Lessons Learned in Rural Engagement

October 8, 2021

HOGA Regional Commission

SGRC
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?

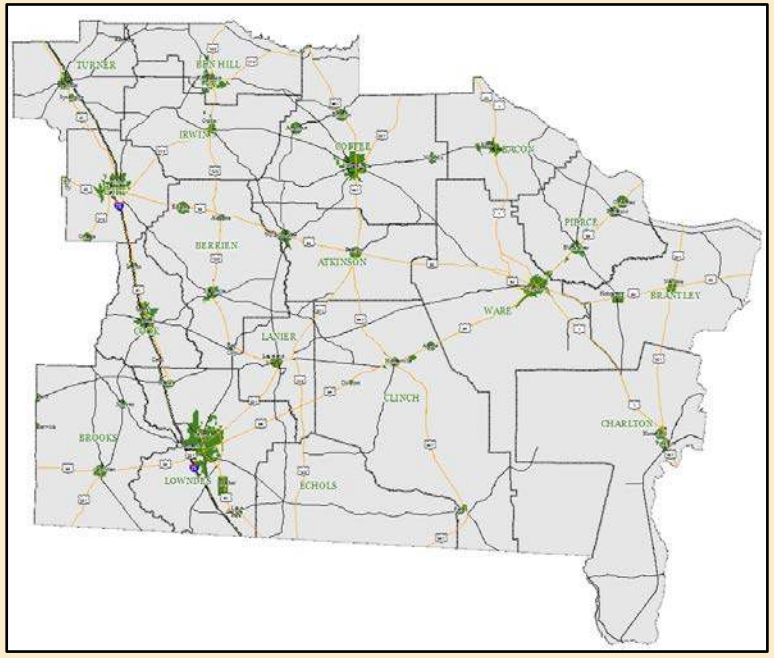
A Regional Commission is a quasi-governmental regional planning organization created and managed under Georgia law by their member local governments.

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.

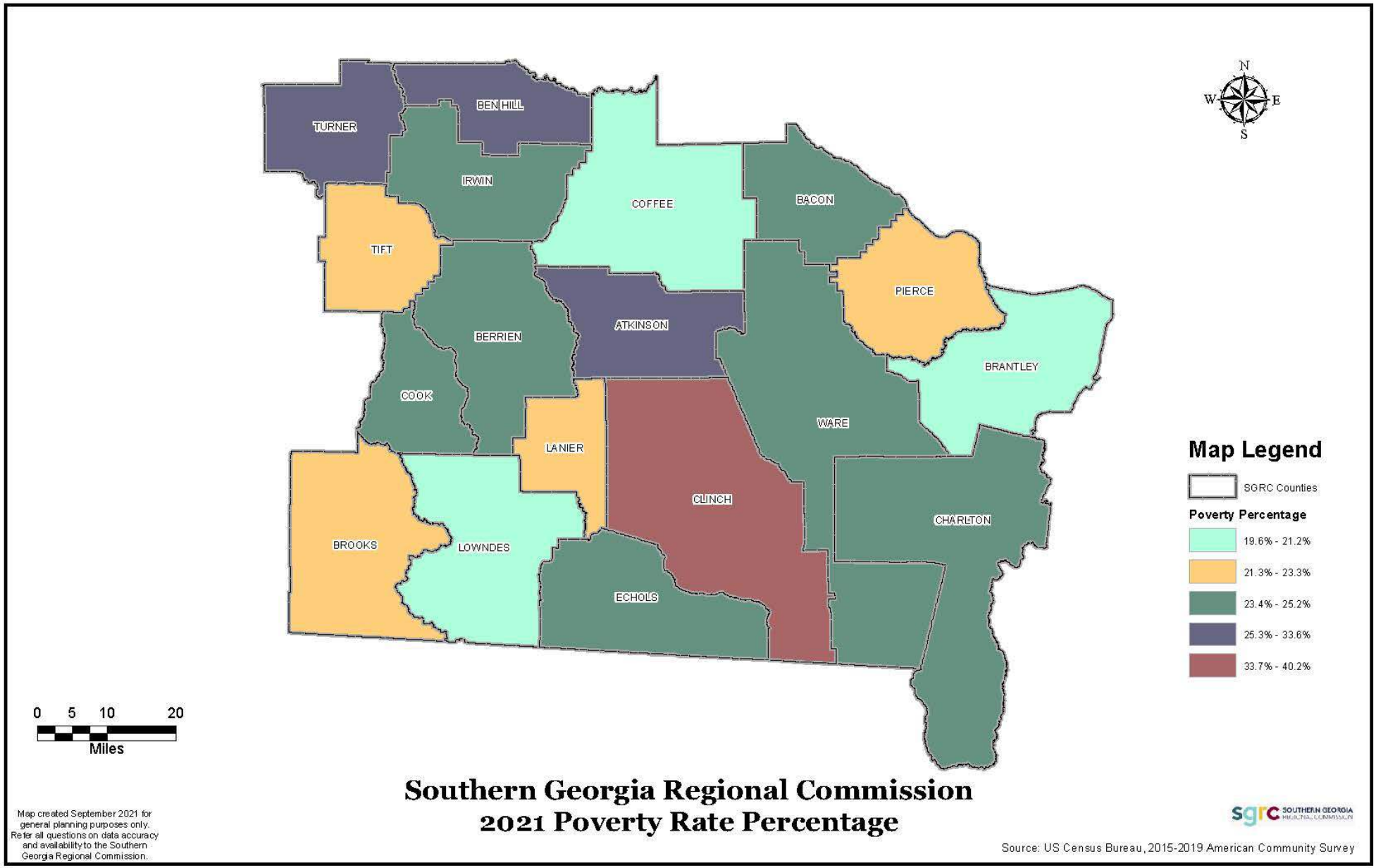
- We have dedicated staff that partners with local governments to increase the prosperity and quality of life in our region.

REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC

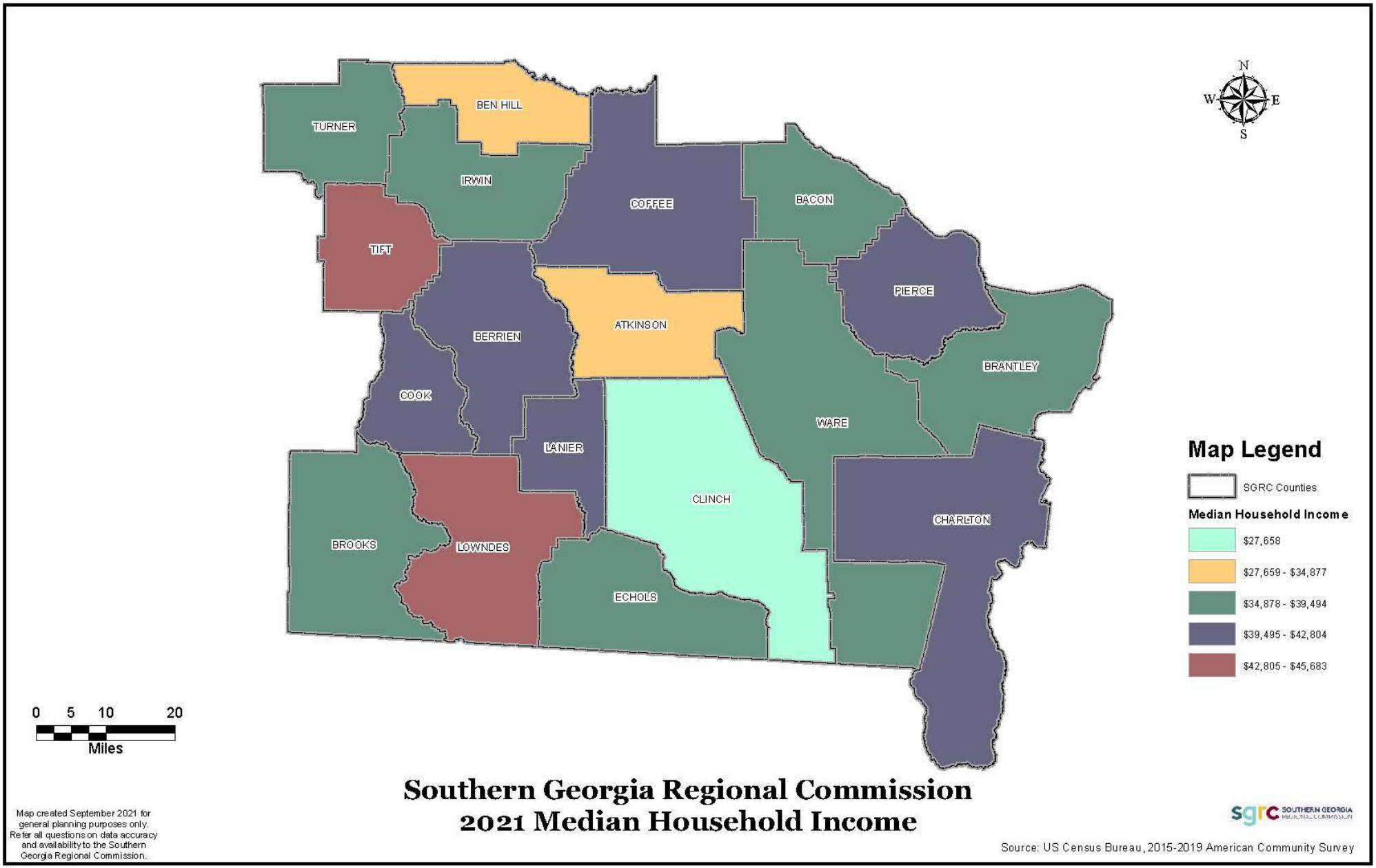
Departments:

- Lending
- Information Technology
- Community & Economic Development
- Local Government Services
- Transportation & Environmental
- Workforce Development
- Area Agency on Aging
- G.I.S.

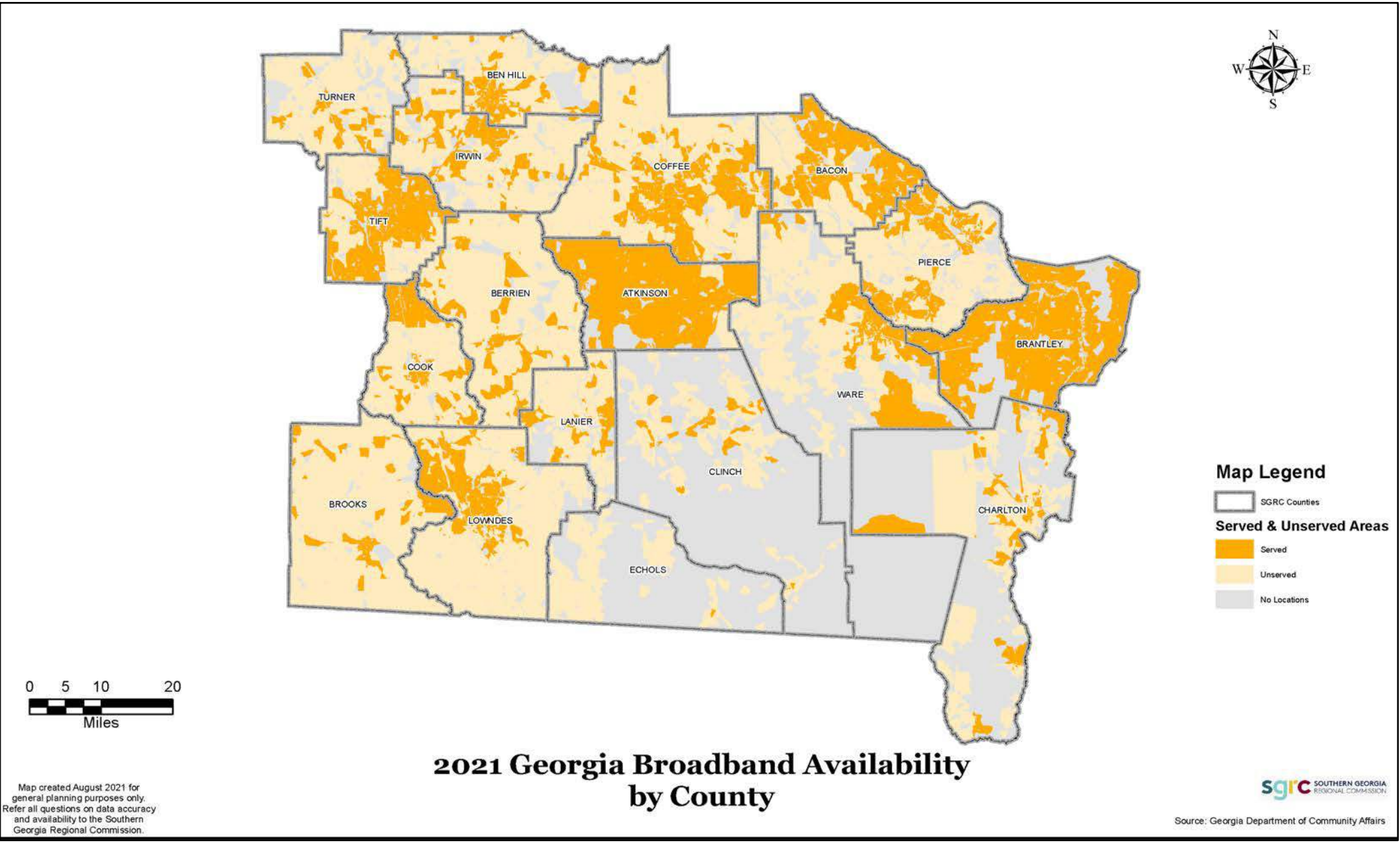
REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



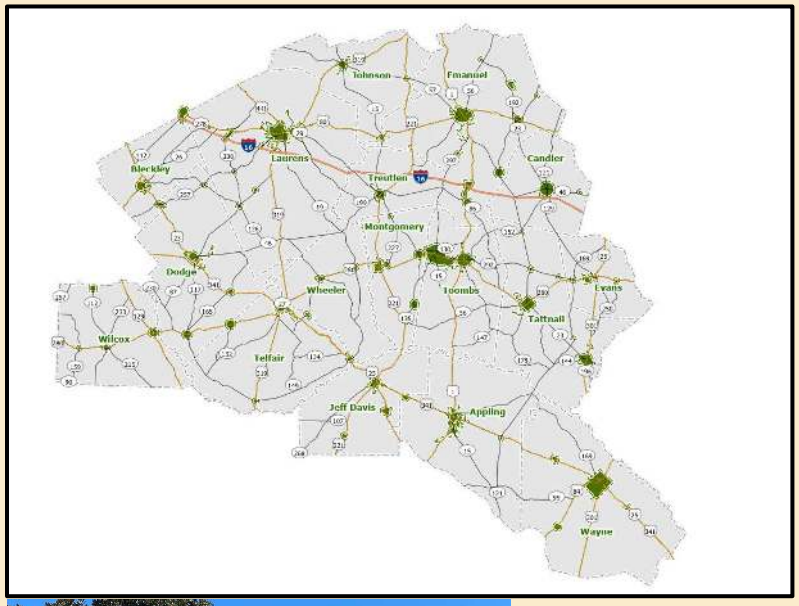
REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS: SGRC



REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission:

17 Counties; 62 Municipalities

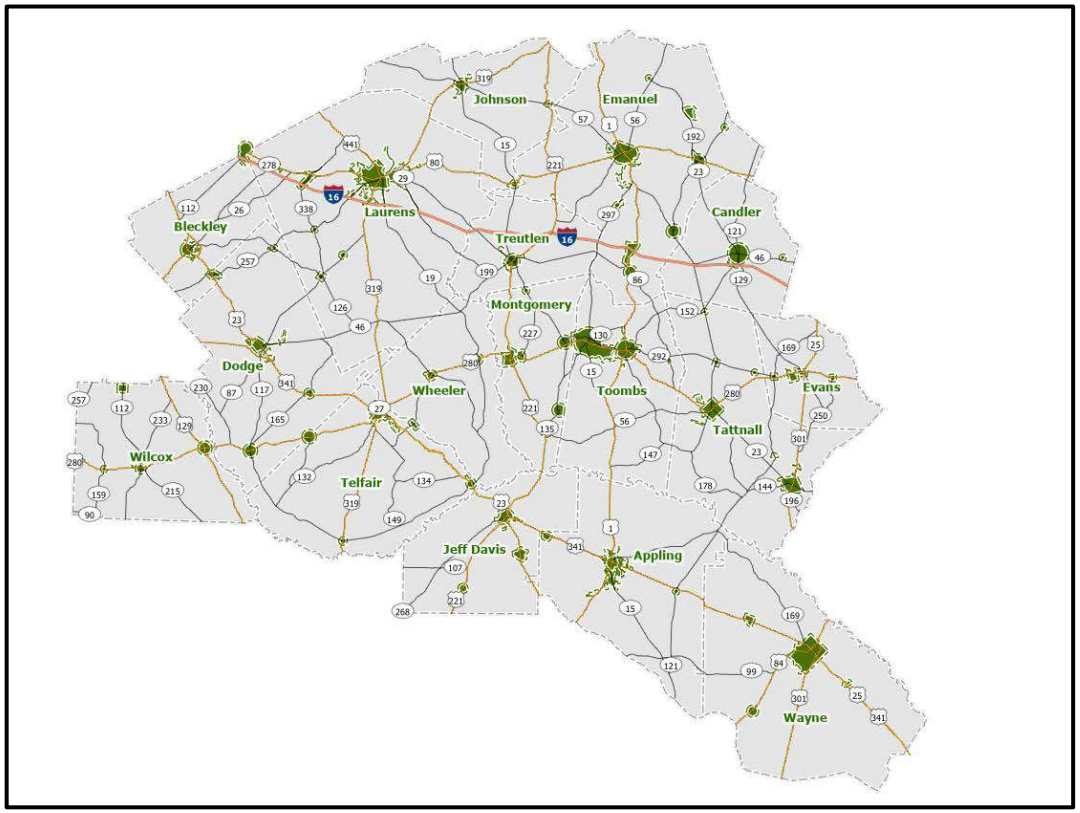


Baxley Office

HOGARC Comprehensive Plan Workshop and Public Outreach

REGIONAL DESCRIPTIONS

Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission



Key Statistics

Population: 292,759

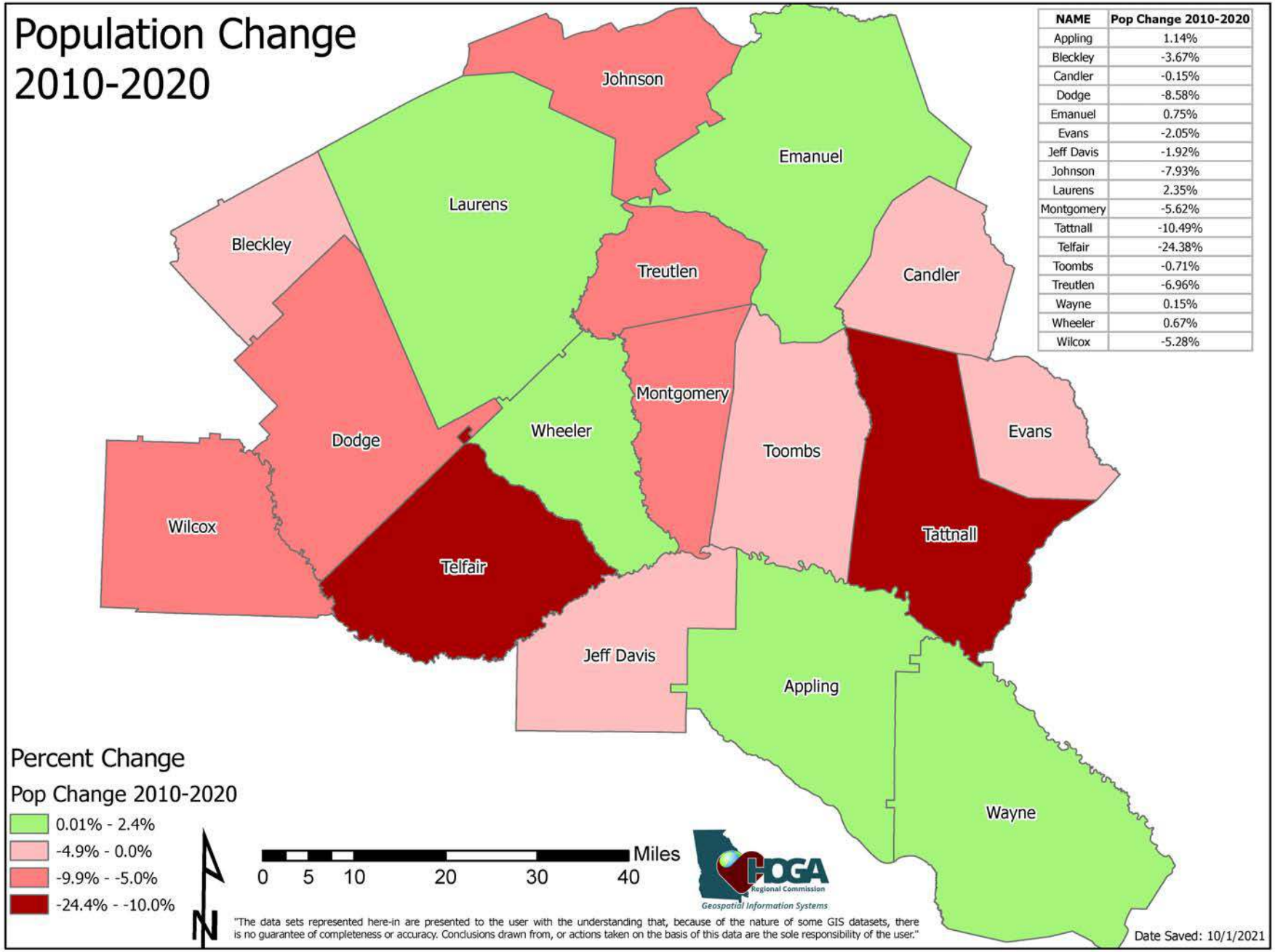
Unemployment: 5.9%

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



NAME	Pop Change 2010-2020
Appling	1.14%
Bleckley	-3.67%
Candler	-0.15%
Dodge	-8.58%
Emanuel	0.75%
Evans	-2.05%
Jeff Davis	-1.92%
Johnson	-7.93%
Laurens	2.35%
Montgomery	-5.62%
Tattnall	-10.49%
Telfair	-24.38%
Toombs	-0.71%
Treutlen	-6.96%
Wayne	0.15%
Wheeler	0.67%
Wilcox	-5.28%

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*

Public Engagement

What if the poor were part of city planning?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sBQv41YbdCk

Public Engagement

Public Engagement – Low Tech

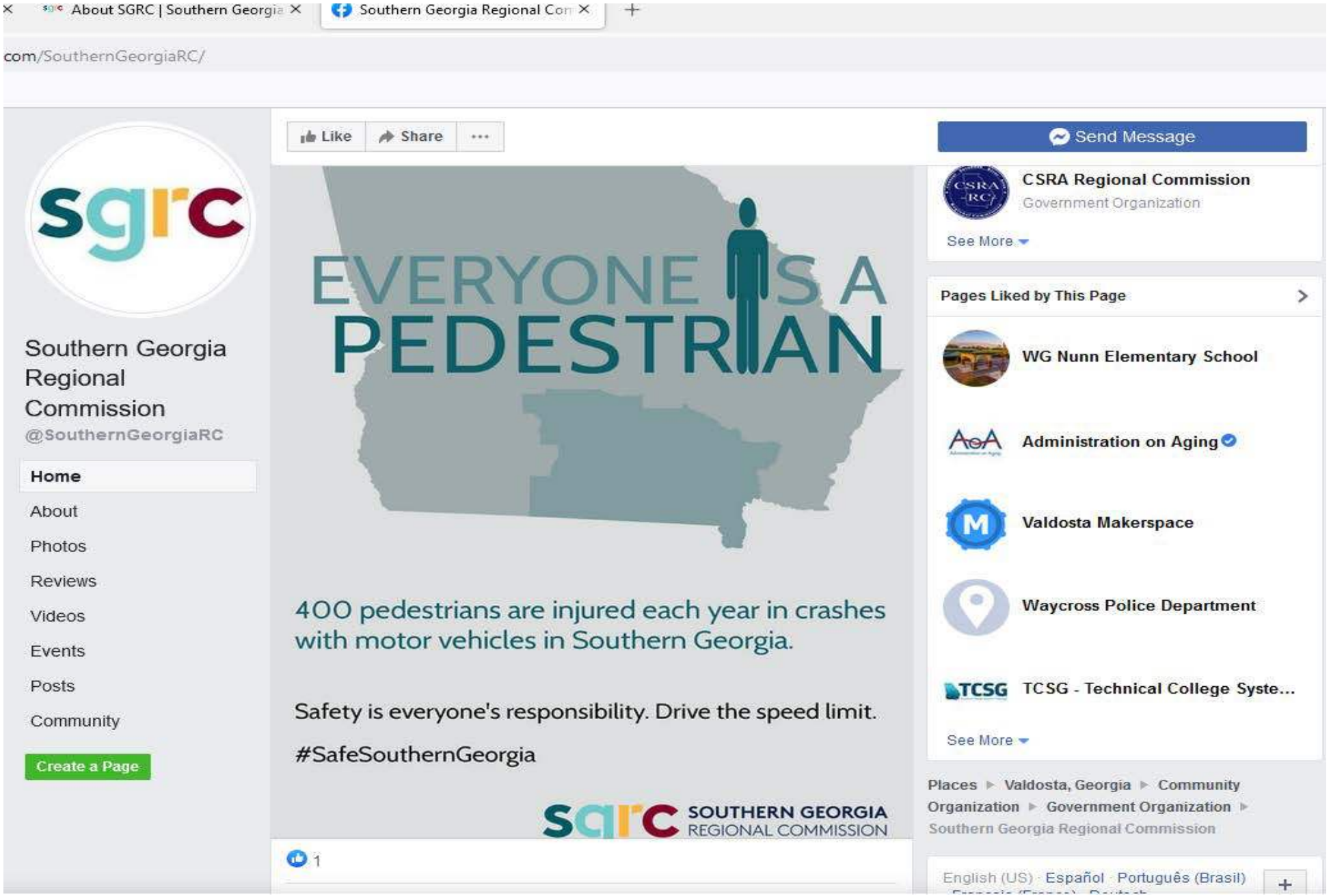
Brooks County & Cities of Barwick, Morven, Pavo, & Quitman Pre-Update Luncheon

Public Engagement – Low Tech

Brooks County Pre-Update Luncheon

Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

Southern GA Regional Commission

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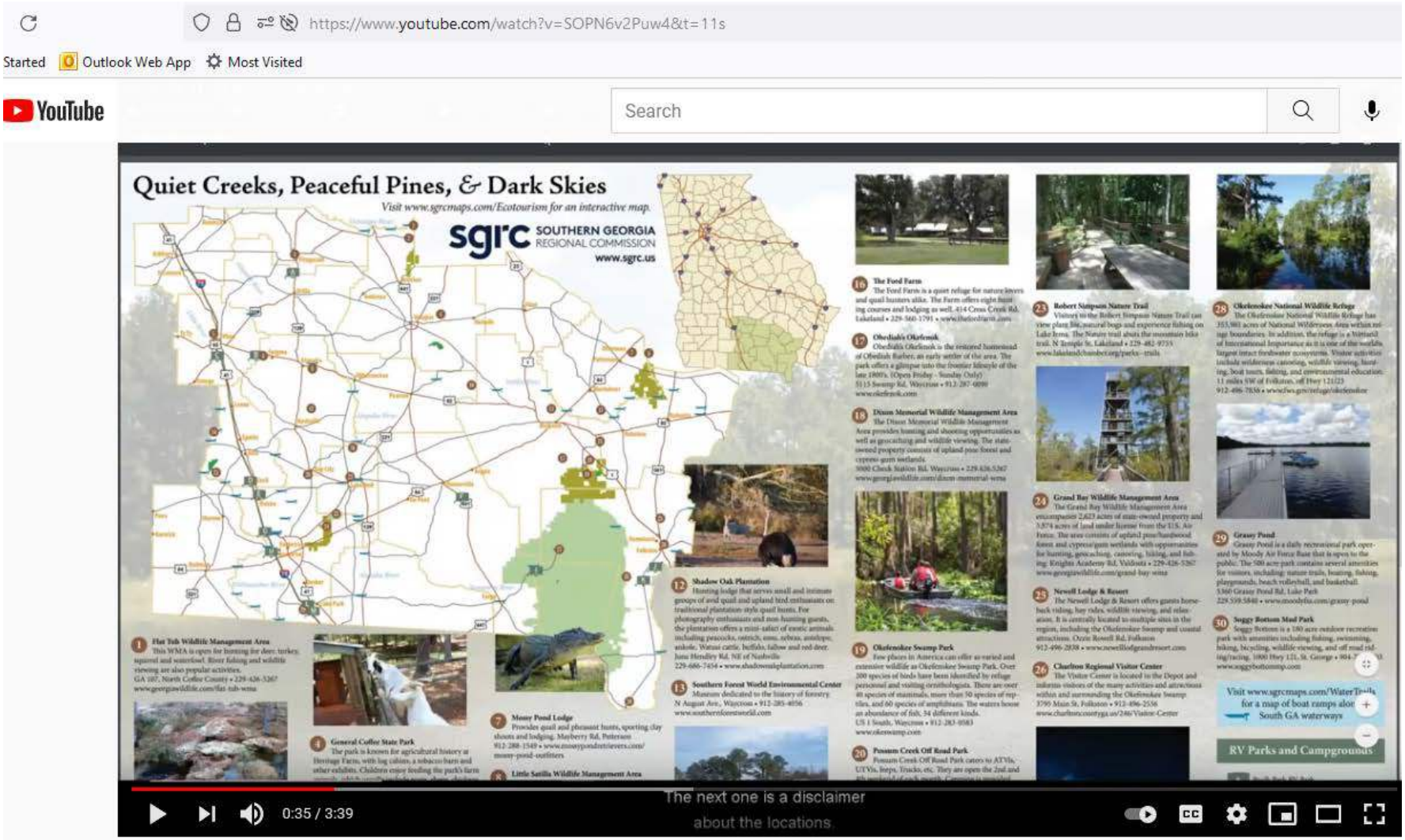

Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/14bdc1c0f23744f795508d925c0833d9

Getting Started | Outlook Web App | Most Visited | Other Bookm

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."

Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

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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.

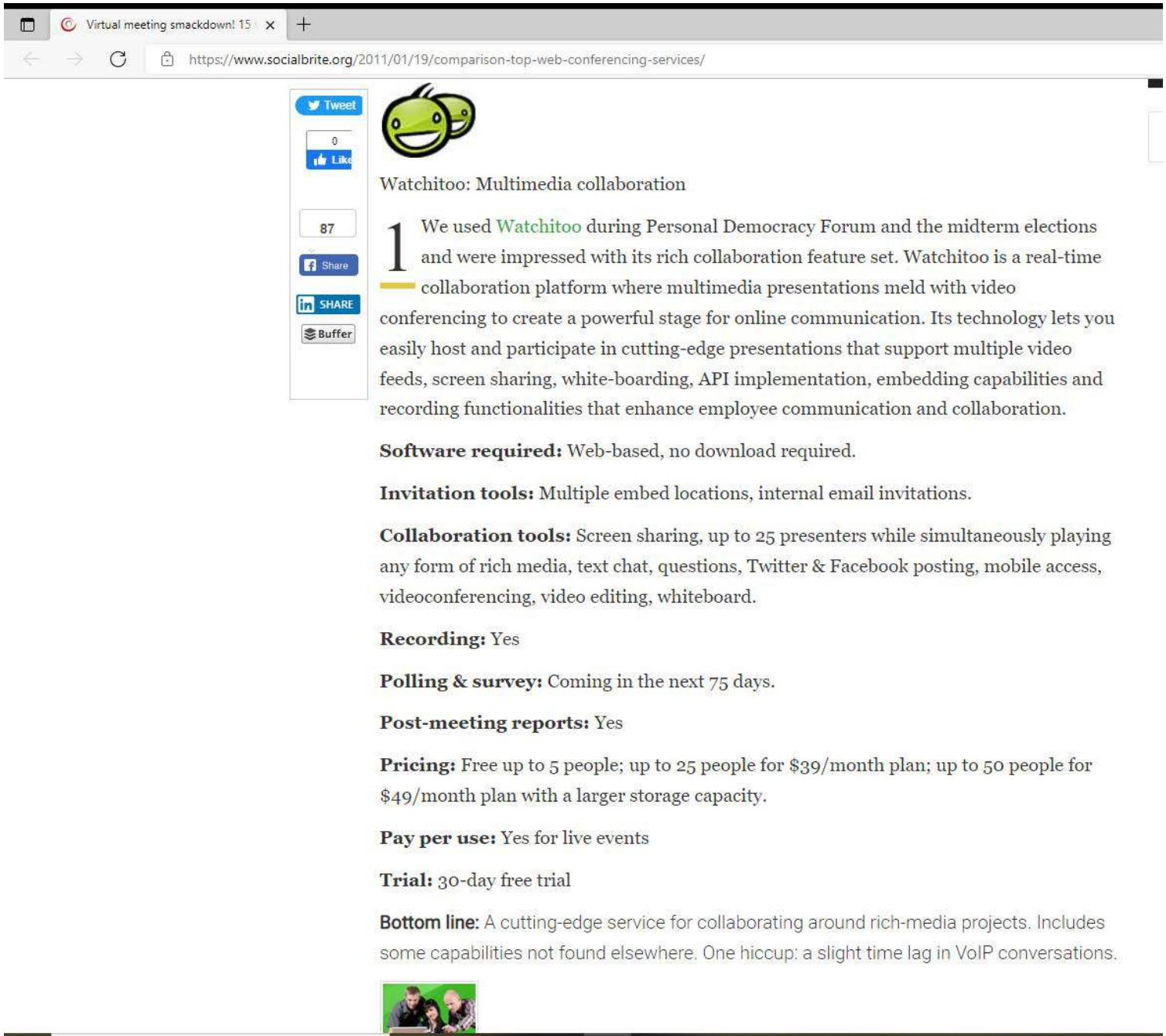
Buy Jamboard | Launch Jamboard app

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

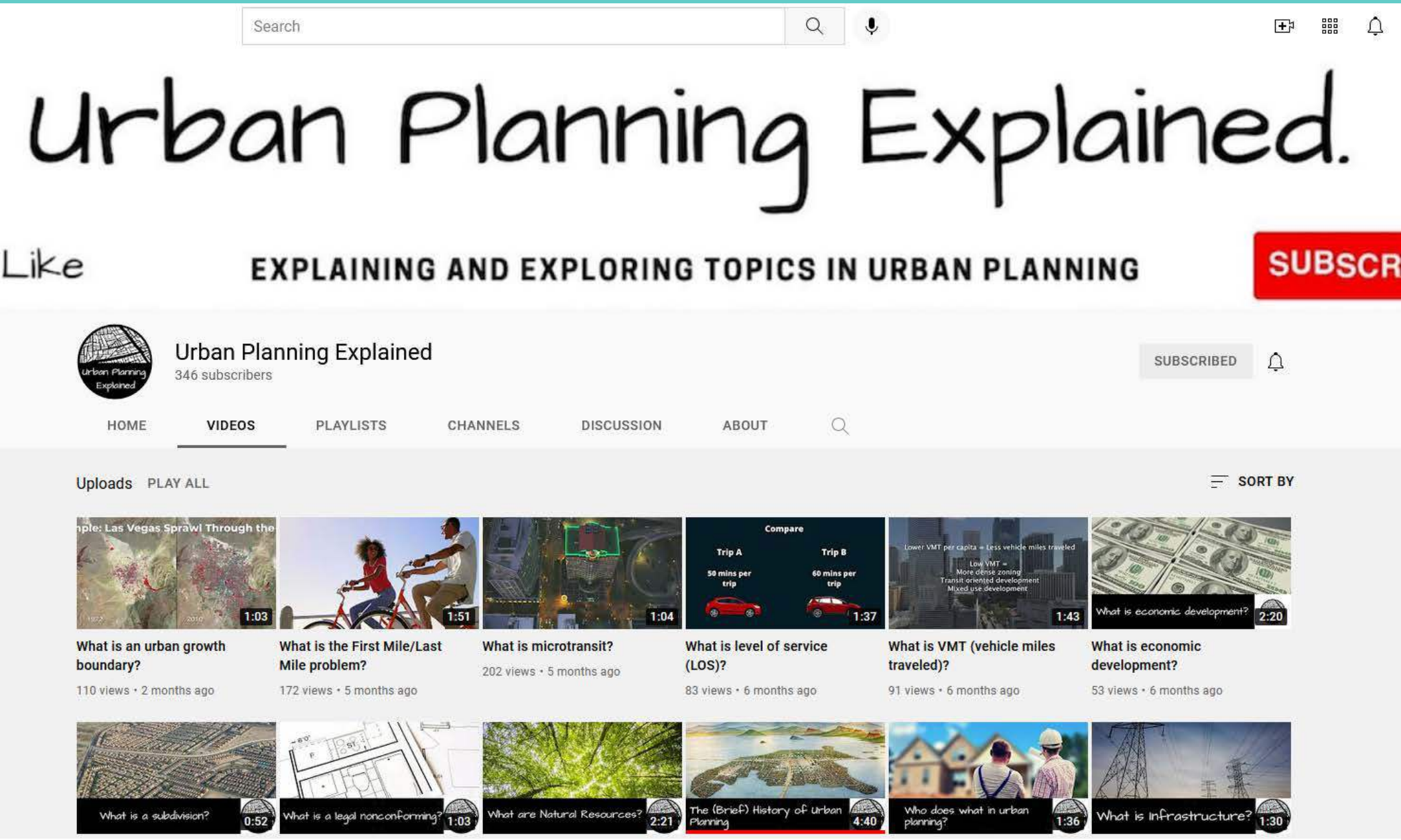
Jamboard unlocks your team's creative potential with real-time co-authoring. Experience unhindered productivity, whether your team is in the same room

Hi there 👋 What brings you to Google Workspace today?

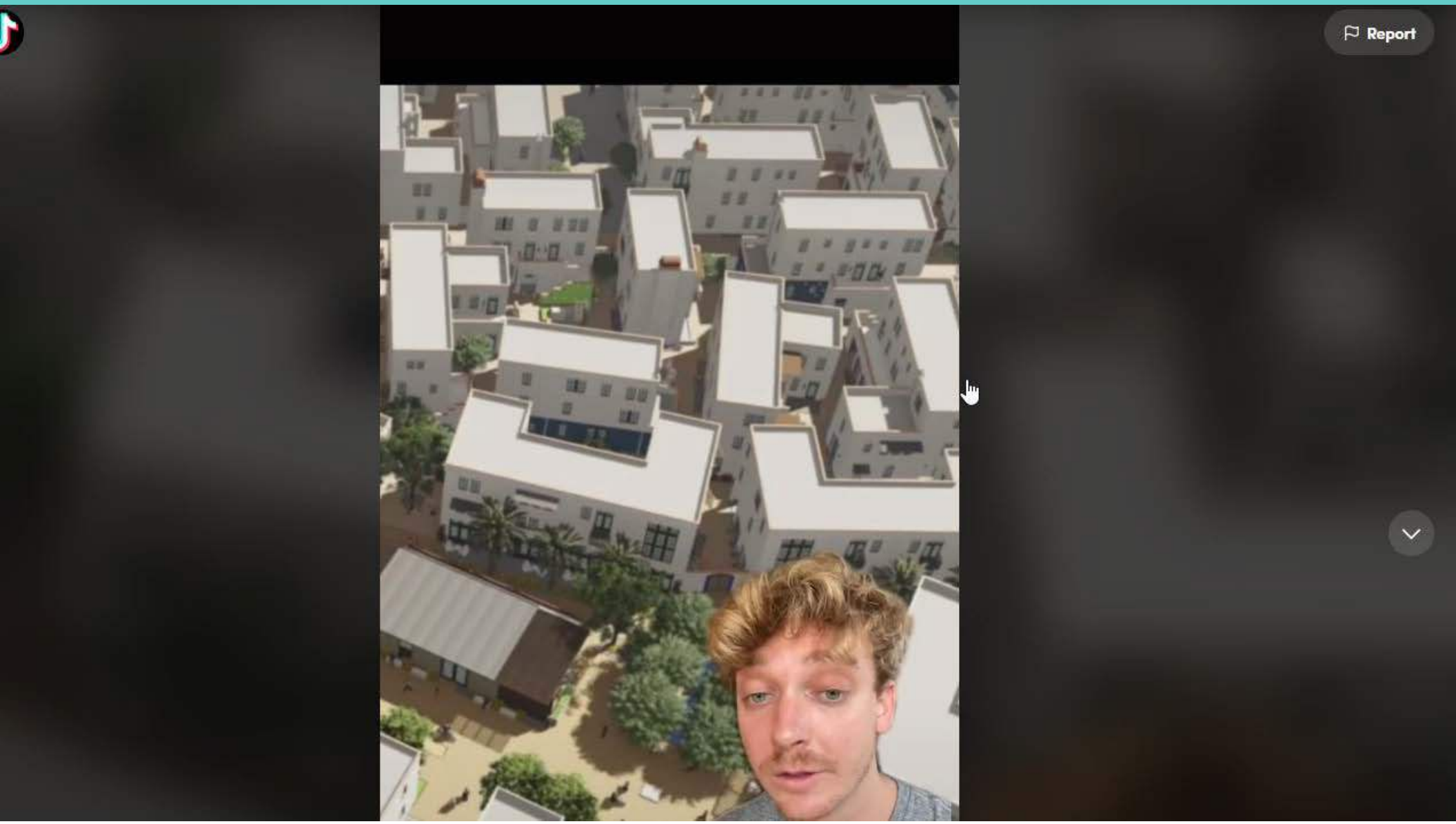
Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement: https://www.socialbrite.org/2011/01/19/comparison-top-web-conferencing-services



Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement



Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement: TikTok; @liveculdesac



Experiences Using Technologies for Engagement

NOAA Tip Sheets for Engagement: https://coast.noaa.gov/digitalcoast/training/virtual-meetings.html

Tips and Tricks for Planning a Virtual Meeting

MEETING ENGAGEMENT TOOL

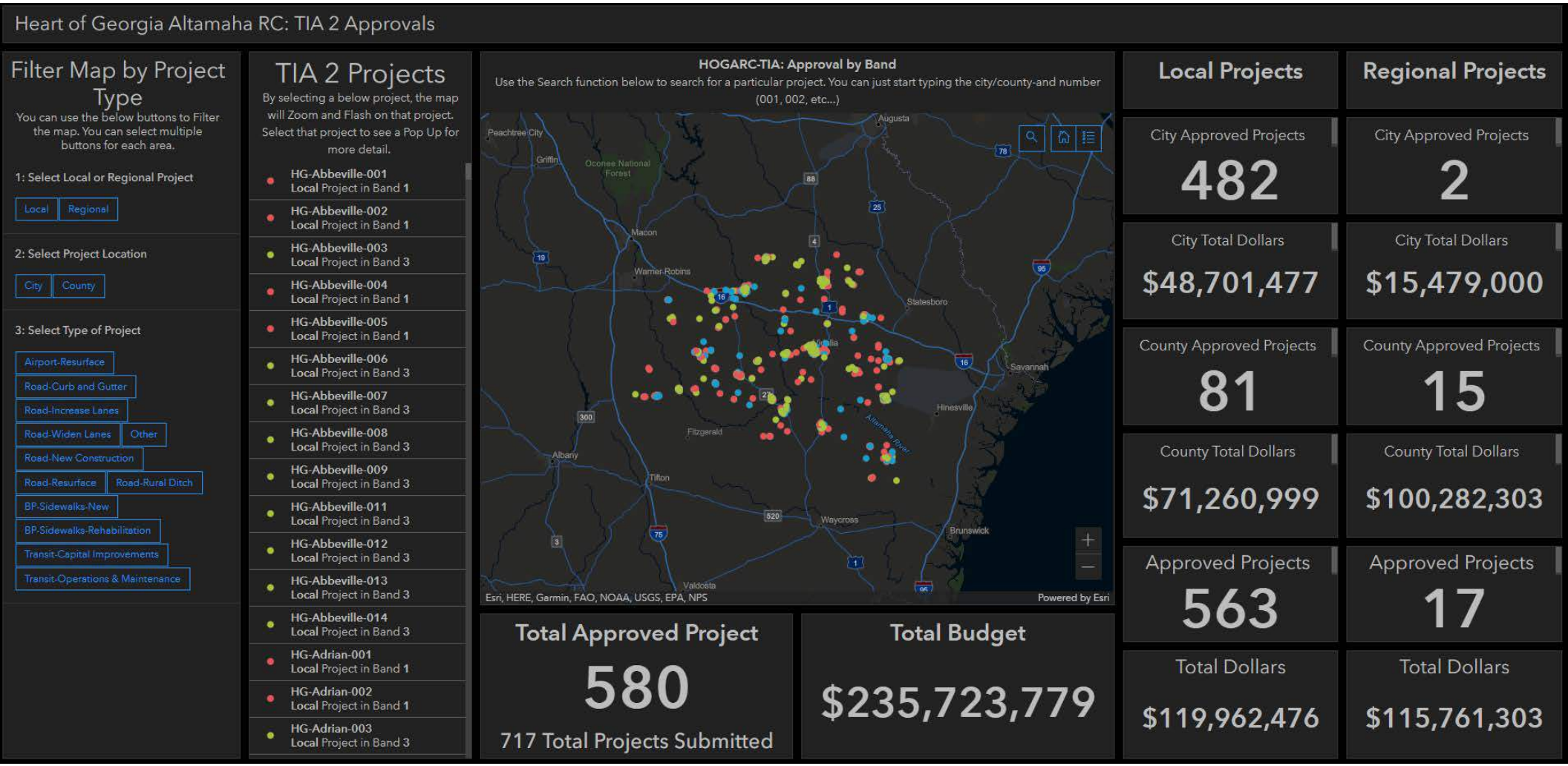
When planning a virtual meeting, the foundations of good facilitation apply just as much—if not more so—in a virtual environment. Rely on being a neutral facilitator, establishing clear goals and objectives, and picking the right tools to meet your objectives. Make sure the technology supports your meeting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

Have an assistant	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.
Plan for timing	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

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

SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

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 (GDEcD) & 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 requir

* 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

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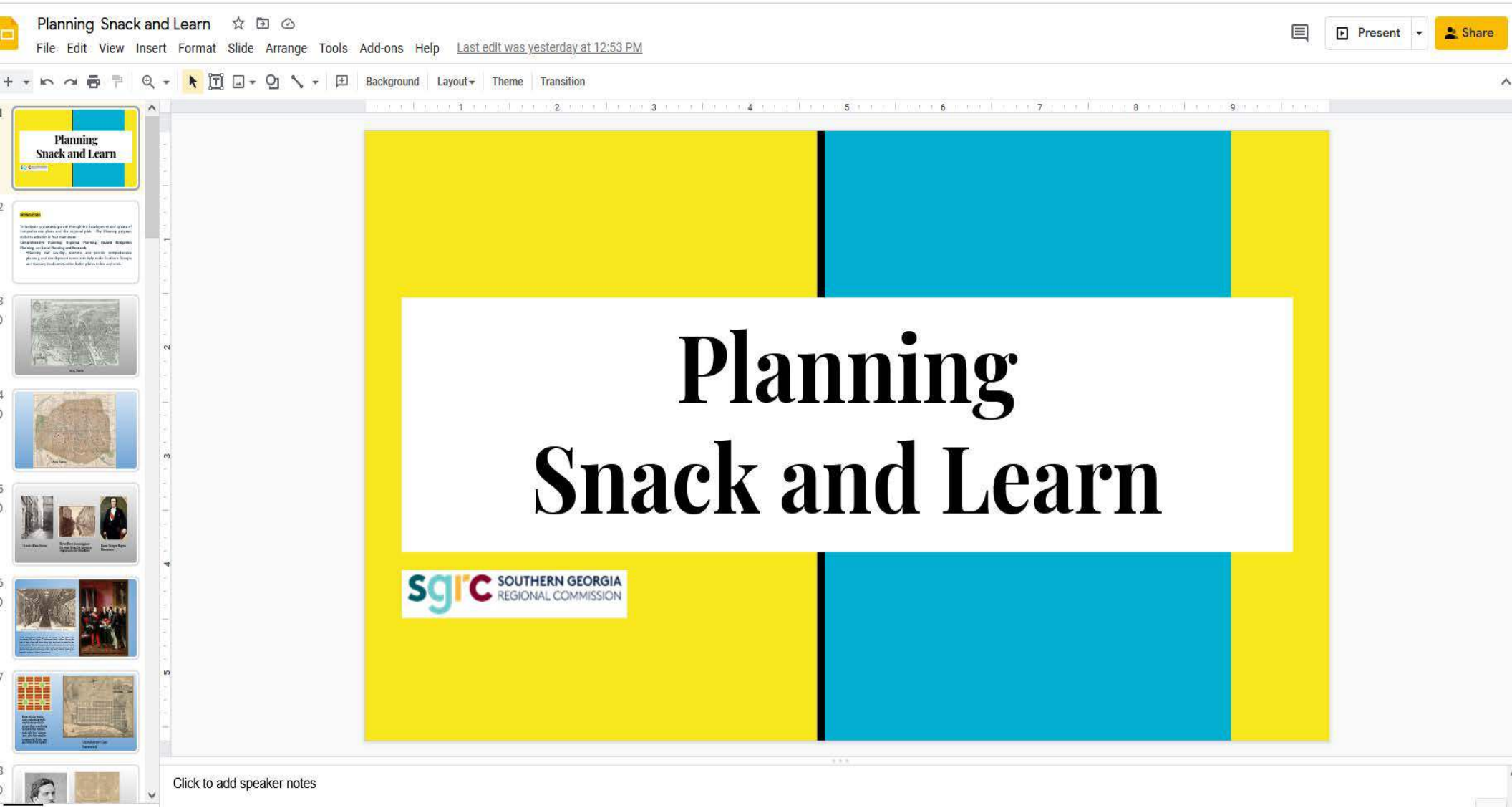

PlanFirst and Main Street Correlation to Successful Plan Implementation and CDBG Applications

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 Community
A Program of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs

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
https://dca.ga.gov/local-government-assistance/planning/local-planning/planfirst

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?

Contact Information

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