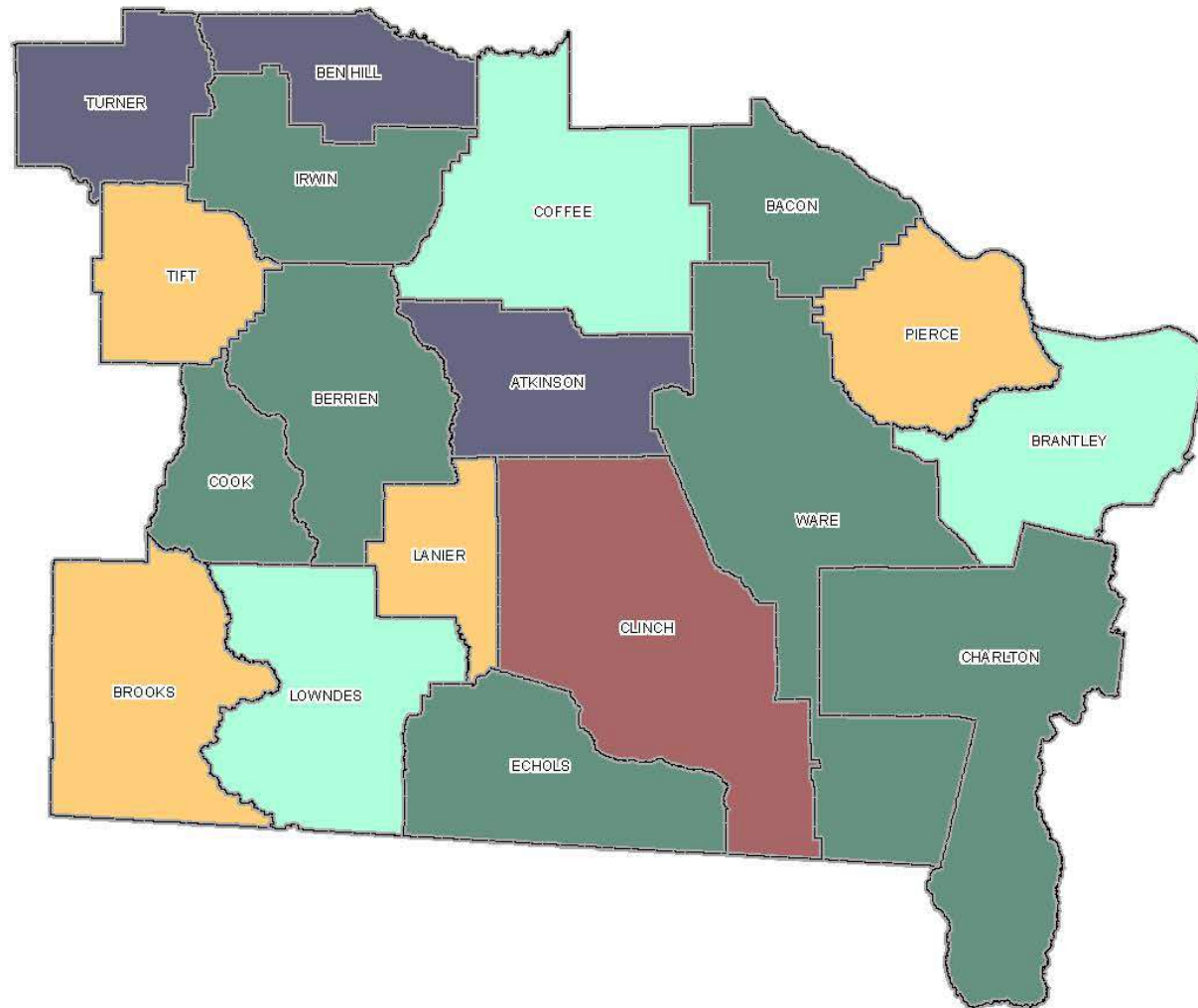
Workforce Development

Area Agency on Aging

G.I.S.

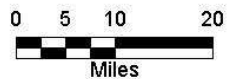


# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



## Map Legend

- SGRC Counties
- Poverty Percentage**
  - 19.6% - 21.2%
  - 21.3% - 23.3%
  - 23.4% - 25.2%
  - 25.3% - 33.6%
  - 33.7% - 40.2%



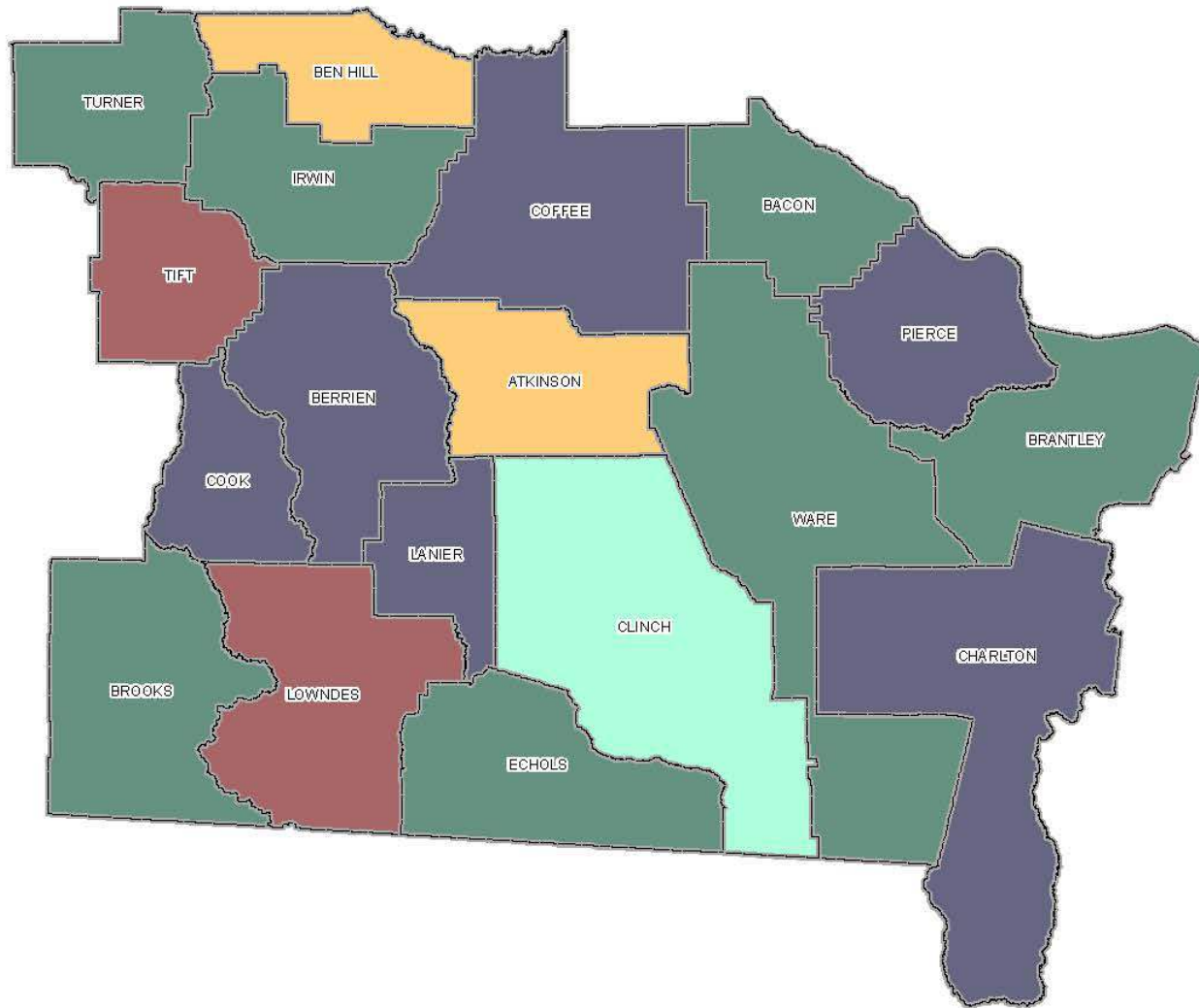
## Southern Georgia Regional Commission 2021 Poverty Rate Percentage

Map created September 2021 for general planning purposes only. Refer all questions on data accuracy and availability to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.

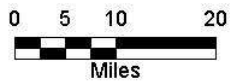
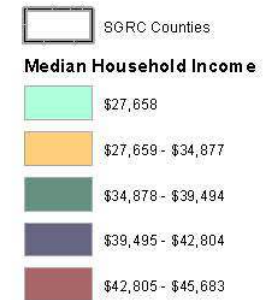


Source: US Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



## Map Legend



## Southern Georgia Regional Commission 2021 Median Household Income

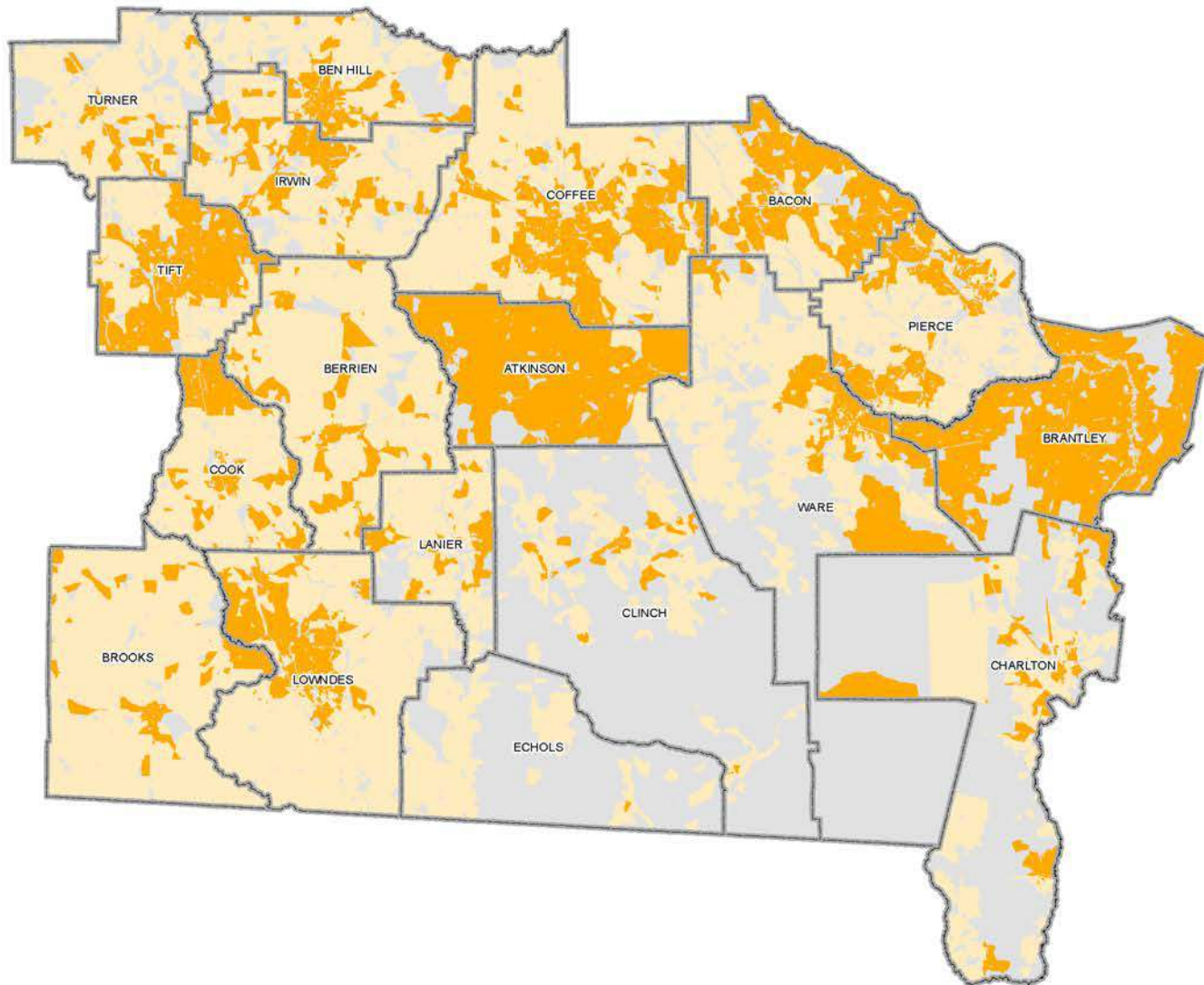
Map created September 2021 for general planning purposes only. Refer for all questions on data accuracy and availability to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.



Source: US Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey

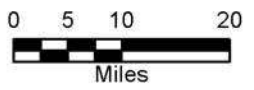


# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



### Map Legend

- SGRC Counties
- Served & Unserved Areas
  - Served
  - Unserved
  - No Locations

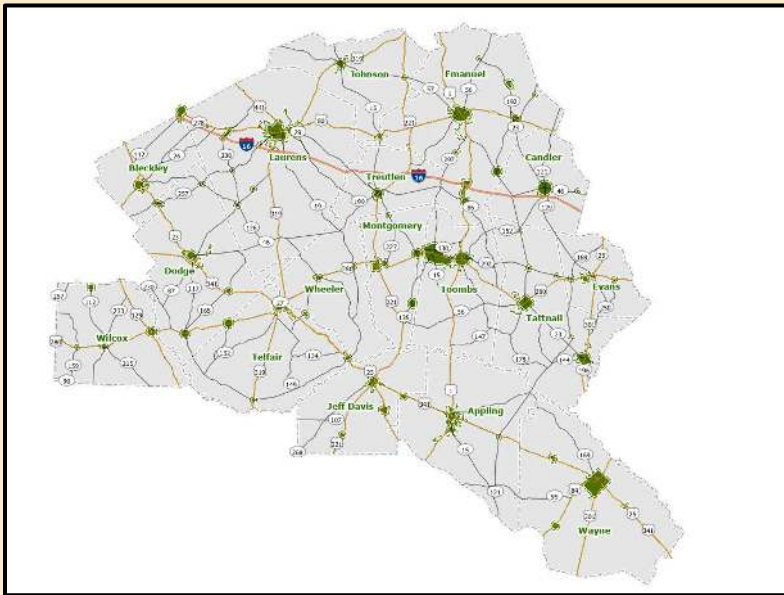


## 2021 Georgia Broadband Availability by County

Map created August 2021 for general planning purposes only. Refer all questions on data accuracy and availability to the Southern Georgia Regional Commission.

# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

Heart of Georgia Altamaha  
Regional Commission:  
17 Counties; 62 Municipalities



Baxley Office

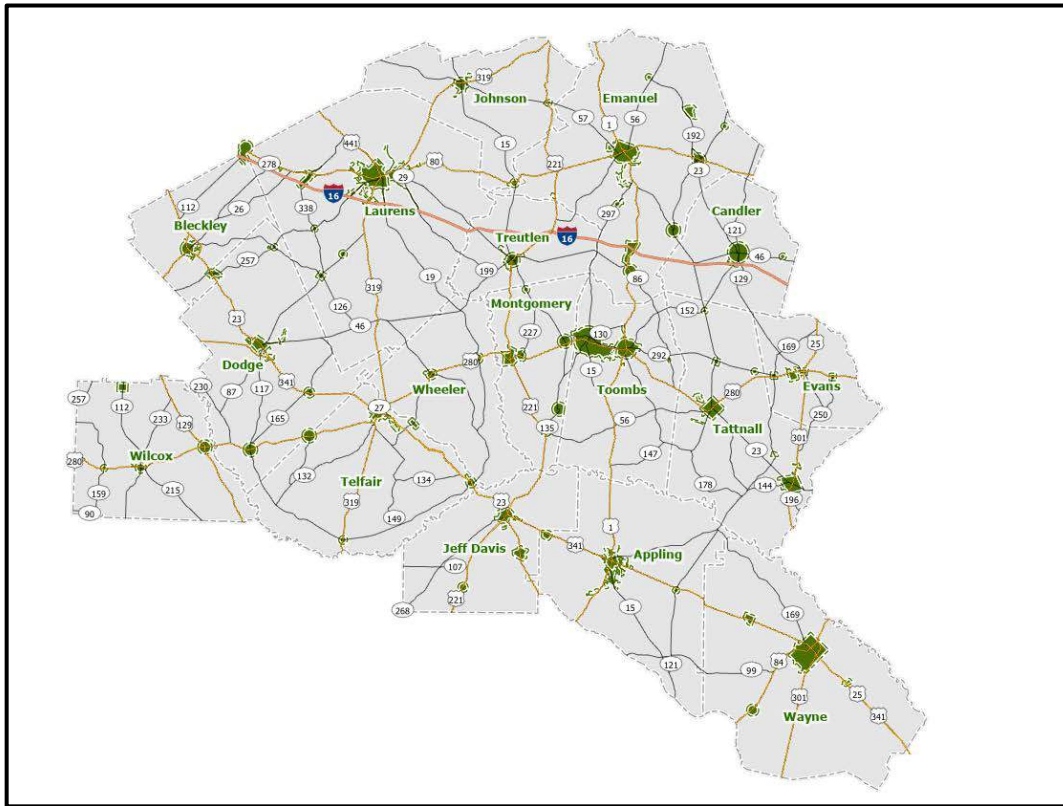


*HOGARC Comprehensive  
Plan Workshop and  
Public Outreach*



# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

## Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission



### Key Statistics

Population: 292,759

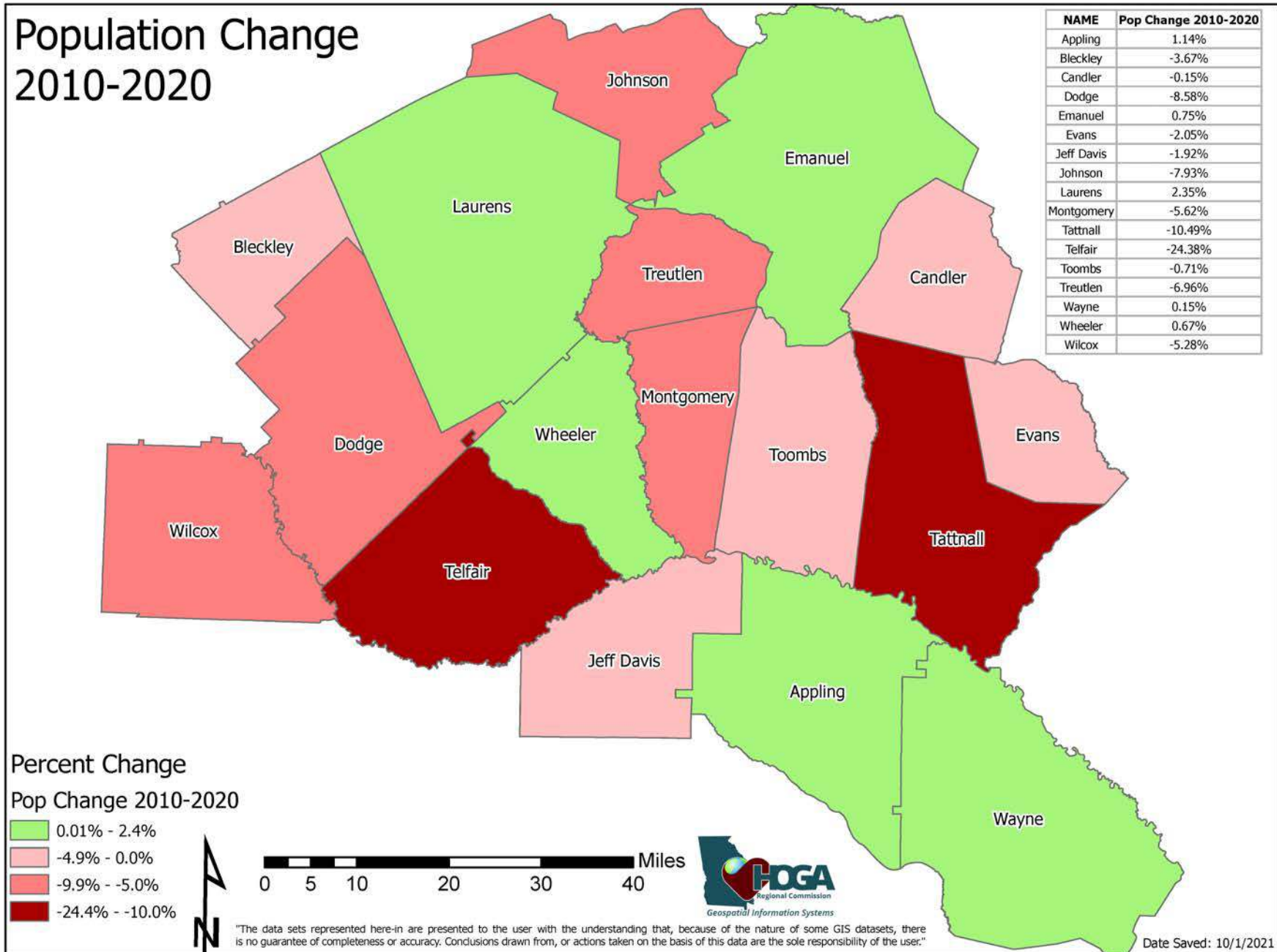
Unemployment: 5.9%

Education: 33.1% Have Some College or Above

Employer Class: 11 Companies with over 500 employees  
54.1% have less than 4 employees

12,785 Road Miles, 46.7% (6,799) are unpaved

# REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS



## REGIONAL PRIORITIES

The region's local government officials and staff were asked: What are the most significant challenges to improving the quality of life in your community?

Resources to repair and maintain Montgomery County's dirt road system.

1. Broadband
2. Broadband
3. Broadband

Access to quality healthcare and the prevention of hospital closures

A lack of transportation network for all modes of travel and cost of providing a transit service.

# Challenges to Effective Public Engagement in Rural Areas: Elected Officials and Staff

- *Wearing Many Hats and Lack of Time*
- *Political Will*
- *Disagreements/Mistrust amongst County and Cities*
- *Inexperience*
- *High Staff Turnover*
- *Staff Overwhelmed*
- *Competing priorities*
- *Covid-19*
- *Past History and Norms*
- *Previous Experiences*
- *Averse to change*
- *Keeping the perspective positive to attract industry/  
major employers*



# Challenges to Effective Public Engagement in Rural Areas: General Public

- *Lack of Understanding*
- *Fear or Reticence about speaking on an unknown topic to professionals and elected officials*
- *History of Dissatisfaction/ Mistrust of Government*
- *Competing priorities*
- *Covid-19*
- *Relevance of discussion*
- *Averse to change*
- *Time Commitment*
- *Types of engagement tools*
- *Doubt about impact*





What if the poor were part of city  
planning?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBQv41YbdCk>



# Public Engagement



▶ ⏪ 🔊 3:48 / 13:27 • Mumbai International Airport >



# Public Engagement – Low Tech

Brooks County & Cities of Barwick, Morven, Pavo, & Quitman Pre-Update Luncheon



# Public Engagement – Low Tech

## Brooks County Pre-Update Luncheon





# BLECKLEY COUNTY JOINT COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Bleckley County and the City of Cochran

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

com/SouthernGeorgiaRC/

Like Share

**sgirc**

Southern Georgia Regional Commission  
@SouthernGeorgiaRC

Home  
About  
Photos  
Reviews  
Videos  
Events  
Posts  
Community

Create a Page

EVERYONE IS A PEDESTRIAN

400 pedestrians are injured each year in crashes with motor vehicles in Southern Georgia.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. Drive the speed limit.  
#SafeSouthernGeorgia

**sgirc** SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

1

Send Message

**CSRA Regional Commission**  
Government Organization  
See More

Pages Liked by This Page

- WG Nunn Elementary School
- Administration on Aging
- Valdosta Makerspace
- Waycross Police Department
- TCSG - Technical College System

See More

Places ▸ Valdosta, Georgia ▸ Community Organization ▸ Government Organization ▸ Southern Georgia Regional Commission

English (US) · Español · Português (Brasil) · Français (France) · Deutsch

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



Southern GA Regional Commission  
87 subscribers

SUBSCRIBED



HOME

VIDEOS

PLAYLISTS

CHANNELS

DISCUSSION

ABOUT



Uploads PLAY ALL

SORT BY



5:45

What's new in ArcGIS Pro 2.7 & 2.8

6 views • 6 days ago



2:15

VALOR Live Map Advanced Topics

13 views • 6 months ago



7:56

VALOR Live Map Instructional Video

13 views • 6 months ago



1:57

More about What's new in ArcGIS Pro 2.6

21 views • 11 months ago



5:17

What's new in ArcGIS Pro 2.6 – Graphics Layers

154 views • 1 year ago



2:53

What's new in ArcGIS Pro 2.6 Options menu

19 views • 1 year ago



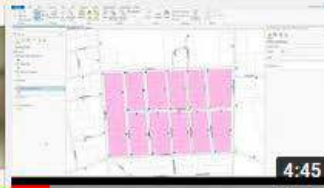
3:28



1:02



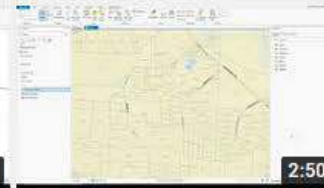
25:14



4:45



1:53



2:50

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

Started Outlook Web App Most Visited

YouTube

Search

## Quiet Creeks, Peaceful Pines, & Dark Skies

Visit [www.sgrcmaps.com/ECotourism](http://www.sgrcmaps.com/ECotourism) for an interactive map.

**sgrc** SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION [www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us)

**1. Flat Top Wildlife Management Area**  
This WMA is open for hunting for deer, turkeys, squirrel and waterfowl. River fishing and wildlife viewing are also popular activities.  
GA 987, North Carter County • 229-426-3367  
[www.georgiawildlife.com/flat-top-wma](http://www.georgiawildlife.com/flat-top-wma)

**2. General Coffee State Park**  
The park is known for agricultural history at Heritage Farm, with log cabins, a tobacco barn and other exhibits. Children enjoy feeding the park's farm animals.

**3. Mowry Pond Lodge**  
Provides quail and pheasant hunts, sporting clay shoots and lodging. Mayberry Rd, Pattenburg  
912-288-1349 • [www.mowrypondlodge.com/mowry-pond-ottifers](http://www.mowrypondlodge.com/mowry-pond-ottifers)

**4. Little Satilla Wildlife Management Area**

**5. Shadow Oak Plantation**  
Hunting lodge that serves small and medium groups of avid quail and upland bird enthusiasts on traditional plantation style quail hunts. For pheasantry enthusiasts and non hunting guests, the plantation offers a mini safari of exotic animals including prairie dogs, otters, coon, bobcat, antelope, snake, Watusi cattle, buffalo, falow and red deer.  
Jane Hendry Rd, NE of Nashville  
229-686-7454 • [www.shadowoakplantation.com](http://www.shadowoakplantation.com)

**6. Southern Forest World Environmental Center**  
Museum dedicated to the history of forestry.  
N August Ave., Waycross • 912-385-4056  
[www.southernforestworld.com](http://www.southernforestworld.com)

**7. The Food Farm**  
The Food Farm is a quiet refuge for nature lovers and quail hunting alike. The Farm offers eight hunting courses and lodging as well. 414 Cross Creek Rd, Lakeland • 229-560-1791 • [www.thefoodfarm.com](http://www.thefoodfarm.com)

**8. Obediah's Obediah**  
Obediah's Obediah is the restored homestead of Obediah Barber, an early settler of the area. The park offers a glimpse into the frontier lifestyle of the late 1800s. (Open Friday - Sunday Only)  
5115 Swamp Rd, Waycross • 912-287-4099  
[www.obediahs.com](http://www.obediahs.com)

**9. Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area**  
The Dixon Memorial Wildlife Management Area provides hunting and shooting opportunities as well as geocaching and wildlife viewing. The state-owned property consists of upland pine forest and cypress-gum wetlands.  
3908 Clark Station Rd, Waycross • 229-426-5267  
[www.georgiawildlife.com/dixon-memorial-wma](http://www.georgiawildlife.com/dixon-memorial-wma)

**10. Okefenokee Swamp Park**  
Five planters in America can still be traced and extensive wildlife at Okefenokee Swamp Park. Over 200 species of birds have been identified by refuge personnel and visiting ornithologists. There are over 40 species of mammals, more than 50 species of reptiles, and 60 species of amphibians. The waters house an abundance of fish, 34 different kinds.  
US 1 South, Waycross • 912-283-8983  
[www.okefenokee.com](http://www.okefenokee.com)

**11. Ponce Creek Off Road Park**  
Ponce Creek Off Road Park caters to ATVs, UTVs, boats, trucks, etc. They are open the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month.

**12. The Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area**  
The Grand Bay Wildlife Management Area encompasses 2,623 acres of state-owned property and 3,874 acres of land under license from the U.S. Air Force. The area consists of upland pine/hardwood forest and cypress-gum wetlands with opportunities for hunting, geocaching, canoeing, hiking, and fishing.  
Knight Academy Rd, Valdosta • 229-428-5267  
[www.georgiawildlife.com/grand-bay-wma](http://www.georgiawildlife.com/grand-bay-wma)

**13. Newell Lodge & Resort**  
The Newell Lodge & Resort offers guests horse-back riding, kayaking, wildlife viewing, and relaxation. It is centrally located in multiple sites in the region, including the Okefenokee Swamp and coastal attractions. Ocean Road Rd, Folkston  
912-496-2838 • [www.newellodgeandresort.com](http://www.newellodgeandresort.com)

**14. Charlton Regional Visitor Center**  
The Visitor Center is located in the Depot and includes visitors of the many activities and attractions within and surrounding the Okefenokee Swamp.  
3799 Main St, Folkston • 912-486-2556  
[www.charltoncountyga.us/246/Visitor-Center](http://www.charltoncountyga.us/246/Visitor-Center)

**15. Robert Nimsman Nature Trail**  
Visitors to the Robert Nimsman Nature Trail can view plant life, natural bogs and experience fishing on Lake Irma. The Nimsman trail abuts the mountain bike trail. N Temple St, Lakeland • 229-482-9753  
[www.lakelandchamber.org/park-trails](http://www.lakelandchamber.org/park-trails)

**16. Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge**  
The Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge has 351,981 acres of National Wilderness Area within refuge boundaries. In addition, the refuge is a Wetland of International Importance as it is one of the world's largest intact peat-forest ecosystems. Visitor activities include wilderness canoeing, wildlife viewing, hunting, boat tours, fishing, and environmental education. 11 miles SW of Folkston, off Hwy 112/223  
912-496-7638 • [www.fws.gov/tegap/okefenokee/](http://www.fws.gov/tegap/okefenokee/)

**17. Grassy Pond**  
Grassy Pond is a daily recreational park operated by Moody Air Force Base that is open to the public. The 500-acre park contains several amenities for visitors, including nature trails, boating, fishing, playgrounds, beach volleyball, and basketball.  
3360 Grassy Pond Rd, Lake Park  
229-559-5840 • [www.moodyafb.com/grassy-pond](http://www.moodyafb.com/grassy-pond)

**18. Soggy Bottom Mud Park**  
Soggy Bottom is a 100-acre outdoor recreation park with amenities including fishing, swimming, hiking, bicycling, wildlife viewing, and off road riding (hunting, 1900 Hwy 115, St. George • 904-377-1111  
[www.soggybottom.com](http://www.soggybottom.com)

Visit [www.sgrcmaps.com/Water](http://www.sgrcmaps.com/Water) for a map of boat ramps along South GA waterways

RV Parks and Campgrounds

The next one is a disclaimer about the locations.

## Navigating the Ecotourism Web App

22 views · Jul 10, 2020

2 0 SHARE SAVE ...

**sgrc** Southern GA Regional Commission  
87 subscribers

SUBSCRIBED

This video will help you to navigate the latest in the SGRC's interactive web map offerings, the Ecotourism map. The web map's purpose is to provide a web-based mapping tool for residents and visitors to promote ecotourism destinations within our region.

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

The screenshot shows a web browser displaying an ArcGIS StoryMap. The browser's address bar shows the URL: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/14bdc1c0f23744f795508d925c0833d9>. The page title is "Agritourism". The main content is a map of the Southeastern United States, specifically the states of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. The map features several numbered blue circular markers (1-10) indicating specific locations. A text box on the left side of the map contains a photograph of a wooden building with a sign, and a title "Bruce's Nut-N-Honey" followed by a paragraph of text. The text describes the business and its operations. The map also shows major roads, rivers, and county boundaries.

Getting Started Outlook Web App Most Visited Other Bookmarks

Agritourism

## Bruce's Nut-N-Honey

What started as a hobby for one generation has grown into a full time business for the next. Bruce's Nut-N-Honey Farm, LLC has enlarged its areas of production over the past years, we now migrate bees to tropical regions of Florida and they also contract with farmers for crop pollination. However, the primary and most important job is the production of our rare gallberry, comb honey, and wildflower honey. The expanded production area allows you to watch from a viewing area and purchase from the "Honey Shack."

Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS

Powered by Esri



# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



## Jamboard

Visualize your ideas in a new and collaborative way

Unleash your team's creativity with Jamboard. Sketch your ideas whiteboard-style while benefiting from the access and connectivity of an interactive canvas, on mobile, or right from your web browser. Drop images, add notes, and pull assets directly from the web while collaborating with team members from anywhere.

Buy Jamboard

Launch Jamboard app

## Create, collaborate, and bring your team's ideas to life

Jamboard unlocks your team's creative potential with real-time co-authoring. Experience unhindered productivity, whether your team is in the same room



Hi there 🙋 What brings you to Google Workspace today?



# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement:

<https://www.socialbrite.org/2011/01/19/comparison-top-web-conferencing-services>

Virtual meeting smackdown! 15 x +

https://www.socialbrite.org/2011/01/19/comparison-top-web-conferencing-services/

Tweet


0 Like

87

Share

SHARE

Buffer



Watchitoo: Multimedia collaboration

**1** We used **Watchitoo** during Personal Democracy Forum and the midterm elections and were impressed with its rich collaboration feature set. Watchitoo is a real-time collaboration platform where multimedia presentations meld with video conferencing to create a powerful stage for online communication. Its technology lets you easily host and participate in cutting-edge presentations that support multiple video feeds, screen sharing, white-boarding, API implementation, embedding capabilities and recording functionalities that enhance employee communication and collaboration.

**Software required:** Web-based, no download required.

**Invitation tools:** Multiple embed locations, internal email invitations.

**Collaboration tools:** Screen sharing, up to 25 presenters while simultaneously playing any form of rich media, text chat, questions, Twitter & Facebook posting, mobile access, videoconferencing, video editing, whiteboard.

**Recording:** Yes

**Polling & survey:** Coming in the next 75 days.


**Post-meeting reports:** Yes

**Pricing:** Free up to 5 people; up to 25 people for \$39/month plan; up to 50 people for \$49/month plan with a larger storage capacity.

**Pay per use:** Yes for live events

**Trial:** 30-day free trial

**Bottom line:** A cutting-edge service for collaborating around rich-media projects. Includes some capabilities not found elsewhere. One hiccup: a slight time lag in VoIP conversations.



# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

Search



# Urban Planning Explained.

Like

EXPLAINING AND EXPLORING TOPICS IN URBAN PLANNING

SUBSCR



Urban Planning Explained

346 subscribers

SUBSCRIBED



HOME

VIDEOS

PLAYLISTS

CHANNELS

DISCUSSION

ABOUT



Uploads PLAY ALL

SORT BY



What is an urban growth boundary?

110 views • 2 months ago



What is the First Mile/Last Mile problem?

172 views • 5 months ago



What is microtransit?

202 views • 5 months ago



What is level of service (LOS)?

83 views • 6 months ago



What is VMT (vehicle miles traveled)?

91 views • 6 months ago



What is economic development?

53 views • 6 months ago



What is a subdivision?

0:52



What is a legal nonconforming?

1:03



What are Natural Resources?

2:21



The (Brief) History of Urban Planning

4:40



Who does what in urban planning?

1:36



What is Infrastructure?

1:30

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement: TikTok; @liveculdesac



Report



### Tips and Tricks for Planning a Virtual Meeting



#### MEETING ENGAGEMENT TOOL

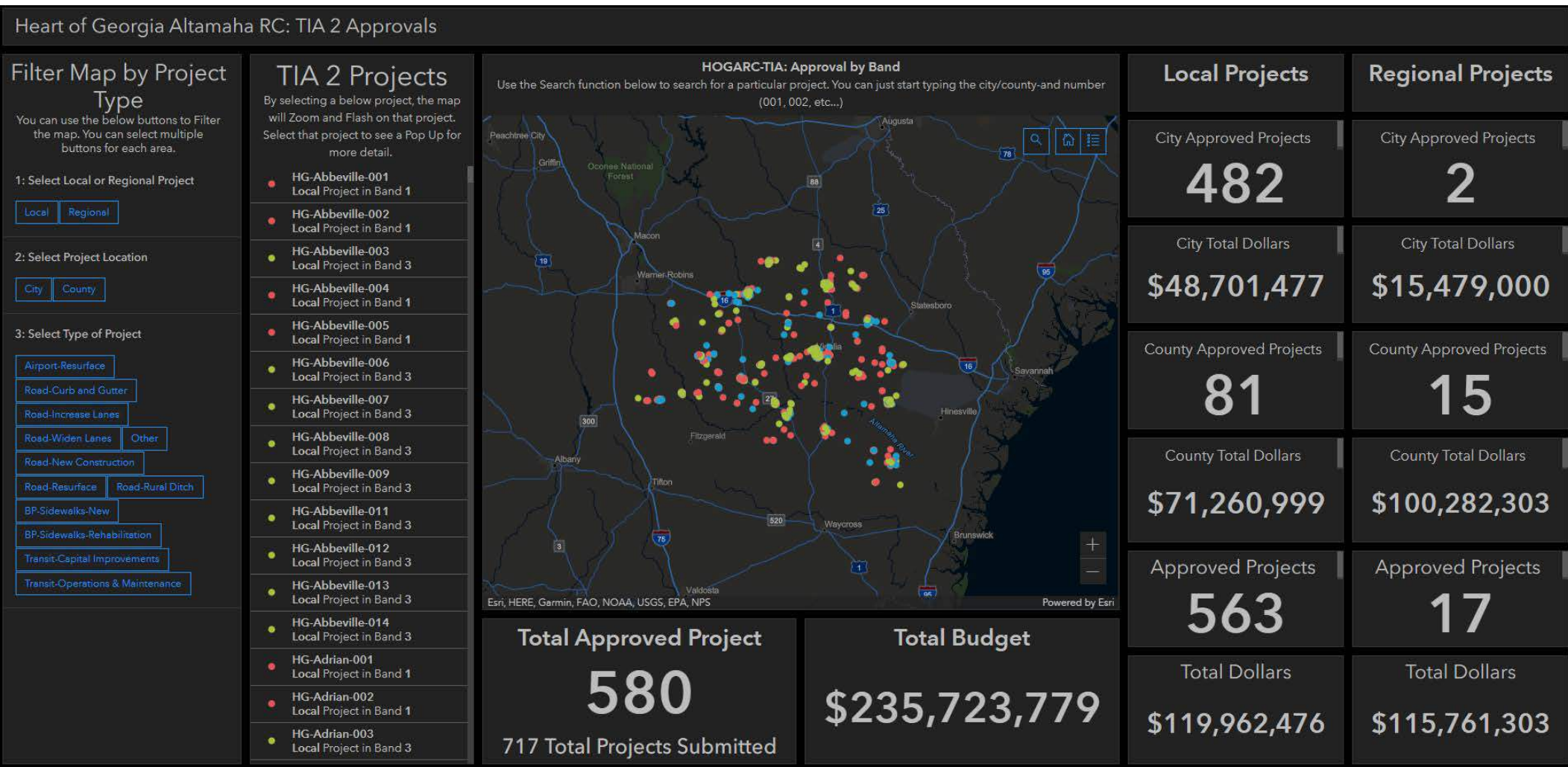
When planning a virtual meeting, the foundations of good facilitation apply just as much—if not more so—in a virtual environment. Rely on being a neutral facilitator, establishing clear goals and objectives, and picking the right tools to meet your objectives. Make sure the technology supports your meeting outcomes, but don't let the technology dictate your outcome.

#### Planning Considerations

In addition to all of the normal pre-meeting items you need to address, there are additional ones to consider when planning for a meeting in a virtual environment.

<b>Have an assistant</b>	Leading a virtual meeting takes more multi-tasking than a face-to-face meeting does, because in addition to leading the meeting, you might have to monitor chats and poll results, pay attention to raised hands, keep track of time, write on the white board, and move people between breakout rooms. You will also be asked to troubleshoot audio and video issues. Having a co-facilitator, assistant, or technology producer can help with many of these issues.
<b>Plan for timing</b>	Virtual meetings take longer than the same meeting held face-to-face. It takes time to move between tools, such as chats, polls, and breakout rooms. Additionally, you have to repeat instructions more often in the virtual environment, because participants may not be able to hear as well, or are more distracted. You also have to pause longer for responses to questions and during discussions to allow time for people to respond via chat or to raise their hand and take themselves off mute. Silence is okay in a virtual meeting so build in that extra time when thinking through your

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

Survey : Questions

[http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e4e3uxq1kh255o89/\\_tmp/q...](http://survey.constantcontact.com/survey/a07e4e3uxq1kh255o89/_tmp/q...)

**THIS IS A TEST VERSION OF THIS SURVEY**  
Responses will NOT be recorded.



REGIONAL SERVICES • COMMUNITY FOCUSED

Pandemic Induced Economic Challenges Survey

\*Required Question(s)

The data in this survey is being collected by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) to

- 1) Identify the immediate and long-term economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and,
- 2) Identify assistance needed in the recovery process and,
- 3) Identify steps to be taken to improve the region's resilience to protect against economic disruptions during future pandemics and/or natural disasters.

**Privacy Statement and Terms of Use**

By participating in this survey, you are agreeing that SGRC may seek to contact you regarding the data you provide in this survey. This information may be shared with the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Authority (EDA) and/or the State of Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEC) & Department of Community Affairs (DCA) in an effort to identify economic needs and solutions.

**Definitions:**

**PPE:** Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses.

**Economic Resilience** (from <https://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm>):

It is becoming increasingly apparent that regional economic prosperity is linked to an area's ability to prevent, withstand, and quickly recover from major disruptions (i.e., 'shocks') to its economic base. Many definitions of economic resilience limit its focus on the ability to quickly recover from a disruption. However, in the context of economic development, economic resilience becomes inclusive of three primary attributes: the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether. Establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy require

- \* 1. Which entities are you reporting for? This could be one city/county or region, please list all that apply.

# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



**Wednesday, September 29th @ 3:00 pm**

**via Zoom**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4647923996?pwd=4XQxNWFJZkRSay9xeE1kdUITVmZPZz09>

Meeting ID: 464 792 3996

Passcode: 759721



# Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

The image shows a Google Slides presentation interface. The title bar at the top reads "Planning Snack and Learn" with a star icon and a share icon. Below the title bar is a menu bar with options: File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Slide, Arrange, Tools, Add-ons, Help. A status bar indicates "Last edit was yesterday at 12:53 PM". On the right side of the interface, there are buttons for "Present" and "Share".

The main slide area features a large white rectangle with the text "Planning Snack and Learn" in a large, bold, black serif font. Below this text is the logo for the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, which consists of the letters "sglrc" in a stylized font followed by the text "SOUTHERN GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION". The slide background is a solid yellow color with a vertical blue stripe on the right side.

On the left side of the interface, there is a slide navigation pane. The first slide is selected and shows a thumbnail of the current slide. Below it are thumbnails for other slides, including a map, a photograph of a building, and a photograph of a group of people. At the bottom of the navigation pane, there is a button that says "Click to add speaker notes".

# PlanFirst and Main Street Correlation to Successful Plan Implementation and CDBG Applications

## What Are the Benefits?

PlanFirst designation brings significant recognition and rewards, including eligibility for the package of incentives listed below:

- Statewide recognition as being an exemplary PlanFirst community
- The ability to apply for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding annually during the designation period
- Bonus points on DCA programs such as the Redevelopment Fund, Employment Incentive Program, and the Downtown Revolving Loan Fund
- Hands-on assistance from DCA staff to help implement community work program activities

## What makes these communities different?

- Recognition of Planning Principals
- Community First Approach
- Regular Training
- Acknowledgement of all community demographics

## PlanFirst Communities



PlanFirst is DCA's program to recognize and reward communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their Local Comprehensive Plan.

Any size community is encouraged to apply, provided it has a history of public involvement with development of the plan, active engagement in plan implementation, and proven progress with achieving the community's stated vision or goals.

For additional information on the PlanFirst program, please contact Ebony Simpson: [ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov](mailto:ebony.simpson@dca.ga.gov)  
<https://dca.ga.gov/local-government-assistance/planning/local-planning/planfirst>

# PlanFirst and Main Street Correlation to Successful Plan Implementation and CDBG Applications

attended training on [how to use the Local Comprehensive Plan effectively](#). These trainings may include those from DCA's Community Planning Institute, the Georgia Academy, the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, Regional Commission, GAZA, GMA or ACCG or other professional organizations that specifically address land use or planning topics. Add more rows and an explanation if necessary.

Elected/Appointed Official, Name & Title	Course Name	Event Sponsor	Dates

I. Discuss your leadership's effort to build collaborative partnerships that will achieve shared Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and/or projects listed in your Community Work Program that have been identified in your Local Comprehensive Plan. Partners may include, but are not limited to: [The Chamber of Commerce, Regional Commission, or Development Authority](#). Include references and page numbers to be used as documentation from your current or previous Local Comprehensive Plan. You may also attach letters of support from your partnering organizations, providing specific examples of collaborative efforts.

J. DCA encourages the coordination of local comprehensive planning and implementation between [neighboring communities \(municipal and county governments\)](#). Discuss your leadership's effort to build collaborative partnerships that will achieve shared Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and/or projects listed in your Community Work Program that have been identified in your Local Comprehensive Plan. Include references and page numbers to be used as documentation from your current or previous Local Comprehensive Plan. You may also attach letters of support from your partnering organizations, providing specific examples of collaborative efforts.

## INDICATOR: PARTICIPATION

Responses in this section should draw upon information in the Goals Element, Needs and Opportunities Element, and Community Work Program element of your current and previous comprehensive plan/updates.

K. Share how community input was received and incorporated into the following Local Comprehensive Plan Elements: Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and the Community Work Program. The response should demonstrate how your Local Comprehensive Plan was prepared with multiple creative engagement opportunities (e.g. visioning workshops, SWOT exercises, charettes, social media, virtual meetings, etc.) that went beyond the two legally mandated public hearings and required steering committee. Provide information and/or documentation that

illustrates your public participation process. Examples of documentation include: agendas, sign-in sheets, photos, survey results, and other meeting materials.

L. Specify the members of your Local Comprehensive Plan's steering committee and their role in the community (e.g. planning commissioner, school board member, neighborhood association, or business owner). Also, please share how the steering committee contributed to the development of the Local Comprehensive Plan, including how many times they met throughout the process.

M. How do you ensure that your planning outreach and engagement activities are responsive to stakeholders representing all demographic and socio-economic backgrounds, in particular, hard to reach populations? Provide examples from your previous comprehensive planning processes.

N. After adoption of your Local Comprehensive Plan, what active, ongoing, outreach processes have you used to solicit input on planning matters from a cross-section of the community?

O. List any active advocates you have for Local Comprehensive Plan implementation (such as activist citizens, organizations or neighborhood groups) that affect decisions made by community leaders. How have they affected these decisions?

## INDICATOR: IMPLEMENTATION

Responses in this section should draw upon information in the Community Work Program, Goals Element, and the Needs and Opportunities Element of your current and previous comprehensive plan (updates).

P. Demonstrate how individual projects/activities in your Community Work Program advance items discussed in both your Goals Element and Needs and Opportunities Element. Examples should clearly illustrate the linkage of the different plan Elements.

## Questions for Discussion

How can we get overlooked community members involved in government-decision discourse?

What are examples of removing barriers for individuals to participate in comprehensive planning and transportation planning?

How can we build trust, empowerment and agency with communities that have been perpetually ignored, harmed, and disinvested in?

## Questions for Discussion

What kind of data points, projects, or outreach can provide the most insight for community planning studies in the given community?

And, do these methods resonate with the community?

Do they want to engage on the broad community vision?

Do they have time to engage?

Or, do they engage on an as needed basis?

Can low-tech and/or high-tech tools be better used for engagement?

## Southern Georgia and Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commissions



**James Horton**  
**Senior Planner**  
Southern Georgia  
Regional Commission  
**Phone (229) 333-5277**  
**Email: [jhorton@sgrc.us](mailto:jhorton@sgrc.us)**



**Elizabeth Backe, AICP**  
**Planning Director**  
Southern Georgia  
Regional Commission  
**Phone (229) 333-5277**  
**Email: [ebacke@sgrc.us](mailto:ebacke@sgrc.us)**



**James Pope, AICP**  
**Assistant Executive Director**  
Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional  
Commission  
**Phone (912) 367-3648**  
**Email: [pope@hogarc.org](mailto:pope@hogarc.org)**