

REGIONAL PLAN FOR RURAL AND COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Final Report
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Presented By:



Georgia
Department of
Transportation

Prepared By:



STUDY PURPOSE

Develop a plan for a coordinated, regional transportation system for the Coastal Georgia Region, serving both the general public and human service agency client transportation.

VISION

- A regional transportation system serving all **ten counties** without regard to jurisdictional boundaries,
- Providing service to the general public for any trip purpose,
- Serving human service client transportation needs for eligible trip purposes,
- Presented to the public as their regional public transportation system,
- With a simple, easily accessible means of making transportation arrangements.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Regional system to provide regional trips,
- Combine Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Department of Human Resources (DHR), and county funding to offer general public service,
- Present the system as general public service,
- Increase efficiency,
- Improve service quality,
- Improve and expand the vehicle fleet,
- Support emergency preparedness for potential assistance in evacuation or meeting other emergencies,
- Expand coordination with Department of Labor (DOL) and Department of Community Health (DCH) transportation programs in the region.

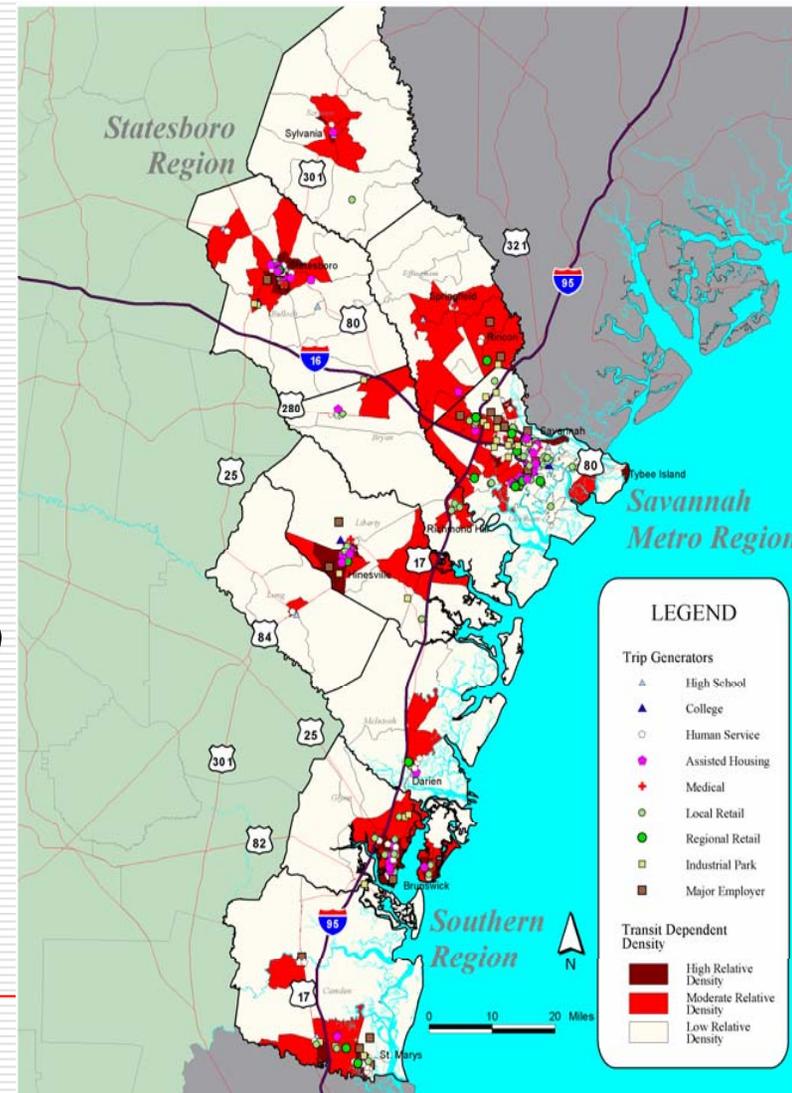
IS IT NEEDED?

- Used 2000 Census data to rank every Block Group in the Coastal Georgia Regional Development Center (CGRDC) region in terms of the number and percentage of persons with these characteristics:
 - Elderly
 - Low-income (persons in poverty)
 - Youth
 - Mobility limitation
 - Living in autoless households

- Significant need identified in the Non-Urban areas of the region:
 - 6,001 autoless households – 5.3%
 - 36,350 persons over 60 – 12.5%
 - 39,231 persons living in poverty – 13.5%
 - 16,472 persons with a mobility limitation – 5.7%

WHERE ARE THE HIGHEST CONCENTRATIONS OF TRANSIT-DEPENDENT PERSONS?

- **Clustered around the Cities of:**
- o Brunswick
 - o St. Marys – Kingsland
 - o Statesboro
 - o Richmond Hill
 - o Hinesville
 - o Rincon
 - o Springfield
- (excludes urbanized area of Savannah)*

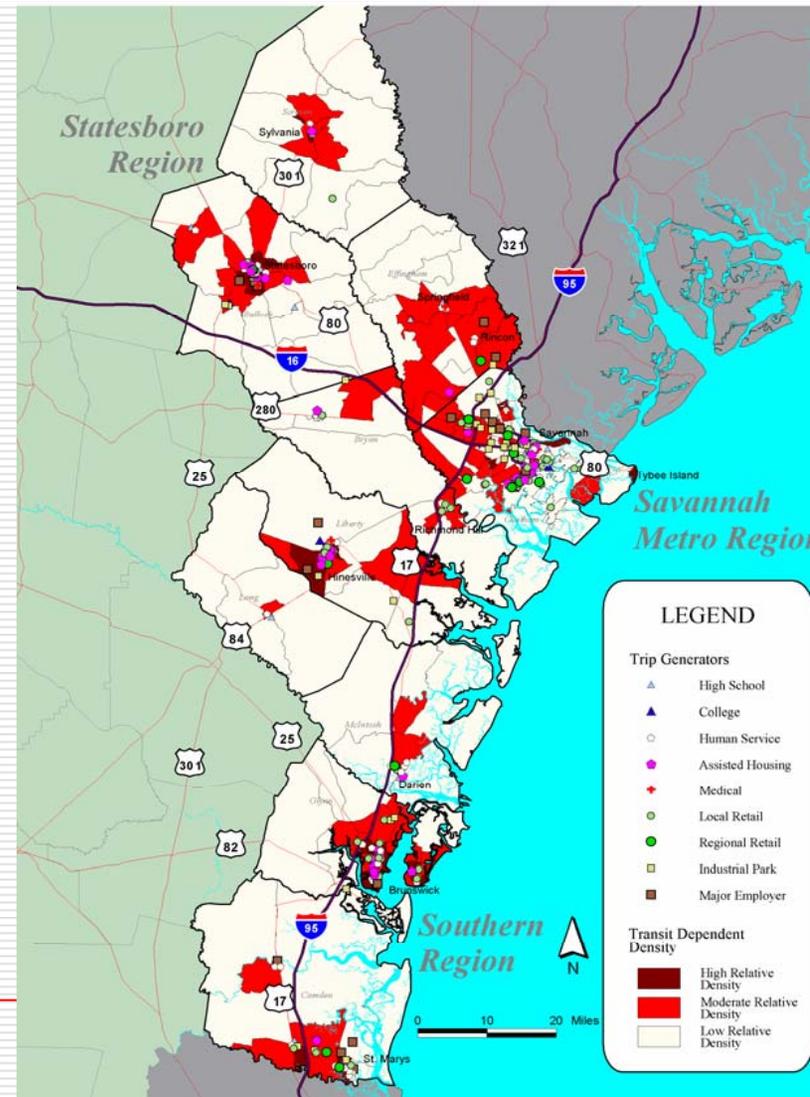


WHERE IS THE GREATEST NEED FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION?

➤ Based on the percentage of the populations with high needs characteristics, the greatest need is in rural regions of:

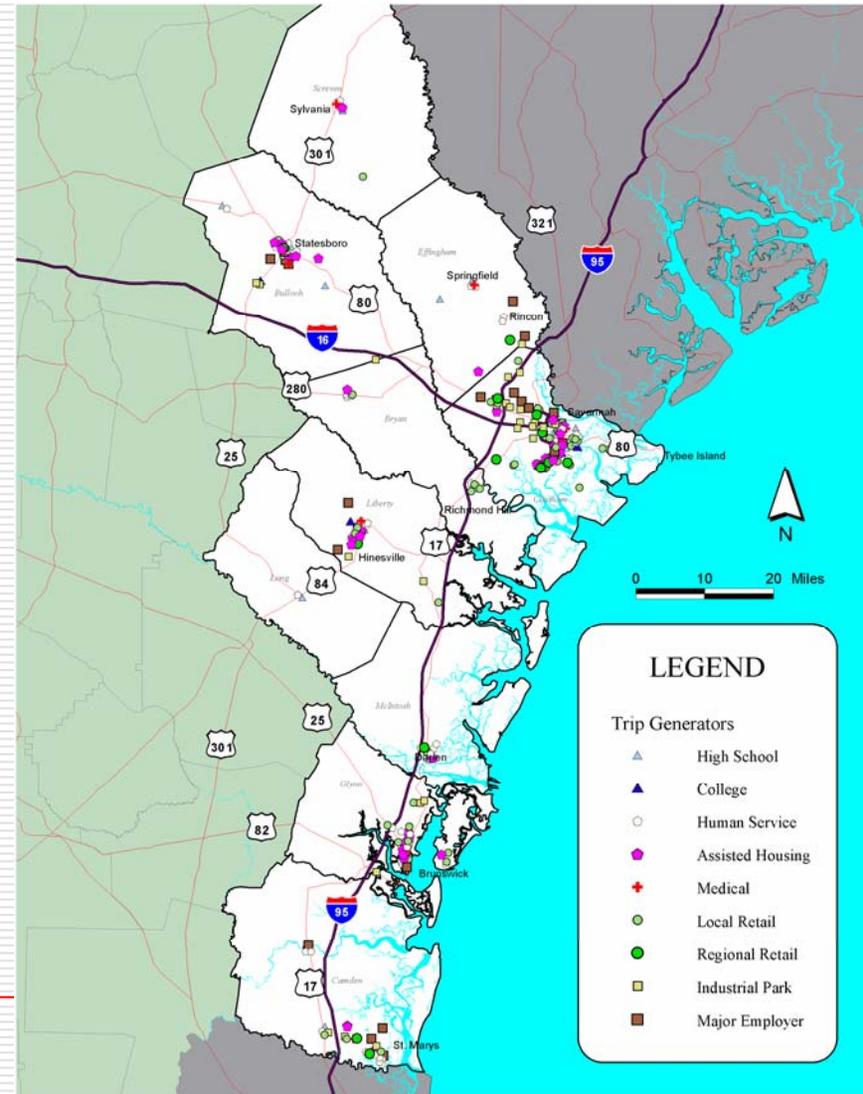
- o Camden
- o Bulloch
- o Effingham
- o Glynn
- o McIntosh
- o Screven

(excludes urbanized area of Savannah)



REGIONAL TRIP GENERATORS: POTENTIAL DESTINATIONS

- **Employment**
 - Major Employers
 - Industrial Parks
- **Shopping**
 - Regional Retail (Malls, Wal-Mart, etc.)
 - Community Retail (grocery stores)
- **Medical**
 - Medical Facilities (such as Hospitals, Health Departments, Doctor's Offices, Pharmacies,
 - Military, Medical Offices, etc.)
- **Public Service**
 - Human Service Agencies (such as senior centers, Department of Family and Children Service's (DFACS) offices, etc.)
 - Assisted Housing
- **Education**
 - Colleges and Universities
 - Vocational Technical Schools
 - High Schools



POTENTIAL DESTINATIONS

- Key finding: potential destinations are dispersed throughout the region.
- Many trips require travel to another county or city for work or essential services.
- Medical services are concentrated in a limited number of places.

NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE AGENCY/PROVIDER SURVEY

➤ **Service Needs:**

- o More service
- o Serve the unserved areas/populations
- o Service to other jurisdictions
- o Rural public service
- o Expanded eligibility (or public service)
- o Longer hours
- o More dependable/reliable transportation
- o Lower cost for riders

NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE AGENCY/PROVIDER SURVEY (continued)

- **Destinations needing service:**
 - Medical appointments
 - Shopping
 - Employment
- **Vehicle issues:**
 - More Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible vehicles needed
 - New/more vehicles needed
 - Better maintenance/more dependable vehicles
- **Staff:**
 - More drivers/administrative help
 - Better communication
 - Increased sensitivity
- **Funding:**
 - More needed for more operations, vehicles, and staff
 - Marketing

NEEDS IDENTIFIED – GENERAL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

- Who would benefit from improved or expanded regional transportation?
 - o Elderly
 - o Low-income
 - o Disabled persons
 - o Employees
 - o Persons with no vehicle available
 - o Persons making medical trips
 - o Students
 - o General public
 - o Military retirees

NEEDS/CONCERNS AS IDENTIFIED IN TEN COUNTY STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

- Additional service -- more vehicles, more drivers, expanded hours
- Expanded DHR service contingent upon additional DHR funding
- Service open to the general public
- Employment trips
- New vehicles
- Accessible vehicles and information/access for persons with disabilities
- Public image of a public transit system that is open to all
- Easy to make trip arrangements
- Local economic benefits are important

KEY PROGRAMS PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION

- **Department of Human Resources:**
 - Coordinated Transportation Program
 - Individual Agency Programs
 - Aging
 - DFACS
 - Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases (MHDDAD) through Community Service Boards
- **Department of Transportation:**
 - Section 5311 Program for Rural Areas (under 50,000)
 - Section 5307 Program for Small Urban areas (50,000-200,000)
- **Department of Community Health:**
 - Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation (NET)
- **Department of Labor**

EXISTING RESOURCES: VEHICLES

- **DHR Fleet in Region**
 - Coordinated System: 37
 - Outside the Coordinated System:
 - MHDDAD - 192
 - Aging - 7
 - Public Health – 2
- **GDOT Fleet in Region**
 - Bryan County – 6
 - Long County – 5
 - Camden – 3
- **Scriven County**
 - Ten Vehicles in DHR service
- **DCH**
 - 8 Contractors
 - Number of vehicles unknown

KEY ISSUES

- Poor condition of the majority of the DHR fleet
- Not enough vehicles to meet the demand
- Ability to use GDOT S.5311 funding depends on the creation of rural general public systems, which depends on County participation for local operating match — for general public trips only
- GDOT and DHR agreement on coordination of funding/service
- Potential for increased coordination with DCH and DOL transportation programs

PROPOSED REGIONAL SYSTEM

- **Single regional system**
- **Centralized trip scheduling:**
- **Distinctive regional name,**
- **Coordinated joint funding:**
- **Possibility of providing services under contract to DCH and DOL**

CAPITAL PLAN: VEHICLES AND OTHER EQUIPMENT

- **Five-year, phase-in vehicle plan** that would:
 - o Replace fully depreciated, life-expired vehicles now used by the coordinated system with new vans, sedans, lift-equipped vans, and small buses.
 - o Replacement is near-term, focus in first year would replace vehicles that have (or will have) over 200,000 miles or are non-operable.
 - o Provide enough vehicle expansion capacity to address the unmet “low demand” identified with the demand model.
 - o Through the replacement/expansion cycle integrate the fleets now owned by individual counties and DHR contractors into a single fleet owned by the regional transit system.
 - o Most new vans and shuttle buses will be lift-equipped – only sedans and non-accessible vehicles already in Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) plans are not fully accessible.
 - o Most vehicles will have greater seating capacity than the vehicles they replace.

- **Add Technology** for Communications, Scheduling and Dispatching, and Management (Intelligent Transportation Systems or ITS):
 - o Mobile Radios
 - o Base Stations
 - o Mobile Digital Terminals (MDTs), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and Smart Card Readers
 - o Paratransit Management and Scheduling Software/Computers



CAPITAL PLAN: FUNDING SOURCES

- Eighty percent of capital costs for replacement and expansion vehicles, and ITS equipment will be FTA S. 5311 (in the rural areas).
- Ten percent of capital costs are funded by the GDOT (under current rules—there is a proposal to increase this to 15%).
- The remaining local share of ten percent will be funded by the CGRDC out of DHR Transportation Reserve Funds. Normally this is provided by county governments.

CAPITAL PLAN: VEHICLE OWNERSHIP TRANSITION

Total Vehicles in Regional Fleet at End of Year

Program Year	1	2	3	4	5
Coordinated Program Fleet	25	17	7	5	0
Regional S. 5311 Fleet	24	45	66	76	89
Local S. 5311(Bryan, Camden, Long)	13	11	8	4	0
Screven County	6	2	0	0	0
Total Fleet	68	75	81	85	89

CAPITAL PLAN: FUNDING BY YEAR

Funding	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
80% Federal Share	\$1,242,400	\$884,160	\$784,160	\$347,840	\$463,440
10% State Share	\$155,300	\$110,520	\$98,020	\$43,480	\$57,930
10% CGRDC (DHR Transportation Reserve Funds*)	\$155,300	\$110,520	\$98,020	\$43,480	\$57,930
TOTAL	\$1,553,000	\$1,105,200	\$980,200	\$434,800	\$579,300

*CGRDC is providing its DHR Transportation reserve funds in place of the normally-required county match.

OPERATING BUDGET: KEY ISSUES

- DHR funding is treated as “revenue” in the overall budget.
- GDOT requires 10 percent “farebox”—user fees and local funds—subtracted from the total annual budgeted operating expense.
- After “farebox” and DHR dollars are included, remaining costs are the “net deficit”.
- GDOT can fund 50 percent of the “net deficit” with federal dollars.
- Remaining “net deficit” must be local (county) dollars, unless another source is found – such as potential supplemental funding from the state.

OPERATING BUDGET: ASSUMPTIONS

- Operating funding is assumed to be primarily DHR funding, through the CGRDC.
- DHR funds are used to purchase service (Purchase of Service (POS)).
- DHR POS funds are to be used as revenue to draw down GDOT FTA S. 5311 operating funds to pay for general public trips.
- Local match for GDOT S. 5311 Rural Operating Funding will have to come from the counties (unless the State provides supplemental funding to offset the required 50% local operating match).

OPERATING BUDGET: ASSUMPTIONS (continued)

- Operating budget estimates for Glynn and Liberty Counties address the rural portions of the county—they do not include either demand or costs for service in the Urbanized Areas.
- Operating budget estimates for Chatham County are for the rural portion—CAT serves the Urbanized Area.

COST ALLOCATION

Allocation of the S.5311 local share is based on each county's percentage of the regional non-urban population.

	Non-urban Population
Bryan	8.1%
Bulloch	19.0%
Camden	15.0%
Chatham	18.6%
Effingham	12.9%
Glynn	5.3%
Liberty	8.5%
Long	3.5%
McIntosh	3.7%
Screven	5.3%
	100.0%

TOTAL OPERATING BUDGET: PROJECTED FUNDING REQUIREMENTS BY YEAR

	Number of Vehicles (1)	Annual Cost/Vehicle (2)	Operating Cost	Farebox at 10%	DHR POS at 80%	Net Deficit	GDOT Share	County Share
2005	61	\$28,000	\$1,708,000	\$170,800	\$1,229,760	\$307,440	\$153,720	\$153,720
Year 1:	68	\$29,400	\$1,999,200	\$199,920	\$1,439,424	\$359,856	\$179,928	\$179,928
Year 2:	75	\$30,870	\$2,315,250	\$231,525	\$1,666,980	\$416,745	\$208,373	\$208,373
Year 3:	81	\$32,414	\$2,625,494	\$262,549	\$1,890,355	\$472,589	\$236,294	\$236,294
Year 4:	85	\$34,034	\$2,892,905	\$289,290	\$2,082,892	\$520,723	\$260,361	\$260,361
Year 5:	89	\$35,736	\$3,180,494	\$318,049	\$2,289,955	\$572,489	\$286,244	\$286,244
	89	\$37,523	\$3,339,518	\$333,952	\$2,404,453	\$601,113	\$300,557	\$300,557

Assumes:

- 1) Listed increase in fleet size/service.
- 2) 5 percent per year increase in cost of vehicle operation.

MARKETING

- System will have its own distinctive paint scheme, logo and markings—not like an agency vehicle, for example:



- Central information and reservation number for the region—for the public.
- Marketing plan to disseminate information to front-line service providers, the general public, and target groups (seniors, persons with disabilities, youth, etc.).

ORGANIZATION

- Initially the regional system will be administered and managed by CGRDC.
- A transportation advisory subcommittee of the CGRDC member counties will be created to provide input on regional needs and issues, reflecting the County role in providing local operating funding.
- CGRDC will be the applicant to the GDOT for funds.
- Contract operations will continue with periodic rebidding of operations.
- Integration of existing S. 5311 programs is anticipated—local match for new vehicles is shown in the regional system capital plan.
- Efforts to consolidate contract operations into fewer or a single contract will be made to support regional operation, and to maximize operational cost effectiveness.

A WIN-WIN PROPOSITION

- **The general public benefits:**
 - Demand-responsive transportation open to anyone would be available throughout the region, without limitation as to trip purpose
 - A single consolidated fleet is available for public emergencies
- **DHR and its clients would benefit:**
 - New, reliable, accessible vehicles
 - Lower unit costs to DHR (due to new publicly-funded vehicles) allow more trips for a given amount
 - Improved scheduling systems would further improve efficiency and service
 - Regional trips are facilitated
- **Foundation for the future:** The regional system provides a basis for future service development of commuter ride-sharing services, fixed-route services in other towns in the region such as Brunswick, Hinesville, Statesboro, regional ride-sharing, and the CAT system in Savannah.

POTENTIAL FOR COORDINATION WITH DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL TRANSIT

- Proposed plan is for a rural and coordinated transportation system
- Transit feasibility studies have been performed for:
 - o Hinesville Urbanized Area
 - o Brunswick Urbanized Area
- Transit systems in those areas could be funded with GDOT/FTA S. 5307 funds and local dollars.
- In Bulloch County the population threshold for S. 5307 has not been reached, but the population, density, and existence of the university bus system suggest a potential for a local fixed-route system—planning and feasibility work is needed.
- The proposed regional system could connect with these local systems, serving the outlying parts of the counties, or they could even be managed as part of the regional system—if local funding can be found for match.

POTENTIAL FOR COORDINATION WITH REGIONAL SYSTEM

- Rural components of either the Brunswick or the Hinesville plans are assumed to be part of the regional system, funded with S. 5311 and DHR POS.
- Potential for connecting service at transfer points, rural services to feed the urban ones.



- Potential for CGRDC to provide management for either system (or both) as an integrated part of the regional system, depending on local desires and willingness to provide the needed capital and operating match for S. 5307 funding.

ADDITIONAL PLANNING IS NEEDED

- Technical Assistance in Implementing the Regional Plan-United We Ride Grant - \$75,000 Approved
- Phase II: Regional Transportation Needs for the Work Trip: Ridesharing (Vanpooling/Carpooling)
- Local area Transit Plan for Bulloch County and the Statesboro area addressing the potential for combining campus and town transit in a single fixed-route system

WHY IMPLEMENT THIS PLAN?

- **It combines different funding sources** to make basic mobility feasible throughout the region for the general public as well as agency clients – any of these programs alone meets only a part of the need, leaving gaps in mobility due to eligibility restrictions or funding limitations.
- **It meets much more of the need** that many in our communities have for basic, necessary transportation for medical services, for training and education, for social services, for employment, for basic shopping, for personal business, and for family and friends.
- **It utilizes a regional mechanism** to administer and implement these services, spreading these costs over the entire region rather than relying on each county and agency to meet all the administrative, reporting, and operational requirements associated with these programs.
- **It reflects the changing travel patterns of the region**, in that the services will be regional, not limited to services within one county or town.
- **It will greatly improve the safety, quality, and visibility of transportation services** through new vehicles, improved scheduling, improved communications, more training, operational improvements, and better information and marketing.
- **It will greatly increase the accessibility of transportation for persons with disabilities** through a major increase in the number of lift-equipped vehicles.
- **It will provide a resource for the entire community to assist in dealing with emergencies**, particularly when the need is for evacuation.
- **It provides a foundation** for future development of improved transportation in the region.

Questions



Steven J. Kish
Transit Program Manager
(404) 651.9210
steve.kish@dot.state.ga.us