

Regional Transit Development Plan

Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission

Existing Conditions Report

July 2024



CSRA-RC
CENTRAL SAVANNAH RIVER AREA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

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List of Acronyms

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic	LIHTC	Low-Income Housing Tax Credit
ACS	American Community Survey	LODES	LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	L RTP	Long-Range Transportation Plan
APTA	American Public Transportation Association	METRA	Columbus Metropolitan (METRA) Transit System
ARTS MPO	Augusta Regional Transportation Study Metropolitan Planning Organization	MHI	Median Household Income
ATS	Albany Transit System	MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
BLS	United States Bureau of Labor Statistics	MTA	Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy	MTP	Metropolitan Transportation Plan
CSRA	Central Savannah River Area	NEMT	Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
CSRA-RC	Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission	NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity
DAC	Disadvantaged Community	NS	Norfolk Southern
DCA	Georgia Department of Community Affairs	NTD	National Transit Database
DCH	Georgia Department of Community Health	RHST	Rural and Human Services Transportation System
DHS	Georgia Department of Human Services	RITIS	Regional Integrated Transportation Information System
DRI	Development of Regional Impact	RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
EJ	Environmental Justice	SGR	State of Good Repair
ETC	Equitable Transportation Community	SR	State Route
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration	SSTP	Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan
FTA	Federal Transit Administration	SWTP	Statewide Transportation Plan
GDOL	Georgia Department of Labor	SWTRP	Statewide Transit Plan
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation	TADA	Traffic Analysis and Data Application
HUD	United States Department of Housing and Urban Development	TAM	Transit Asset Management
I	Interstate	TDP	Transit Development Plan
IIJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act	TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act	ULB	Useful Life Benchmark
ITS	Intelligent Transportation Systems	US	United States Highway
LEHD	Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics	USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
LEP	Limited English Proficiency	USDOT	United States Department of Transportation
		UZA	Urbanized Area

1.0 Introduction

In 2020, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) published the Statewide Transit Plan (SWTRP), which recommended strategies to address rural and regional transit needs across the state. In addition to stressing the need for regionalized transit service in Georgia, the plan also called for a two-pronged strategy to assist the preparation of transit development plans (TDPs) across the state.

The TDP Guidebook, published in 2021, equips regional commissions, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), rural transit providers, and small urban transit providers with the methodologies, resources, and data necessary to draft a TDP.

GDOT is currently implementing the second part of this strategy through the development of several Regional TDPs. With the support of the Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission (CSRA-RC), GDOT is preparing a Regional TDP for the Central Savannah River Area (CSRA).

The following SWTRP strategies directly inform this plan:

- **10.1.1.1** - Develop Transit Development Plan Guidance and Regional TDPs
- **10.2.3.1** - Regionalize Transit Service

1.1 Purpose and Methodology

A Regional TDP identifies transit needs and opportunities and informs future transit system investments. The TDP process assists communities in developing a transit vision and evaluating transit alternatives that move communities closer to these goals. TDPs typically have a 20-year horizon and are intended to be updated on a five-year renewal cycle. Though they have a 20-year horizon, TDPs should identify achievable transit projects that can be implemented within five years.

The first part of the Regional TDP, the Existing Conditions Report, compiles current information from a variety of sources, including existing plans and studies and the latest data from agencies like the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL), the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), and the U.S. Census Bureau. This report documents demographic and employment trends, travel patterns, transportation options, and land use and development patterns within the CSRA region.

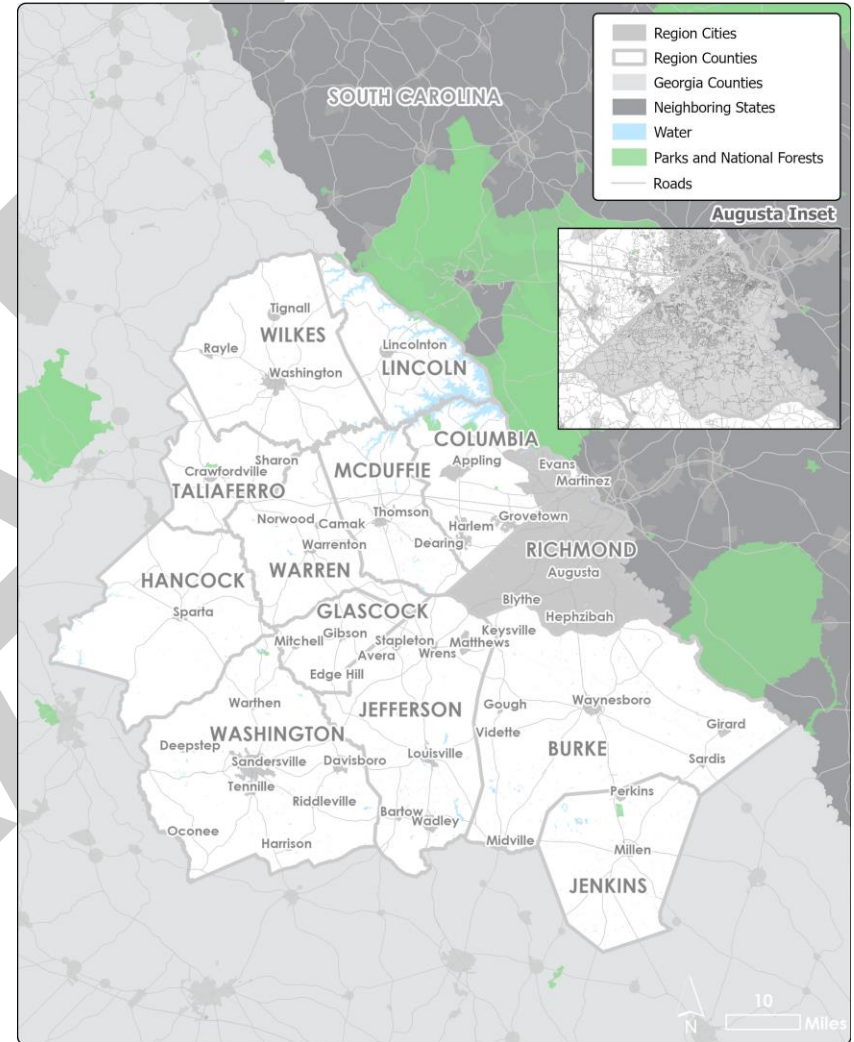
This report also includes a performance review of the region's current transit providers, their funding situation, and a comparison of the CSRA transit providers to other peer transit systems in the state.

1.2 Overview of the CSRA Region

The CSRA-RC consists of 13 counties and is bordered by South Carolina to the east. This region includes the following counties: Burke, Columbia, Glascock, Hancock, Jefferson, Jenkins, Lincoln, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, Washington, Warren, and Wilkes. The largest municipality in the area is the City of Augusta. Augusta’s metropolitan statistical area comprises Burke, McDuffie, Columbia, Lincoln, and Richmond Counties in Georgia, and Aiken and Edgefield Counties in South Carolina. Major economic drivers and population centers are the Fort Eisenhower military installation in Richmond County, the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University in Richmond County, Plant Vogtle in Burke County, and the Savannah River Site Energy Facility in Aiken, South Carolina.

The region is mostly rural with flat terrain and rolling hills. Other major physical features include the Savannah River bordering the region on the east and the Clarks Hill Lake and Dam in Lincoln and Columbia Counties. Additionally, the region has many dirt roads that have yet to be paved and major congestion due to Fort Eisenhower, creating transportation obstacles for residents in the region.

Figure 1: Central Savannah River Area Region



Source: CSRA-RC

2.0 Demographic Trends

Demographic trends show growth patterns within the CSRA region. This section depicts historical, current, and future population trends for the region and provides a breakdown of demographic characteristics across the region.

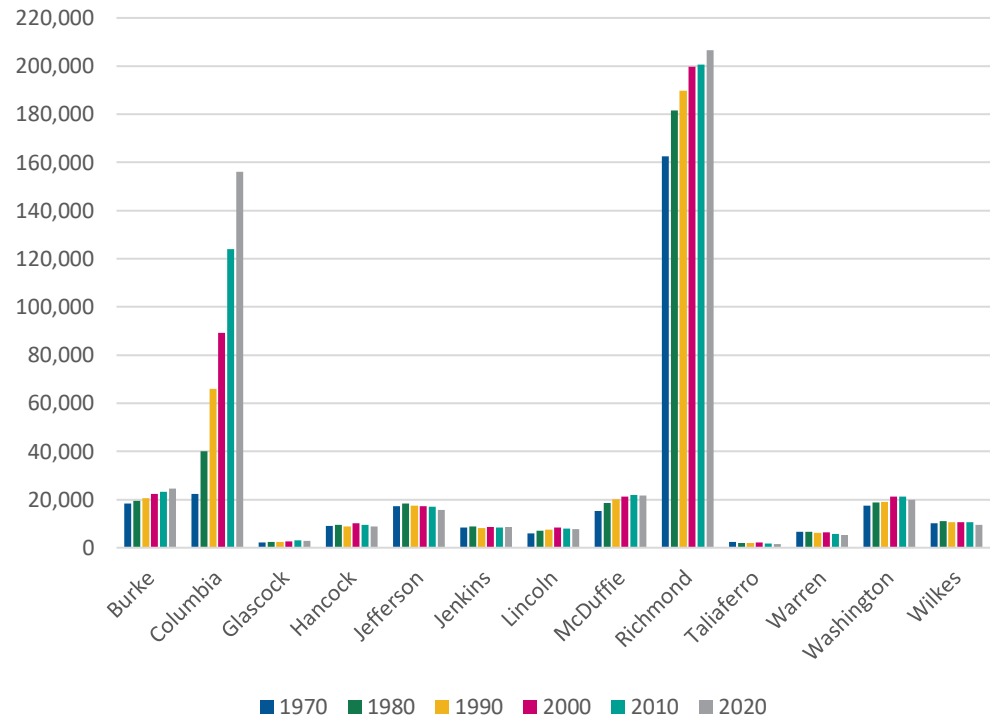
Disclaimer: This report uses U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year data to analyze various population trends and demographic characteristics. The 5-year estimates are "period" estimates that represent data collected over a period of time. These datasets use different collection methods and methodologies to provide more demographic detail than the Decennial Census. There may be variations in figures such as total population across ACS datasets.

2.1 Historical Population

The CSRA region's population has grown over the last five decades, though at a declining rate behind statewide trends. Since 1970, the region has grown 64.2 percent, less than half of the state's 133.4 percent growth during the same period.

Table 1 shows historical population counts and rates of change for the region and state. The region saw the most growth in the 1970s (15.6 percent). Historical population trends for all counties in the region are shown in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2: Historical Population by County



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Population Change Data (1910-2020)

Table 1: Historical Population and Population Change

Geography	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	1970-1980	1980-1990	1990-2000	2000-2010	2010-2020
CSRA	297,751	344,091	378,512	419,634	454,901	488,864	15.6%	10.0%	10.9%	8.4%	7.5%
Georgia	4,589,575	5,463,105	6,478,216	8,186,453	9,687,653	10,711,908	19.0%	18.6%	26.4%	18.3%	10.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Historical Population Change Data (1910-2020)

2.2 Demographic Trends within the Past Decade

In the last decade, the CSRA region experienced consistent population growth. Between 2011 and 2016, the region's population increased by 4 percent, followed by 4.4 percent growth from 2016 to 2022. The most significant growth from 2011 to 2022 occurred in the extended Augusta metro area in Columbia (29.3 percent) and Burke (4.9 percent) Counties. Other counties, such as Jenkins (4.6 percent) and Richmond (3.5 percent) also saw modest increases. The other nine counties experienced declines in population, with the largest declines seen in Taliaferro, Warren, and Hancock Counties.

The CSRA region's population has become more diverse since 2011. The share of people of color (Hispanic or Latino, Black, Asian, and multi-racial residents) has steadily increased and reached 50.3 percent of the total population by 2016, making the region more diverse than the state (45.9 percent). Alongside this diversification, the CSRA residents are also getting older. Between 2011 and 2022, the median resident age has increased from 39 to 42 years old. The number of residents over 60 years old in the region reached 108,865 in 2022, showing a 40 percent increase compared to the numbers from 2011. Across the region, Taliaferro County has the highest 2021 median age at 47.2 years old.

Table 2: Population and Population Change from the Last Decade

Geography	2011	2016	2022	2011-2016	2016-2022
CSRA	450,614	468,498	489,055	4.0%	4.4%
Georgia	9,600,612	10,099,320	10,722,325	5.2%	6.2%

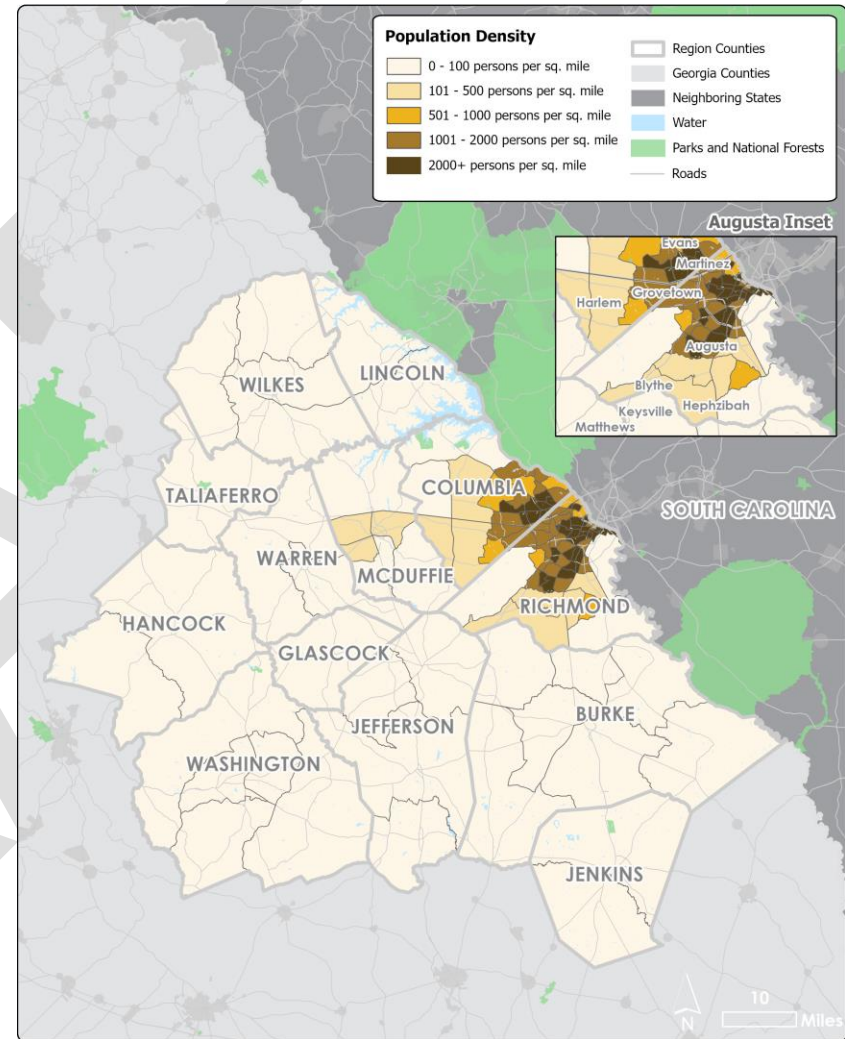
Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.3 Current Demographics

The CSRA region is currently home to an estimated 489,055 residents and has a land area of 5,142 square miles. The average population density for the region is 95.1 people per square mile. As presented in **Figure 3**, the highest areas of concentration are in the Augusta area and east Columbia County, where densities in some census tracts reach over 2,000 people per square mile.

Most of the region’s land area, however, is rural with low population densities.

Figure 3: Population Density by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.4 Transit Market Demographics

Selected demographics were chosen for analysis to find populations that could benefit from public transportation. These demographics are:

- Low-Income Population
- Elderly Population: Individuals Ages 60+
- Youth Individuals: Ages 15-19
- Zero-Car Households
- Populations with a Disability

Additional demographics, minority, and limited English proficiency populations will be discussed in **Section 2.5**.

2.4.1 Low Income

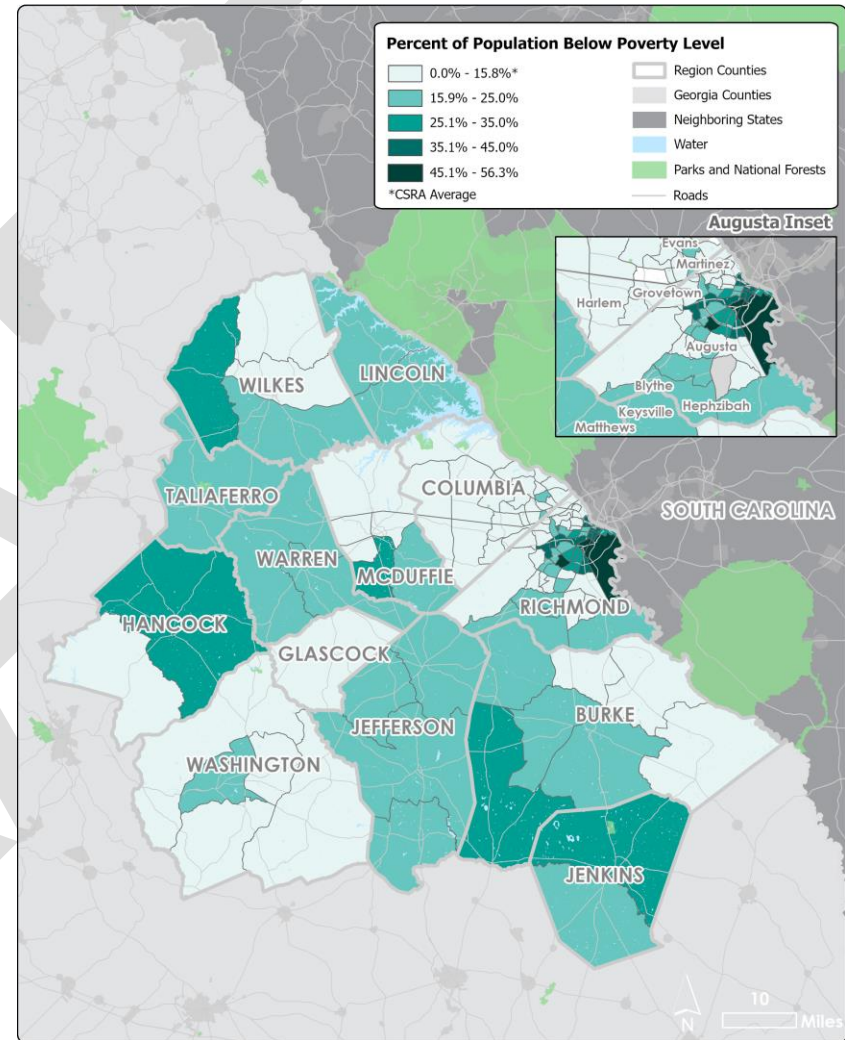
The median household income (MHI) in the CSRA region is \$50,321, which is 29.5 percent lower than the state MHI of \$71,355. Only Columbia County has an MHI above the state average at \$92,571. The lowest MHI is found in the region’s more rural areas, such as Jenkins County (\$31,463) and Hancock County (\$31,767). The CSRA region has a higher percentage of individuals classified as low income compared to the state as a whole (see **Table 3**). **Figure 4** shows the areas where low-income individuals are most concentrated.

Table 3: Low-Income Population

Geography	Total Population for Poverty	Number Below Poverty	Percent Below Poverty	Median Household Income
CSRA	472,068	74,488	15.8%	\$ 50,321
Georgia	10,462,430	1,415,573	13.5%	\$ 71,355

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 4: Low-Income Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.4.2 Elderly (60+)

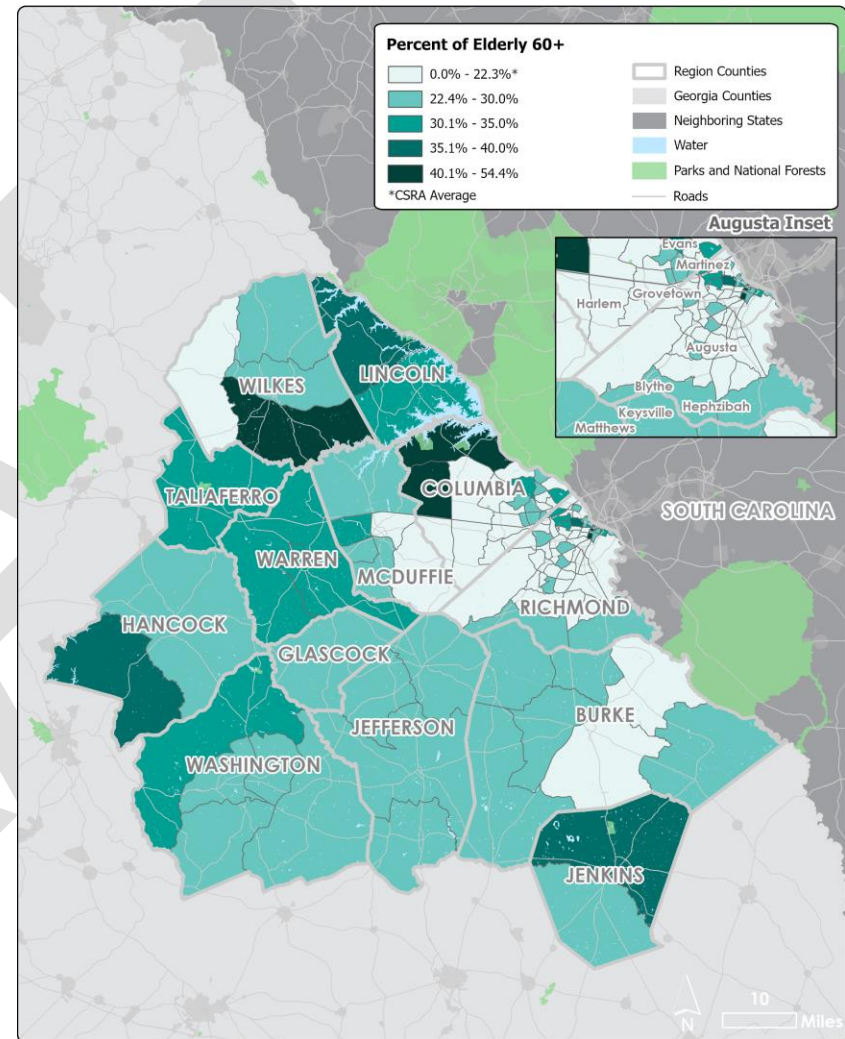
Table 4 shows that 22.3 percent of residents in the CSRA region are aged 60 and above, aligning closely with the state average of 20.3 percent. As shown in **Figure 5**, census tracts with higher concentrations of older adults can be found throughout the region, but the most substantial concentrations of older adults are observed in suburban and rural areas outside Lincolnton in Lincoln County, Washington in Wilkes County, Appling in Columbia County, and Sparta in Hancock County, as well as the north end of Richmond County. In those locations, some census tracts report over 35 percent of residents aged 60 and above. In contrast, central Columbia and Richmond Counties show very low concentrations of older adults (below 22.3 percent).

Table 4: Elderly Population

Geography	Total Population	Total 60+	Percent 60+
CSRA	489,055	108,865	22.3%
Georgia	10,722,325	2,172,093	20.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 5: Elderly Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.4.3 Youth (15-19)

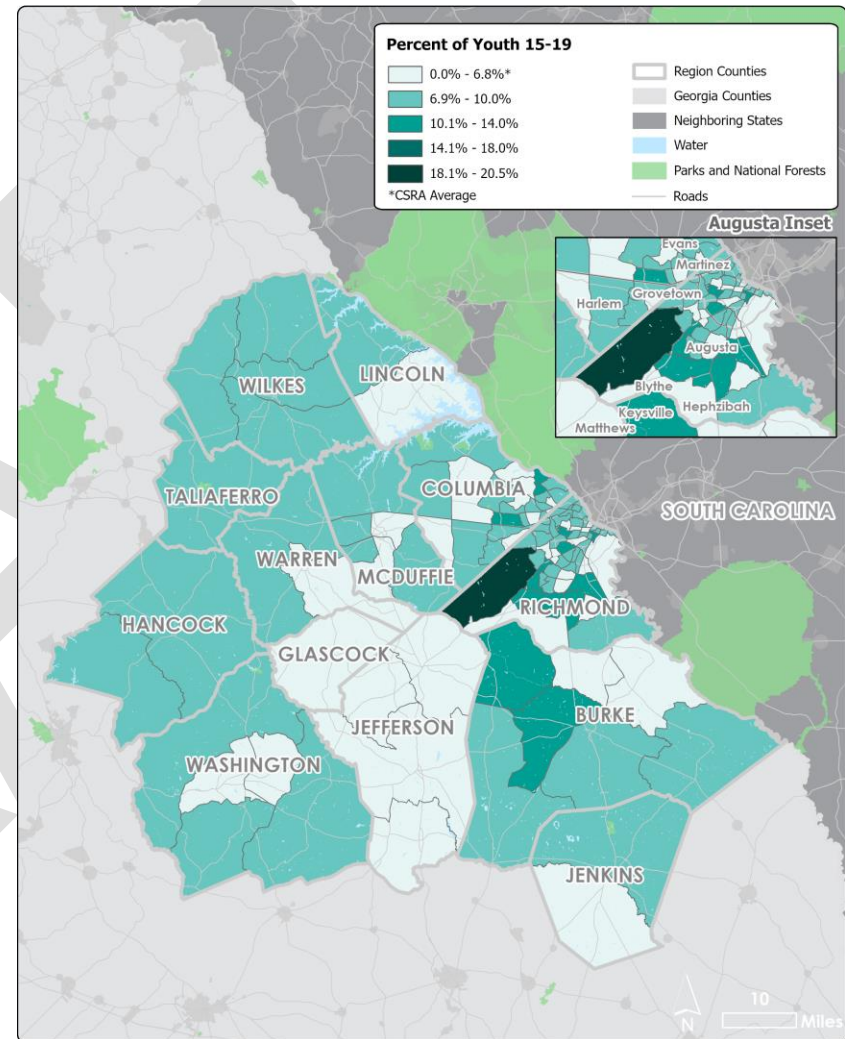
Youth populations may rely on public transportation for essential activities such as commuting to school, accessing employment opportunities, and participating in extracurricular activities. This Existing Conditions Report defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 19. According to **Table 5**, the CSRA region has a slightly smaller proportion of youth within this age range (6.8 percent) than the state average (7.1 percent). **Figure 6** highlights that areas with the highest concentrations of this age group are predominantly located in the Augusta area, with over 10 percent of the population identifying as youth. High concentrations of youth populations in Augusta are particularly tied to Augusta University and Augusta Technical College.

Table 5: Youth Population

Geography	Total Population	Total 15-19	Percent 15-19
CSRA	489,055	33,089	6.8%
Georgia	10,722,325	757,557	7.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 6: Youth Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.4.4 Zero-Car Households

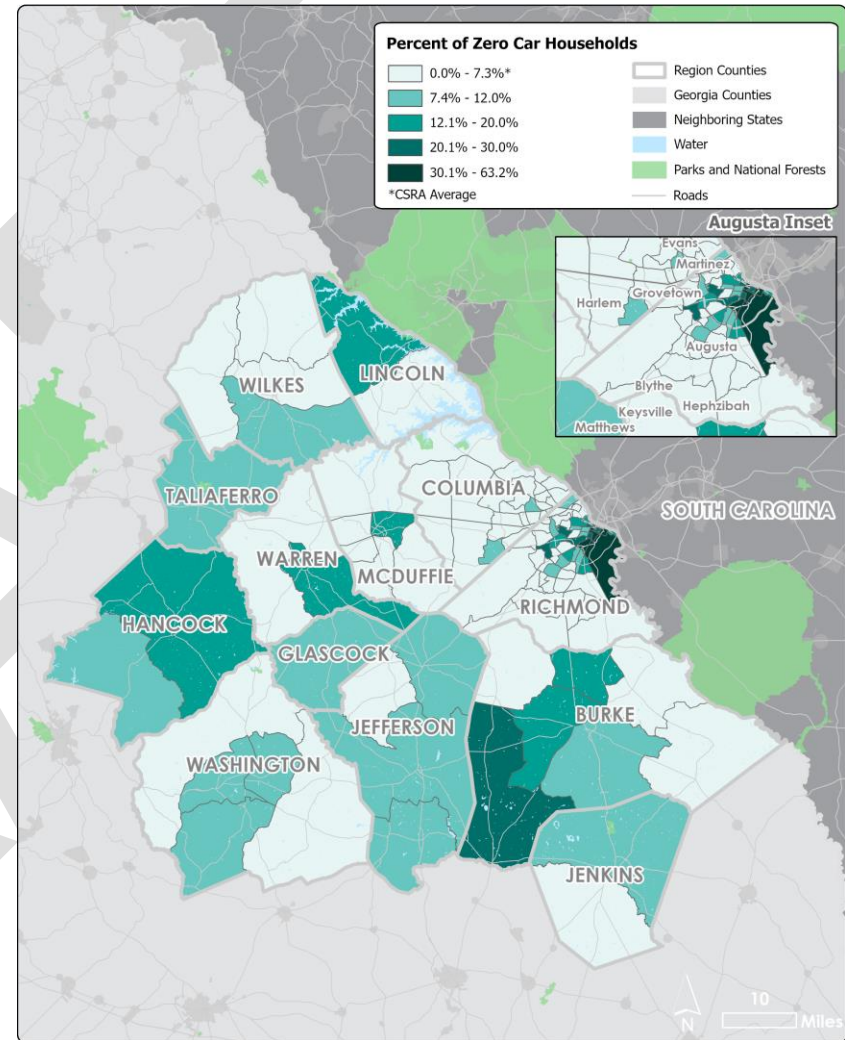
Zero-car households lack access to a vehicle for transportation. These populations may rely on transit or another form of transportation to meet their daily needs. In the CSRA region, **Table 6** indicates 7.3 percent of households do not own a vehicle, higher than the state average of 6.1 percent. As shown in **Figure 7**, zero-car households in the region are largely found in and around the Augusta area and cities with access to transit service of some kind. For example, some census tracts in north Richmond County, north and southwest Burke County, central McDuffie County, central Warren County, and west Hancock County report more than 15 percent of households without a car. Additionally, some of the areas with a high percentage of zero-car households are colleges with a large surrounding residential student population, like Augusta in Richmond County.

Table 6: Zero-Car Households

Geography	Total Households	Total Zero-Car Households	Percent Zero-Car Households
CSRA	171,060	12,455	7.3%
Georgia	3,946,490	236,816	6.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 7: Zero-Car Households by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.4.5 Population with a Disability

People with a disability may rely on transit to access destinations and provide mobility. The U.S. Census Bureau defines populations with a disability as individuals having hearing, vision, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living difficulties.

As illustrated in **Table 7**, residents in the CSRA region are more likely to have disabilities (16.0 percent of population) compared to the overall state average of 12.7 percent. Some areas with a high concentration of residents with a disability coincide with areas having more senior residents, like west Columbia, west Warren, and northwest Washington Counties. While the CSRA region generally follows this pattern, there are differences.

Figure 8 identifies the specific areas with the highest concentration of residents with a disability.

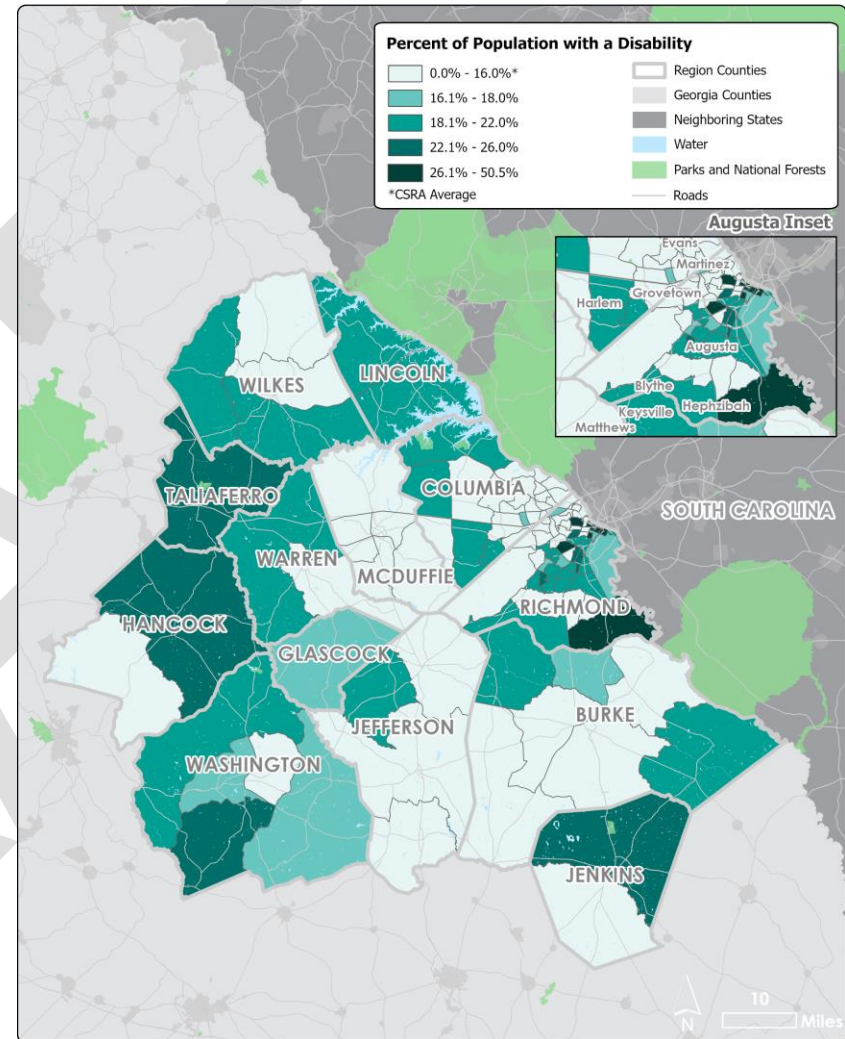
Zooming in, Taliaferro County stands out with the highest share of residents with a disability (22.6 percent), emphasizing the unique challenges in this community. Across the region, Richmond County has the highest total number of residents living with a disability, totaling 35,690 individuals. McDuffie County, in contrast, reports the lowest share of disabled residents at 12.3 percent, indicating a comparatively lower prevalence of disabilities in that part of the region.

Table 7: Populations with a Disability

Geography	Total Population for Disabled	Total Disabled	Percent Disabled
CSRA	468,970	75,262	16.0%
Georgia	10,531,900	1,336,645	12.7%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 8: Populations with a Disability by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.5 Title VI

According to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4702.1B, Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance (e.g., states, local governments, or transit providers) from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin in their programs or activities. Title VI also obligates federal funding agencies to enforce compliance of these requirements. Two demographic groups covered by Title VI, minority and limited English proficiency populations, are discussed below.

2.5.1 Minority

The U.S. Census Bureau defines minority as populations with an ethnicity of Hispanic and Latino and/or who identify as the following:

- Black or African American
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- Other
- Two or More Races

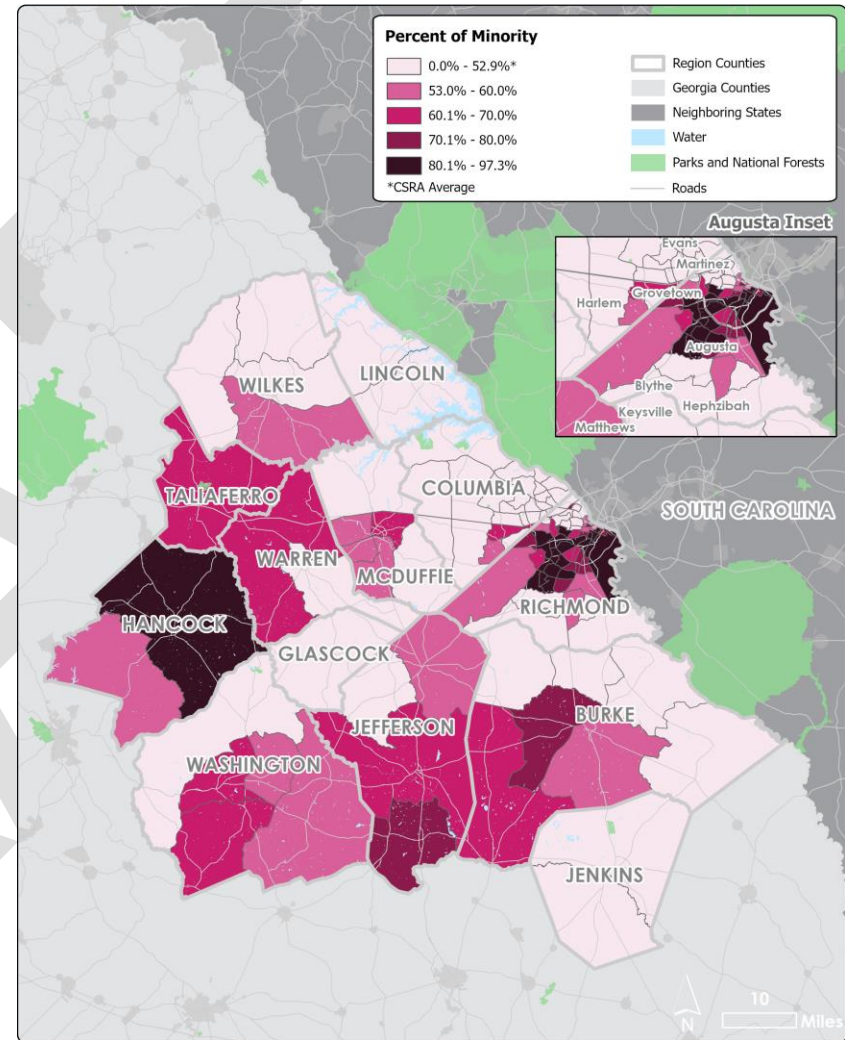
The CSRA region’s share of minority residents is 52.9 percent, above the statewide average of 49.2 percent (**Table 8**). **Figure 9** highlights that the highest concentrations of minority population are located in north Richmond County and east and central Hancock County, with the proportion exceeding 80 percent in these areas.

Table 8: Minority Population

Geography	Total Population	Total Minority	Percent Minority
CSRA	489,055	258,467	52.9%
Georgia	10,722,325	5,277,170	49.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 9: Minority Population by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.5.2 Limited English Proficiency

Limited English proficiency (LEP) populations are those persons who speak English less than very well (i.e., well, not well, or not at all). The U.S. Census Bureau collects this information for people five years of age and older.

Table 9 shows that 2.1 percent of the CSRA region’s residents have limited English proficiency, below the state average of 5.5 percent. The most common language spoken by LEP residents is Spanish, at 1.1 percent of the total population (5,106 residents). The second most common language spoken by LEP residents is Korean, accounting for 1,069 residents.

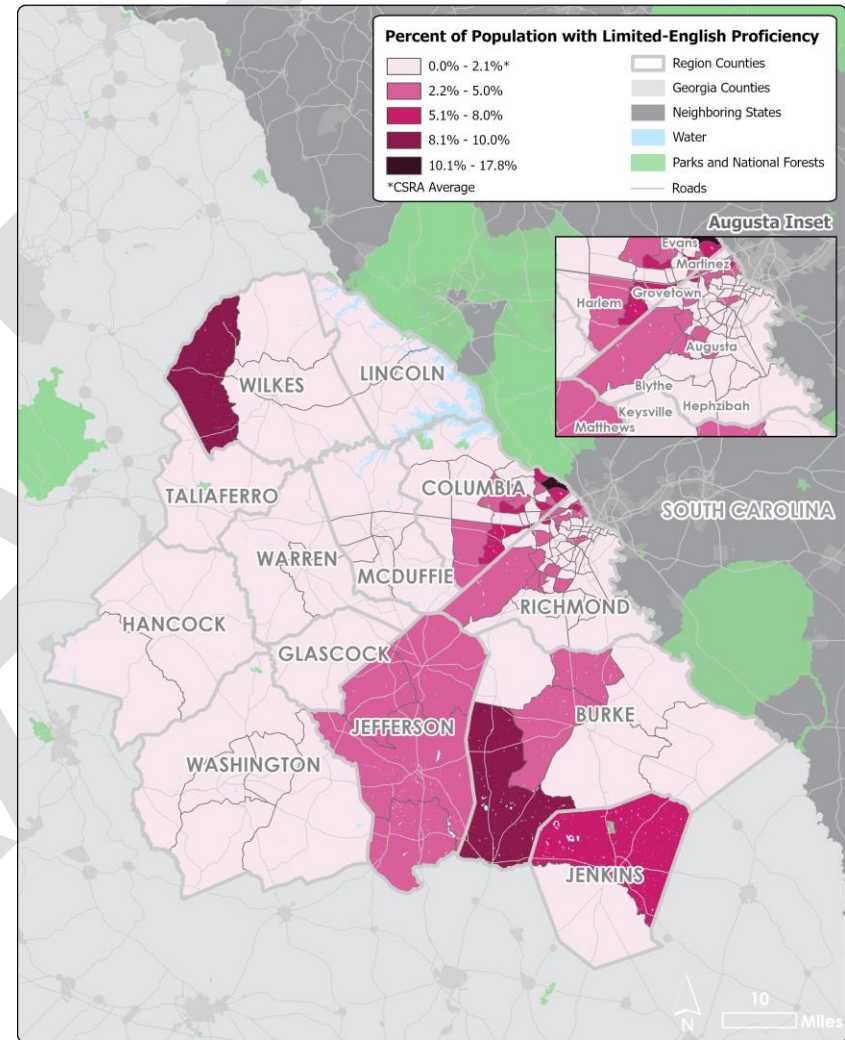
Figure 10 shows that the areas with the highest concentrations of LEP residents are primarily located in urban areas in and around Richmond and Columbia Counties as well as west Wilkes and Burkes Counties, where more than 10 percent of the population face English proficiency challenges.

Table 9: LEP Populations

Geography	Total Population Ages 5+	Total LEP	Percent LEP
CSRA	459,461	9,811	2.1%
Georgia	10,087,026	551,131	5.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 10: LEP Populations by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

2.5.3 Transportation Disadvantaged Communities

In 2021, the Biden administration issued Executive Order 14008 establishing the Justice40 Initiative, which seeks to ensure that disadvantaged communities (DACs) receive 40 percent of the overall benefits of federal investments in climate and clean energy programs, including sustainable transportation. As part of implementing Justice40, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) developed several tools to measure historical disadvantage across the nation. This report uses USDOT's Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer tool¹ to assess disadvantage in the CSRA region. This tool takes into account five components of disadvantage, with each component comprising multiple indicators. These components are:

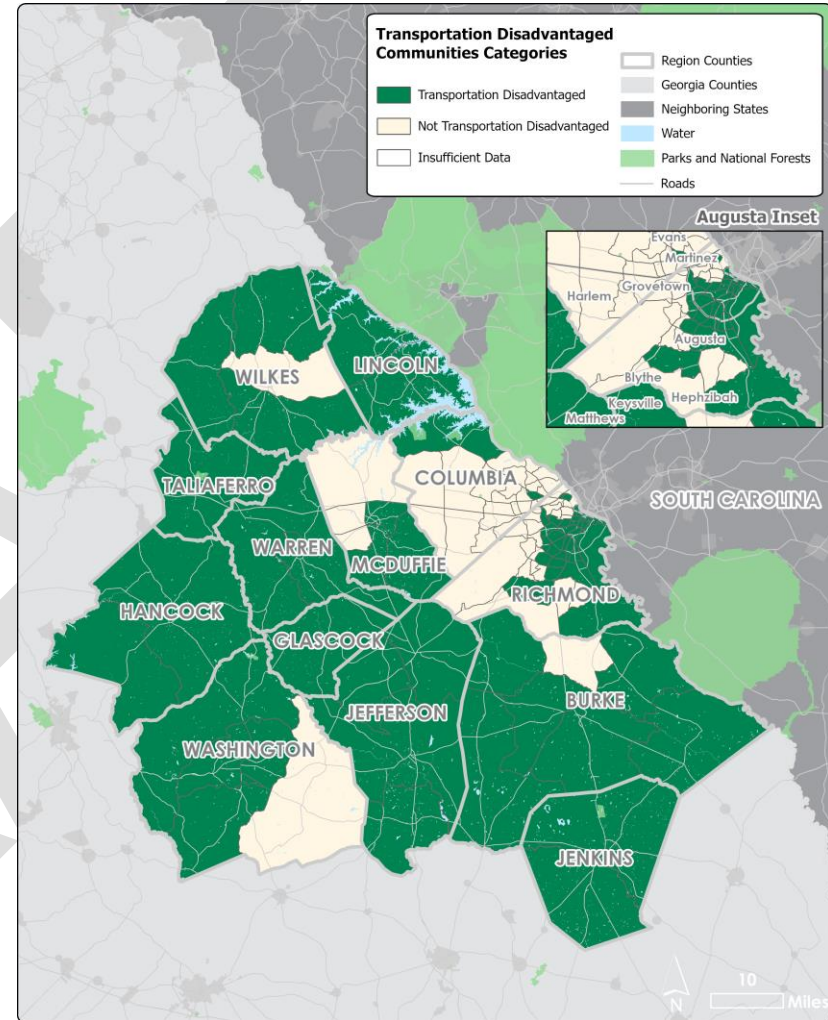
- **Transportation Insecurity:** Considers transportation access, transportation cost burden, and transportation safety to assess residents' ability to easily address their daily transportation needs.
- **Environmental Burden:** Considers 16 environmental indicators measuring air and water pollutant exposure, proximity to known emitters of air, soil, noise, water, or light pollution, and percentage of pre-1980s housing, which is predictive of lead exposure.
- **Social Vulnerability:** Looks at 12 socioeconomic indicators that have a direct impact on a population's quality of life, including unemployment levels, housing cost burden, and lack of internet access. This component also includes many of the socioeconomic factors covered in **Section 2.4** and **Section 2.5**.
- **Health Vulnerability:** Assesses an area's frequency of health conditions by measuring the prevalence of five chronic health conditions that can be caused by environmental factors: asthma, cancer, high blood pressure, diabetes, and low mental health.
- **Climate and Disaster Risk Burden:** Measures the risk an area faces from increased chances for climate or disaster events. Indicators include anticipated changes in extreme weather, annualized disaster losses, and impervious surface percentage.

¹<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/0920984aa80a4362b8778d779b090723/page/ETC-Explorer---Homepage/>

Figure 11 shows which tracts in the CSRA region are designated as disadvantaged. These designations typically follow the trends seen for many of the previously analyzed demographic factors, with disadvantaged areas most likely to be in either very urban or very rural areas.

In total, 56 percent of the CSRA region's land area falls within a census tract that is designated as historically disadvantaged. These tracts are home to 48.7 percent of the region's residents. Residents living within one of the CSRA region's historically disadvantaged areas are 50 percent more likely to lack vehicle access than the average regional resident.

Figure 11: Transportation Disadvantages by Census Tract



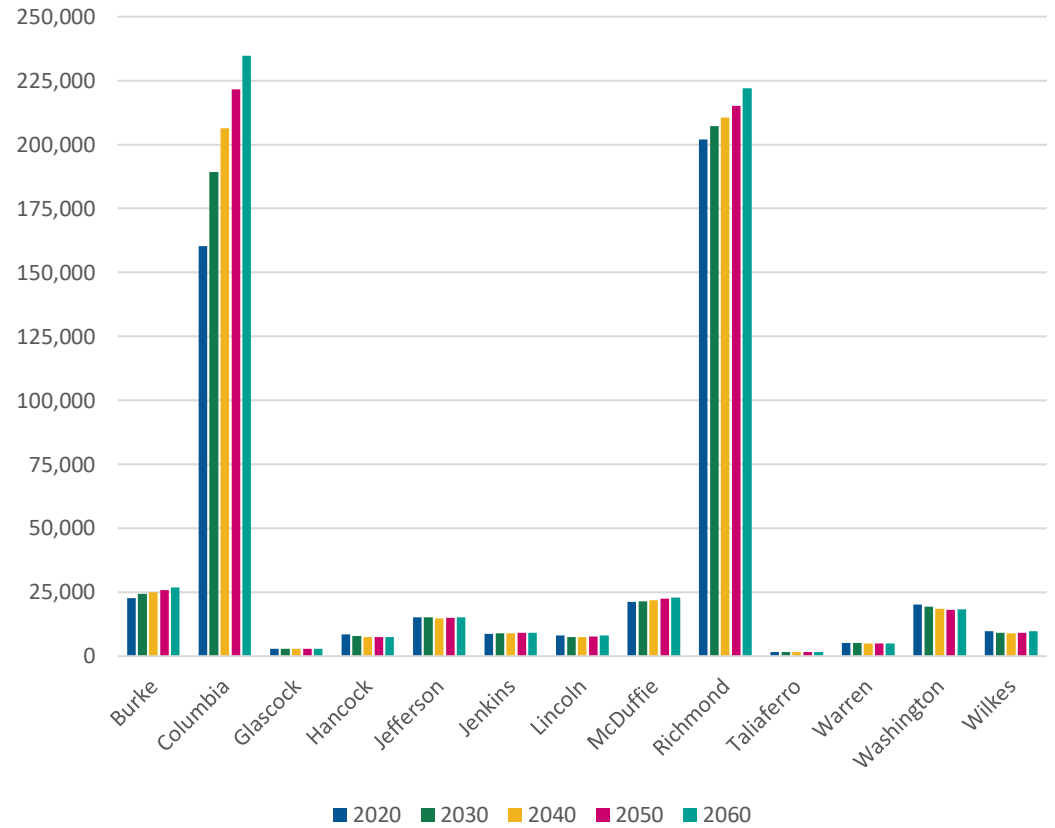
Source: USDOT ETC Explorer Tool

2.6 Future Demographics

Population projections provide insight on the growth of geographic areas. The Georgia Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget issues a population projection series by county. Based on the 2020 Census, these data use birth rates and other growth factors to extrapolate population for each year from 2022 to 2060. Much like the differences seen between U.S. Census and ACS data, differences in methodology can lead to variations across datasets.

The CSRA region is projected to see modest growth in the coming decades, with a projected population of 583,781 by 2060, reflecting an increase of 20 percent from the 2020 population. This growth is less than the state’s projected 32.1 percent growth by 2060 (see **Table 10**). Most of this growth is expected to be driven by Columbia, Burke, Richmond, and McDuffie Counties; they are projected to experience increases exceeding eight percent. Some other counties are also expected to see a small increase in population by 2060. Jefferson, Glascock, Warren, Washington, and Hancock Counties, though, are predicted to experience declines, especially for Hancock County with a decline exceeding 12 percent. **Figure 12** shows the projected population by decade for all 13 counties in the region.

Figure 12: Population Projections by County



Source: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, Series 2023

Table 10: Projected Population Growth in the Central Savannah River Area

Geography	2020	2030	2040	2050	2060
CSRA	486,426	519,756	539,525	560,987	583,781
Georgia	10,710,017	11,764,473	12,786,367	13,545,662	14,147,873

Source: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget, Series 2023

3.0 Employment Trends

The CSRA region contributes greatly to Georgia’s economy, particularly in government, healthcare, and retail trade. This section summarizes employment and industry trends, both present and future. In addition, this section analyzes the job concentration within the region.

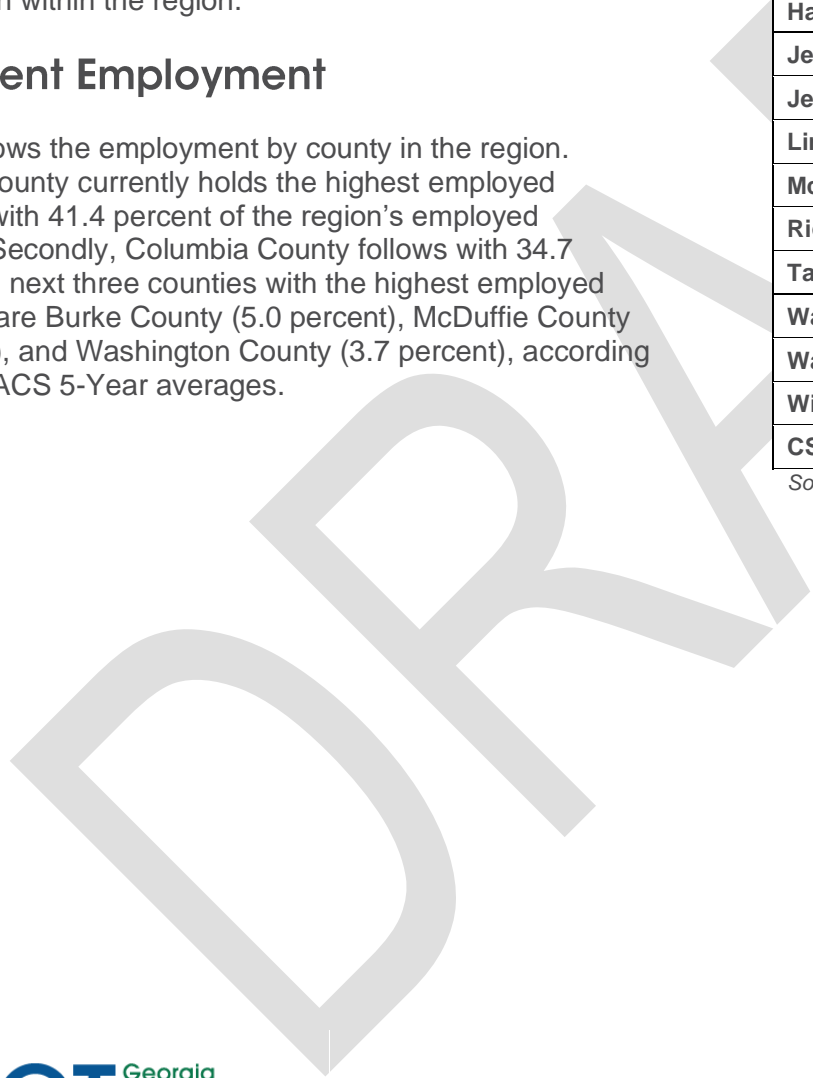
3.1 Current Employment

Table 11 shows the employment by county in the region. Richmond County currently holds the highest employed population, with 41.4 percent of the region’s employed population. Secondly, Columbia County follows with 34.7 percent. The next three counties with the highest employed populations are Burke County (5.0 percent), McDuffie County (4.5 percent), and Washington County (3.7 percent), according to the 2022 ACS 5-Year averages.

Table 11: Employment by County

County	Total Employed Population	Percent of Region’s Total Employed Population
Burke	10,558	5.0%
Columbia	73,121	34.7%
Glascok	1,321	0.6%
Hancock	2,530	1.2%
Jefferson	6,243	3.0%
Jenkins	2,940	1.4%
Lincoln	3,203	1.5%
McDuffie	9,547	4.5%
Richmond	86,632	41.1%
Taliaferro	668	0.3%
Warren	2,020	1.0%
Washington	7,809	3.7%
Wilkes	3,964	1.9%
CSRA	210,556	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data



As for unemployment in the region, 3.7 percent of the population over 16 are unemployed. This rate is higher than that of Georgia’s rate of 3.3 percent, shown in **Table 12**. Like the employment rates, both Richmond and Columbia Counties have the highest unemployment rates, with 55.3 percent and 27.7 percent, respectively. Following those counties are Burke (4.1 percent), McDuffie (2.6 percent), and Washington (2.6 percent) Counties.

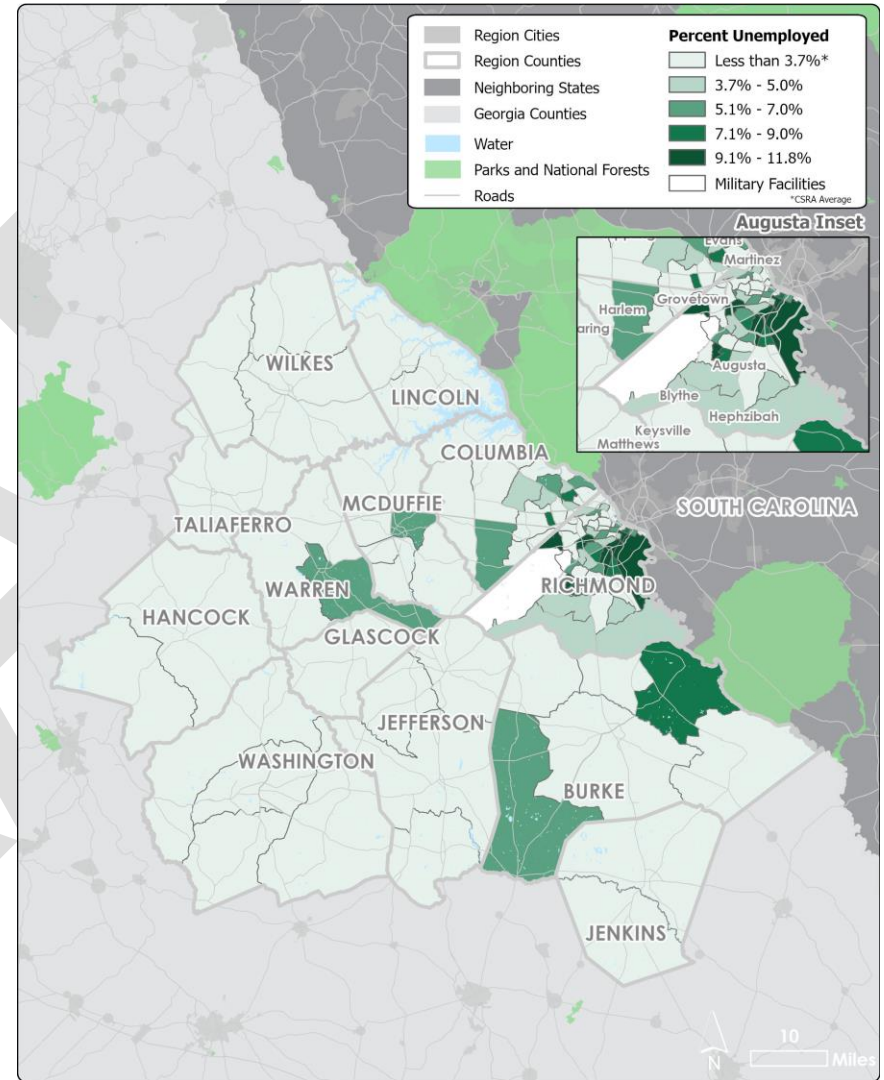
Figure 13 displays the unemployment percentages by census tract. Burke, Columbia, McDuffie, Richmond, and Warren Counties all have census tracts with percentages higher than the regional average of 3.7 percent. Unemployment is highest in Richmond County, with census tracts of between 9.1 and 11.8 percent unemployed.

Table 12: Unemployed Population

Geography	Total Population 16+	Total Labor Force	Total Unemployed	Percent Unemployed
CSRA	388,147	234,715	14,229	3.7%
Georgia	8,504,181	5,406,476	280,651	3.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Data

Figure 13: Unemployment by Census Tract



Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS 5-Year Data

3.2 Current Job Concentration

The U.S. Census Bureau’s Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program provides workforce data through its LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, or LODES.

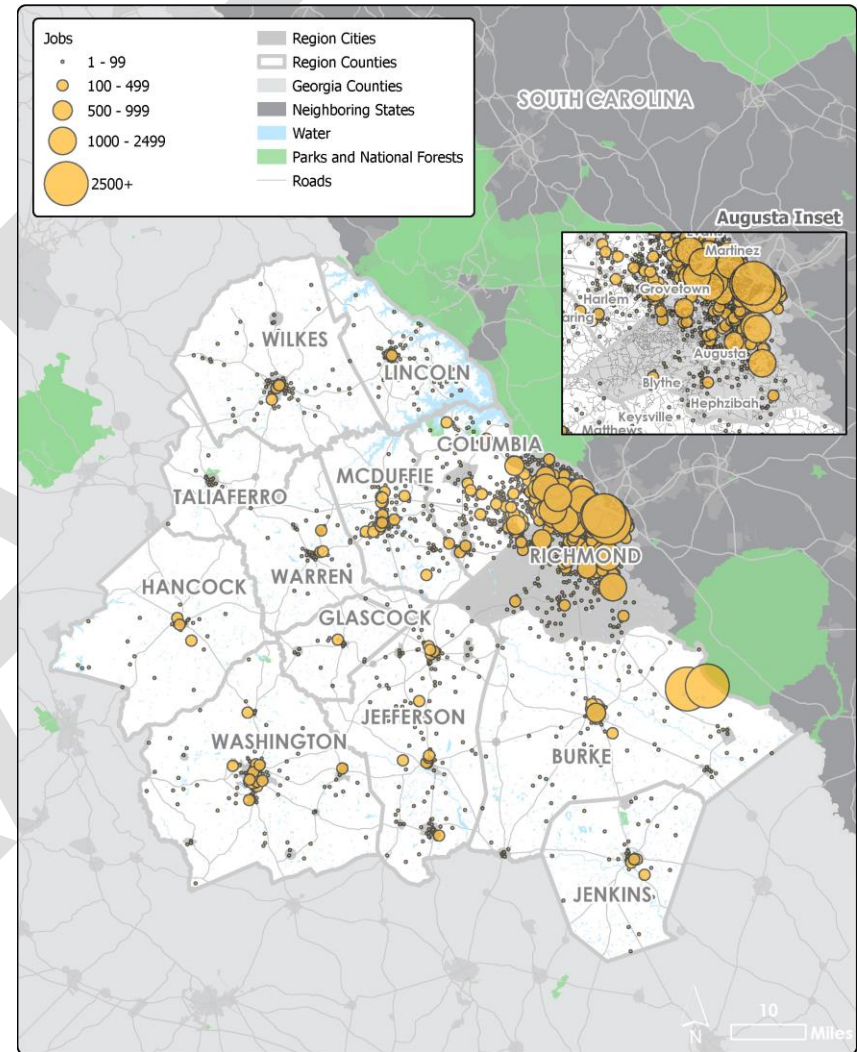
Figure 14 shows the number of jobs for each census block in 2020 available from LODES.

The highest job concentrations are in Richmond, Burke, and Columbia Counties. In addition, there are areas of notable employment activity concentrated around the region’s cities.

Data from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) shows that while agriculture contributes to the economies of every county in the region, the industry is most prominent in Wilkes and Burke Counties. According to the 2017 USDA AgCensus, these counties contribute 33.9 percent and 25.9 percent of the region’s agricultural output value, respectively. Peanuts are the main agricultural products produced in the region.

Though data on agricultural production is provided by USDA, agriculture’s impact as a source of employment remains more difficult to quantify. Agricultural labor data is complicated by factors like seasonal fluctuation and the involvement of farmworkers that are self-employed, part-time, family members, or undocumented workers. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) focuses employment statistics on Nonfarm Payrolls, which exclude the self-employed, private household employees, volunteers, and farm employees. Both LODES and the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) utilize BLS data for their jobs, employment, and industry mix releases.

Figure 14: Job Concentration by Census Block



Source: U.S. Census Bureau LODES

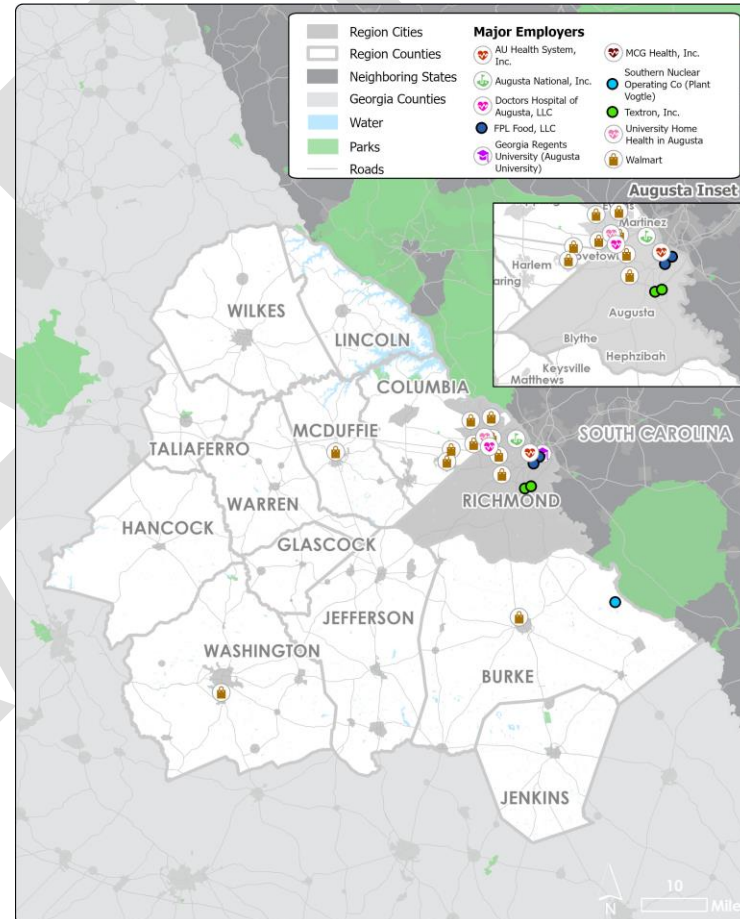
3.3 Major Industries

The top industries in the CSRA region according to GDOL data are: Government (20.6 percent), Healthcare and Social Assistance (15.0 percent), Retail Trade (11.8 percent), Accommodation and Food Services (10.0 percent), and Manufacturing (9.2 percent). The region’s top private-sector employers by number of employees are shown in **Figure 15**. The industries and their employment centers are listed below.

- The CSRA region is home to Fort Eisenhower, the U.S. Army Cyber Center of Excellence, causing government to be the top industry for employment in the region.
- The Healthcare and Social Assistance industry has four of the 10 major employers in the CSRA region: AU Health System, Doctors Hospital of Augusta, MCG Health, and University Home Health, all located in Augusta.
- In Retail Trade, Walmart is a major employer in the CSRA region. Stores are located in several counties, including Columbia, Burke, Washington, McDuffie, and Richmond Counties.
- The Accommodation and Food Services industry consists of establishments for lodging and/or preparing meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption.² While not tied to a major employer, there may be many establishments in this industry surrounding major entertainment destinations in Augusta like the Augusta National Golf Club and the James Brown Arena.
- For Manufacturing, FPL Food, Southern Nuclear Operating Company, and Textron are major employers. FPL Food processes beef at two locations in Augusta. The Southern Nuclear Operating Company at Plant Vogtle in Burke County is among the nation’s top nuclear energy operators. With two locations in Augusta, Textron produces specialized vehicles like golf carts and utility vehicles.

- The last major employer is Georgia Regents University (Augusta University) – University offering healthcare and business administration programs in Augusta.

Figure 15: Major Employers



Source: GDOL Area Labor Profile

² <https://www.bls.gov/iaq/tgs/iaq72.htm>

3.4 Future Employment Trends

The GDOL’s industry projections through 2030 are presented in **Table 13**. Based on these projections, hospitality-related industries like Food Services and Drinking Places (highest-growth industry) and Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries (fifth highest-growth industry) are expected to continue growing in the region. Healthcare-related industries account for three of the five highest-growth industries: Ambulatory Healthcare Services, Hospitals, and Social Assistance.

The next five highest-growth industry projections are General Merchandise Stores, Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Educational Services, and Food Manufacturing. These trends highlight growth in retail, education, and technology for the CSRA region.

These industry projections also align with top industry growth sectors in the CSRA Regional Plan 2040:

- Healthcare and Social Assistance
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
- Construction
- Administrative Support and Waste Management
- Accommodation and Food Services
- Finance and Insurance
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Table 13: Industry Projections

Industry Title	2020-2030 Employment Change	
	Total	Percent
Food Services and Drinking Places	1,970	21.4%
Ambulatory Healthcare Services	1,340	21.2%
Hospitals	1,080	9.3%
Social Assistance	430	25.4%
Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries	360	33.8%
General Merchandise Stores	330	12.7%
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	290	25.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	280	5.5%
Educational Services	270	2.1%
Food Manufacturing	230	9.3%
Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations	200	8.6%
Administrative and Support Services	150	2.0%
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports, and Related Industries	150	61.8%
Merchant Wholesalers, Durable Goods	120	4.8%
Food and Beverage Stores	120	7.0%
Health and Personal Care Stores	120	12.8%
Accommodation, including Hotels and Motels	120	11.2%
Repair and Maintenance	120	10.3%
Personal and Laundry Services	120	19.2%
Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction	110	1.7%

Source: GDOL Long-Term Industry Projections

4.0 Travel Trends

This section includes information on travel patterns within the CSRA region. Understanding regional travel patterns will help identify intra- and cross-county traffic flows as well as transit demand in the region.

4.1 Background

The Regional Integrated Transportation Information System (RITIS) platform and the INRIX Analytics suite provide information on travel patterns based on millions of data points collected daily. For this report, the data trends covered in the following subsections are based on RITIS INRIX origin-destination trip data from January 2022 through December 2022. The origin-destination data includes all trips across all modes in 2022.

4.2 Geographic Areas for Travel Trends Analysis

The analysis of travel trends in the region includes all counties within the region and all counties that share a border with the region, including the following:

- Five counties in South Carolina: Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell, Edgefield, and McCormick Counties
- Three counties in Middle Georgia: Baldwin, Putnam, and Wilkinson Counties
- Three counties in Northeast Georgia: Elbert, Greene, and Oglethorpe Counties
- Two counties in the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region: Emanuel and Johnson Counties
- Two counties in Coastal Georgia: Bulloch and Screven Counties

4.3 Travel Patterns within the Region

The major travel pattern in the CSRA region is intra-county travel, with 79 percent of trips reporting origins and destinations within the same county for the 2022 study period. As shown in **Table 14**, the counties with the highest percentage of internal trips are Richmond and Columbia Counties.

Table 14: Total Trips and Intra-County Percentage (2022)

County	Total Trips	Intra-County Trip Percentage
Richmond	24,833,218	33.4%
Columbia	20,082,862	27.1%
Burke	3,351,957	4.5%
Washington	2,686,935	3.6%
McDuffie	2,361,432	3.2%
Jefferson	2,117,426	2.8%
Wilkes	970,899	1.3%
Jenkins	888,996	1.2%
Lincoln	683,798	0.9%
Warren	432,594	0.6%
Hancock	406,221	0.6%
Glascok	225,642	0.3%
Taliaferro	98,470	0.1%

Source: RITIS, Trip Analytics. INRIX sample trip totals collected: All months 2022.

Inter-county travel is also a major contributor to the number of trips in the region, with trip origins and destinations in Richmond County reporting the highest overall number of inter-county trips. Travel between Richmond and Columbia Counties accounts for the third-highest trip volume in the region, behind the intra-county trips that stay within Richmond and Columbia Counties. The following three county pairs reported the most trips:

- Richmond and Columbia Counties,
- Richmond and Burke Counties, and
- Columbia and McDuffie Counties.

Figure 16 illustrates inter-county travel patterns (rounded to the closest thousand), and **Table 15** provides the top origin-destination pairs and total number of trips for the time period analyzed – January 2022 to December 2022.

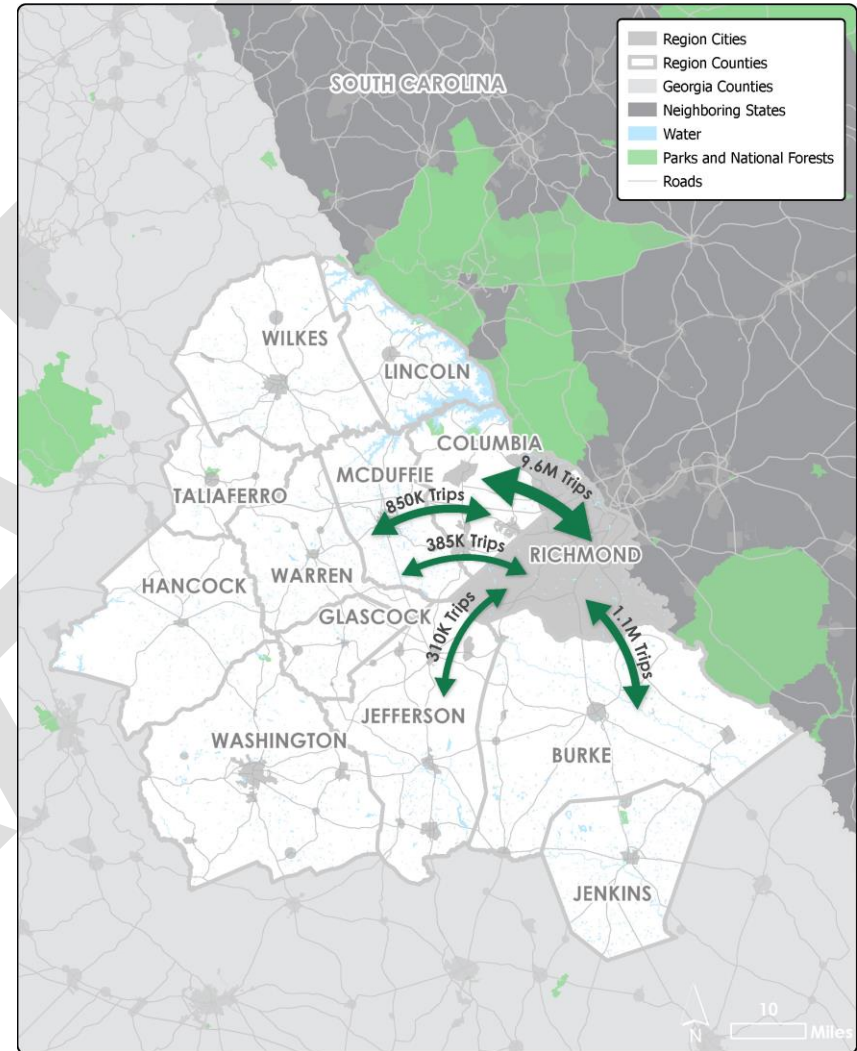
County pairs with fewer than 300,000 total trips during the study period are not included in the table or corresponding figure.

Table 15: Inter-County Trips in the Region

Origin-Destination Pair	Total Trips
Richmond – Columbia	9,650,292
Richmond – Burke	1,138,638
Columbia – McDuffie	847,072
McDuffie – Richmond	385,648
Richmond – Jefferson	311,543

Source: RITIS, Trip Analytics. INRIX sample trip totals collected: All months 2022.

Figure 16: Inter-County Travel in the Region (2022)

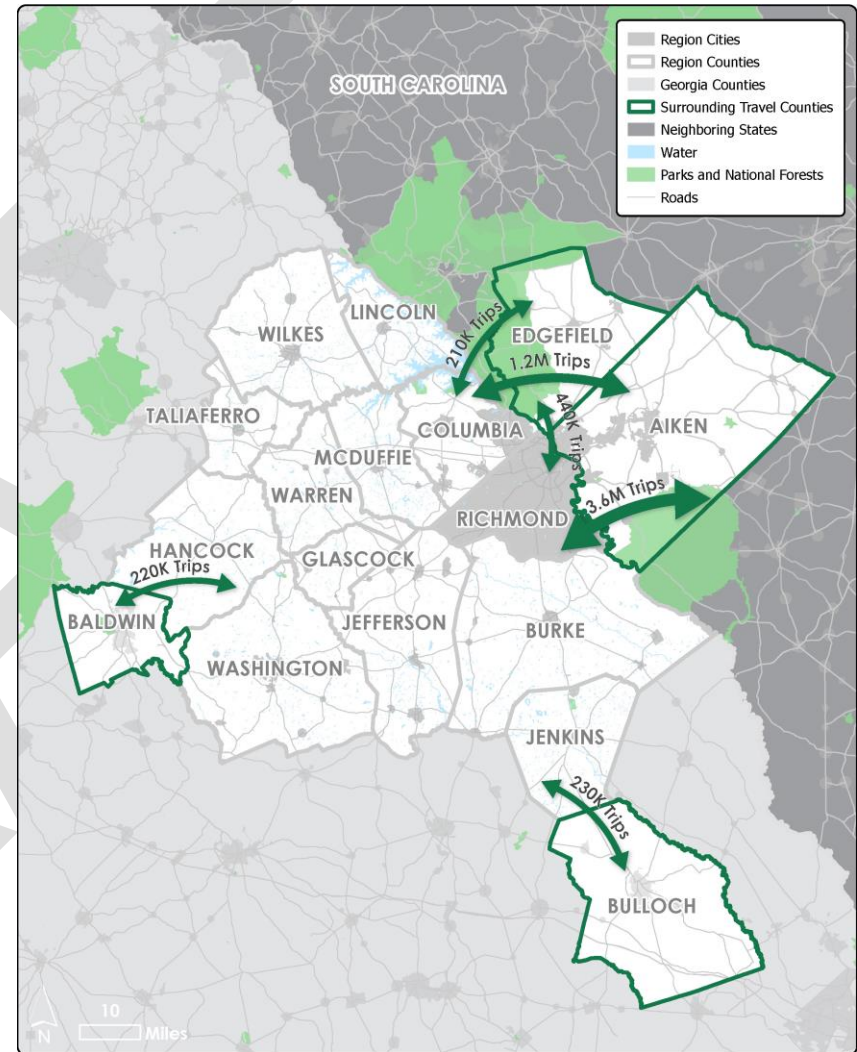


Source: RITIS INRIX Origin-Destination Data

4.4 Travel Patterns between the Region and Surrounding Areas

Inter-region and inter-state travel are important to analyze as key components of the region’s overall travel trends. **Figure 17** illustrates these inter-region and inter-state travel trends in the analysis period. County pairs with fewer than 200,000 total trips during the study period are not included in the figure. Additionally, **Table 16** and **Table 17** provide an overview of the total trips between the CSRA region and neighboring counties. The highest number of trips are recorded in inter-state travel to and from South Carolina (between Richmond and Aiken Counties, and between Columbia and Aiken Counties). There is also minor inter-regional travel to the Coastal region (between Jenkins and Bulloch Counties) and to the Middle Georgia region (between Hancock and Baldwin Counties).

Figure 17: Inter-Regional Travel (2022)



Source: RITIS INRIX Origin-Destination Data

Table 16: Origin-Destination Pairs where Destination is Outside of the Region (2022)

Origin	Destination	Total Trips
Richmond	Aiken	1,865,519
Columbia	Aiken	612,312
Richmond	Edgefield	210,339
Jenkins	Bulloch	115,202
Hancock	Baldwin	107,745
Columbia	Edgefield	101,149
Washington	Baldwin	92,288
Columbia	McCormick	87,164
Washington	Johnson	78,532
Jefferson	Emanuel	72,273
Burke	Aiken	53,640
Jenkins	Emanuel	48,748
Jenkins	Screven	43,329
Lincoln	McCormick	42,336

Source: RITIS, Trip Analytics. INRIX sample trip totals collected: All months 2022.

Table 17: Origin-Destination Pairs where Origin is Outside of the Region (2022)

Origin	Destination	Total Trips
Aiken	Richmond	1,833,915
Aiken	Columbia	617,478
Edgefield	Richmond	229,610
Bulloch	Jenkins	117,861
Baldwin	Hancock	111,685
Edgefield	Columbia	108,228
Baldwin	Washington	94,317
McCormick	Columbia	79,080
Johnson	Washington	76,895
Emanuel	Jefferson	73,872
Aiken	Burke	51,989
Emanuel	Jenkins	49,253
Screven	Jenkins	43,375
McCormick	Lincoln	42,357

Source: RITIS, Trip Analytics. INRIX sample trip totals collected: All months 2022.

4.5 Impacts of COVID-19 on Travel Patterns

The COVID-19 pandemic altered travel patterns across the country, including throughout the CSRA region. The GDOT Traffic Analysis and Data Application (TADA) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) 2019-2021 data set provides evidence that the number of trips in the region decreased during COVID-19. In 2021, transit trips in the region fell 29.0 percent compared to 2019 levels but rose 13.0 percent in 2022 compared to 2021.

Trips that are normally classified as “essential,” such as medical appointments, occurred less frequently during the pandemic. Healthy individuals put off routine healthcare visits or were able to take advantage of telehealth appointments.

As for work trips, many industries shifted to remote work at the beginning of the pandemic. Where possible, the remote work lifestyle continued even as pandemic restrictions lifted. Many major industries in the CSRA region, such as essential healthcare positions and manufacturing, are not conducive to remote work.

Pandemic precautions limited and discouraged in-person gatherings, particularly in densely populated areas. As a result, many in-state college students returned home and completed their classes virtually. This situation resulted in lower activity in the vicinity of the region’s colleges and universities, particularly in the Augusta area, which is home to Augusta University and Paine College.

Leisure travel was impacted at the beginning of the pandemic, but the region is known for its wealth of outdoor experiences that people can enjoy safely. National reports found that camping, particularly recreational vehicle camping, surged during the pandemic as individuals sought ways to travel in an isolated manner. There are five major state parks and many campgrounds with recreational vehicle parking in the region.

National public and private transit experienced lower ridership during the pandemic as many people feared traveling in the same vehicle as others. As COVID-19 case numbers ebbed and flowed, transit also went through waves of increased and decreased ridership. Unfortunately, transit ridership in the region had not recovered to pre-pandemic levels by 2022 (2022 is the most current data year available).

5.0 Existing Transportation Network

The following section has information on the transportation network, including an overview of the roadway system, traffic volumes, and traffic count percent change over time.

5.1 Transportation System Overview

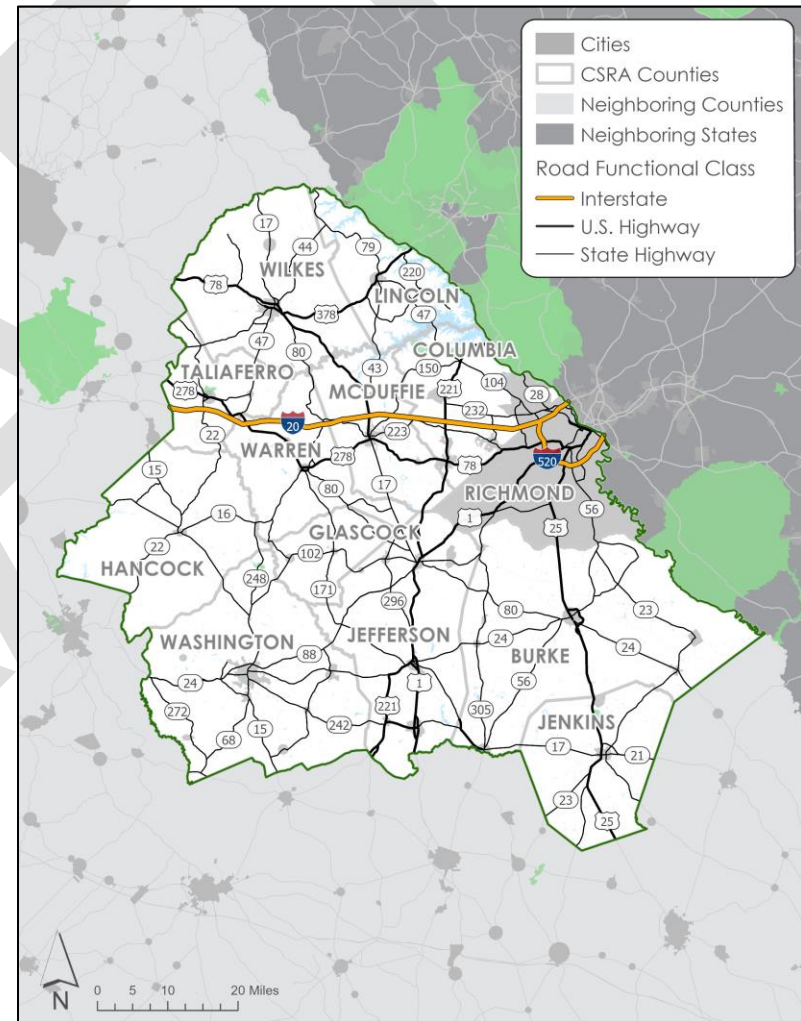
The transportation system in the CSRA region primarily consists of the roadway network, demand-response and fixed-route transit services, non-motorized facilities such as sidewalks and bike lanes, and intercity transportation options that include intercity bus and Amtrak intercity rail services. As shown in **Figure 18**, there are several highly traveled Interstate highways, along with US and State Routes that provide connectivity for the region.

Major corridors that serve the region include:

- Interstate 20 (I-20), the region’s main east-west route, which runs from the Richmond County border around North Augusta in South Carolina to the Taliaferro County border adjacent to Greene County,
- I-520, which encircles most of Augusta, Georgia, and North Augusta, South Carolina, as a three-quarter beltway around the western, southern, and eastern parts of the Augusta metro area.
- United States Highway 1 (US 1), which connects Jefferson and Glascock Counties with Richmond County and other parts of the Augusta metro area.
- US 78, which connects Wilkes County at the northwest through McDuffie County with Columbia and Richmond Counties at the east.

- State Route 56 (SR 56), which travels south from Burke County to Richmond County at the north, connecting them with I-20 through I-520 to the Augusta and Atlanta metro areas.

Figure 18: Existing US and State Highway Network



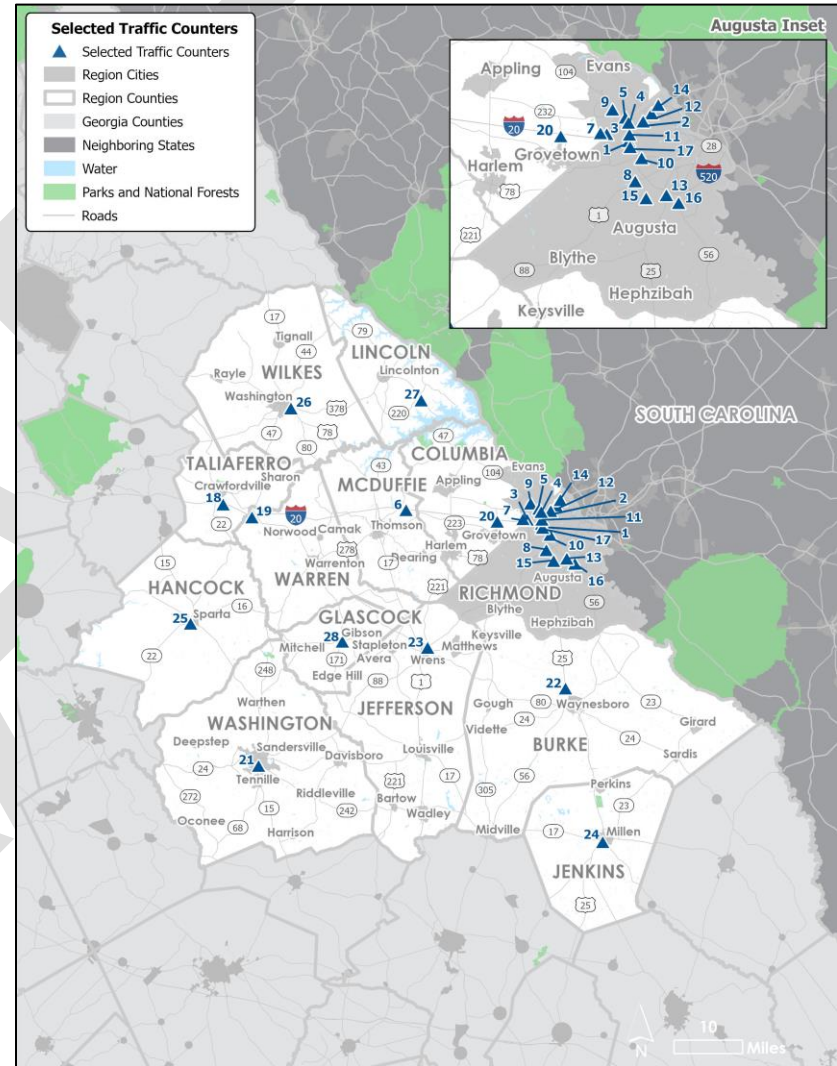
Source: GDOT, U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics

5.1.1 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT)

GDOT collects and reports traffic volume for all vehicle classes (car, single-unit truck, multi-unit truck) throughout the state of Georgia from traffic count stations, measured as AADT. This traffic volume provides valuable data and critical information for federal reporting and for analyzing traffic patterns and other statistics.

Figure 19 shows the location of selected count stations. For the purposes of this analysis, count stations were selected along the major routes and spread out geographically across the region. Each county has at least one count station. The busiest counter in the region, along I-520 in Richmond County, had an AADT of 95,200 in 2022, a 1 percent decrease over 2019 counts. Most of the sampled counters saw declines during this time period. Complete details for these counters are provided in **Table 18**.

Figure 19: Selected Counters for Annual Average Daily Traffic



Source: GDOT Road and Traffic Data

Table 18: Average Annual Daily Traffic

Map ID	GDOT Traffic Counter ID	Roadway Functional Class	Roadway Name	County	2019 AADT	2022 AADT	% Change
1	245-0223	Urban Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-520	Richmond	96,200	95,200	-1%
2	245-0216	Urban Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-20	Richmond	82,900	82,000	-1%
3	073-0198	Urban Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-20	Columbia	76,600	77,700	1%
4	245-0212	Urban Principal Arterial - Freeways & Expressways	SR 232	Richmond	49,400	49,100	-1%
5	073-0184	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 232	Columbia	36,400	40,100	10%
6	189-0132	Urban Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-20	McDuffie	37,700	39,900	6%
7	073-0218	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 383	Columbia	39,400	36,600	-7%
8	245-0012	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	US 1	Richmond	37,000	35,900	-3%
9	073-0143	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 104	Columbia	32,100	35,700	11%
10	245-0054	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	US 78	Richmond	35,900	35,500	-1%
11	245-0516	Urban Minor Arterial	Wheeler Rd.	Richmond	38,100	35,400	-7%
12	245-0083	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 28	Richmond	35,000	34,300	-2%
13	245-0196	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	US 25	Richmond	31,600	34,200	8%
14	245-0931	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 104	Richmond	32,800	32,800	0%
15	245-0256	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	Windsor Spring Rd.	Richmond	29,100	31,300	8%
16	245-0143	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 56	Richmond	30,600	30,600	0%
17	245-0412	Rural Principal Arterial - Other	Wrightsboro Rd.	Richmond	26,500	30,200	14%
18	265-0163	Rural Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-20	Taliaferro	29,800	30,100	1%

Map ID	GDOT Traffic Counter ID	Roadway Functional Class	Roadway Name	County	2019 AADT	2022 AADT	% Change
19	301-0194	Rural Principal Arterial - Interstate	I-20	Warren	29,800	30,100	1%
20	073-0258	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	SR 388	Columbia	26,800	28,400	6%
21	303-0021	Urban Minor Arterial	SR 15	Washington	16,800	17,200	2%
22	033-0209	Urban Principal Arterial - Other	US 25	Burke	14,600	14,700	1%
23	163-0136	Rural Principal Arterial - Other	US 1	Jefferson	13,500	13,000	-4%
24	165-0134	Rural Principal Arterial - Other	US 25	Jenkins	10,600	10,900	3%
25	141-0193	Rural Minor Arterial	SR 15	Hancock	7,750	8,420	9%
26	317-0105	Rural Principal Arterial - Other	US 78	Wilkes	4,700	6,320	34%
27	181-0119	Rural Minor Arterial	SR 47	Lincoln	4,400	4,810	9%
28	125-0154	Rural Major Collector	SR 102	Glascocock	2,210	2,310	5%

Source: GDOT Road and Traffic Data

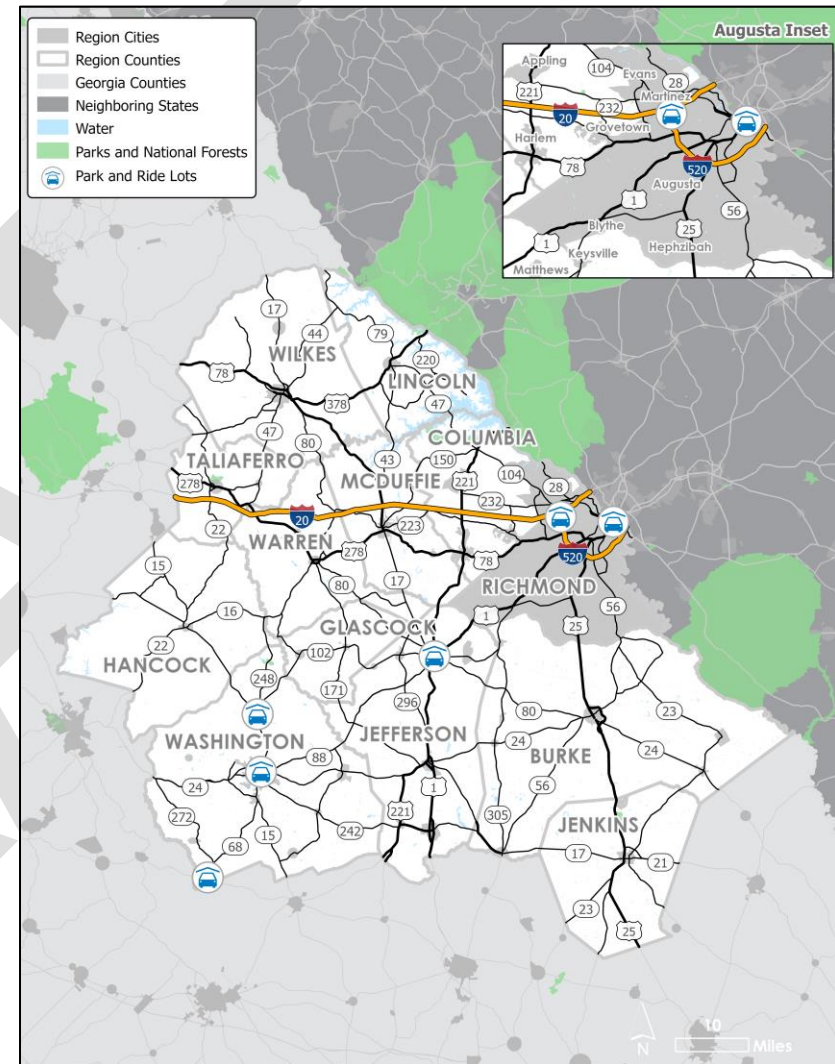


5.2 Park and Ride Lots

Park and ride lots allow users to park and transfer to other modes of transportation, such as carpool, vanpool, etc. **Figure 20** shows the six lots with 141 spaces within the CSRA region. Lots are located in Jefferson, Richmond, and Washington Counties, adjacent to US 1/Highway 88, US 78, I-520 and other principal arterials. One lot, at SR 15/SR 102 in central Washington County, is inactive due to low parking activity and contains 11 spaces.

- The I-520 and Wheeler Road lot in Augusta (Richmond County) has 20 spaces. The lot can be accessed from Marks Church Road and from Wheeler Road.
- The second lot in Richmond County is the Broad Street and Gordon Highway lot. It is in between Ellis Street and Broad Street in Augusta and contains 44 spaces.
- Jefferson County has one lot at US 1/Main Street and School Street in Wrens. This lot is next to the McCollum Public Library and has 24 spaces.
- In northeast Sandersville is the E. McCarthy Road and M. Friedman Drive lot. This lot is located in Washington County in between two gas stations and has 10 spaces.
- In southwest Washington County is the SR 57 and SR 68 lot. This lot contains 32 spaces.

Figure 20: Park and Ride Lot Locations



Source: GDOT

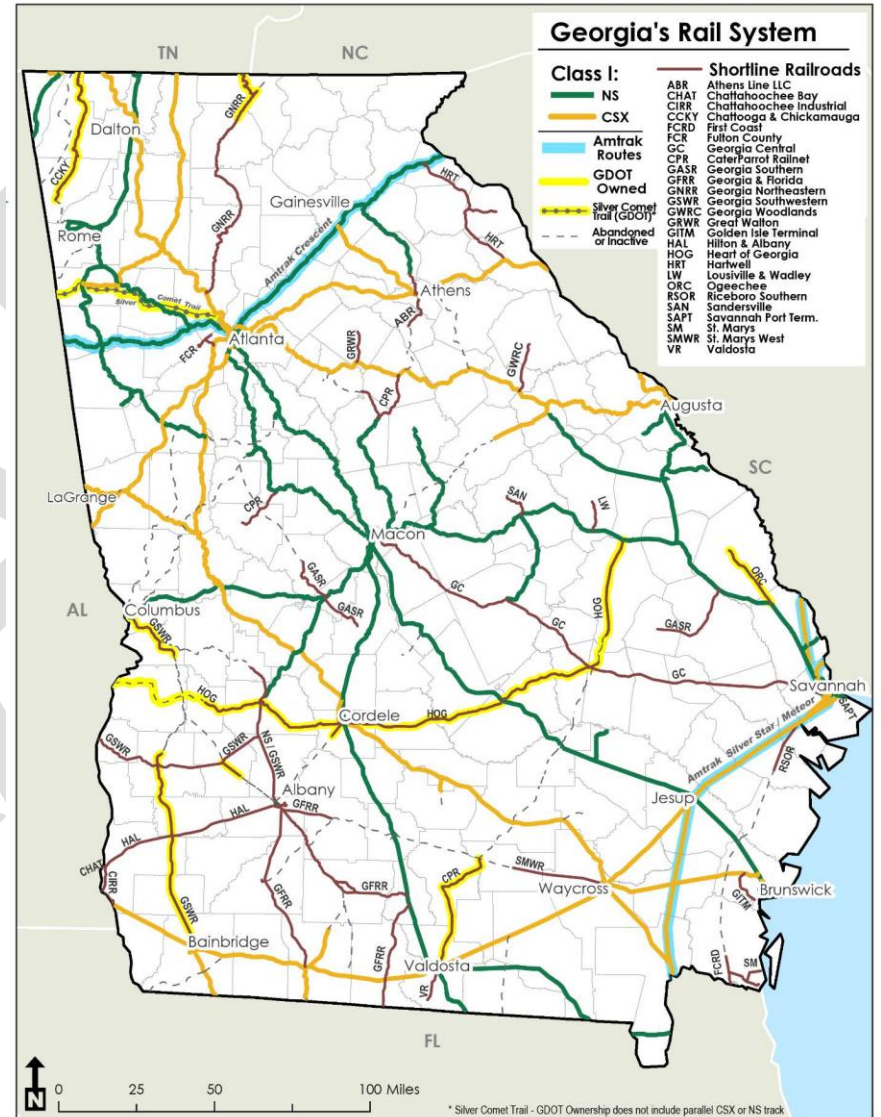
5.3 Rail

Two Class I railroads operate within the Central Savannah River Area. The first, operated by CSX Transportation, has east-west mainlines and branches running through Columbia, Hancock, McDuffie, Richmond, Taliaferro, and Warren Counties in the northern portion of the region. These mainlines provide connections from South Carolina to the Atlanta region. Regional rail yards along the CSX Transportation main lines include Augusta and Camak. The second Class I railroad, operated by Norfolk Southern (NS), has mainlines passing through Richmond County and Burke, Glascock, Jefferson, and Warren Counties in the southern portion of the region. Regional rail yards along the NS mainlines include Augusta, Eco-Energy Augusta, Millen, Nixon, and Tennille.

Class III shortlines in the region include the Georgia Woodlands, Louisville and Wadley, and Sandersville Railroads. No regional shortlines are owned by GDOT. **Figure 21** shows these regional lines in relation to the state's rail network.

There is currently no passenger rail service available within the CSRA region. Augusta was previously included as a station in proposed Atlanta to Augusta and Augusta to Savannah intercity rail corridors in the 2015 Georgia State Rail Plan within the Georgia Rail Passenger Program. The Atlanta to Savannah intercity rail project is currently in the transportation planning process and has not solidified stations, but may include an Augusta Station.

Figure 21: State Rail Network



Source: GDOT Georgia State Rail Plan

5.4 Active Transportation

Active transportation refers to the concept of using walking or biking as a means of traveling from an origin to a destination. These means can occur on sidewalks, bikeways, or trails. Sidewalks and multi-use paths are not prevalent throughout the CSRA region. Augusta and Grovetown are the cities with the most sidewalk infrastructure in the region. Additionally, Wilkes, McDuffie, Columbia, Richmond, Jefferson, and Burke Counties have some level of bike lanes and bike paths.

The CSRA region has three statewide bike routes³, including:

- Savannah River Run – North/south starting northwest of Tignall, GA (Wilkes County) and ending south of Millen, GA (Jenkins County)
- Augusta Link – East/west starting from the Savannah River Run in Thomson (McDuffie County) to Downtown Augusta (Richmond County)
- March to the Sea – East/west starting northwest of Deepstep, GA (Washington County) and ending in east of Millen, GA (Jenkins County)

The CSRA region has several trails throughout the region, mostly around Columbia County and Augusta.⁴ Featured trails in the Augusta metro area include:

- Euchee Creek Greenway⁵
- Bartram Trail
- Keg Creek Bike Trail
- Augusta Canal Singletrack

Euchee Creek Greenway around Grovetown is divided into two segments, including the five-mile northern section between the Patriots Park recreation area and the Canterbury Farms development and the 1.1-mile southern segment at Euchee Creek. Bartram Trail near Appling is an 18.5-mile trail that runs east-west from the West Dam Recreational Area to Washington Road. Keg Creek Trail is part of the Bartram Trail and is a 9.2-mile loop-style trail with several creek crossings. Augusta Canal Singletrack across Columbia and Richmond Counties is a 3-mile loop-style trail located between the canal tow path and the Savannah River. Outside the Augusta metro area, there are several other trails, including A.H. Stephens State Park Trail in Taliaferro County⁶, Magnolia Springs State Park trails in Jenkins County⁷, and Elijah Clark State Park trails in Lincoln County.⁸

³ <https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/BikePed.aspx>

⁴ <https://sorbacsra.org/trails/>

⁵ https://u.realgeeks.media/pifumorealtor/EuCheeCreekGreenway_Phasin.pdf

⁶ https://gastateparks.org/sites/default/files/parks/pdf/trailmaps/AHStephens_Trail_Map_2020.pdf

⁷ <https://gastateparks.org/MagnoliaSprings/Trails>

⁸ <https://gastateparks.org/ElijahClark/Trails>

6.0 Existing Transit Plans

A review of studies pertinent to the CSRA region was conducted to understand the issues, opportunities, and recommendations that have been previously identified for the region and its individual municipalities. The Regional TDP will take previous planning efforts into consideration to identify comprehensive transit solutions for the CSRA region.

6.1 GDOT Georgia Statewide Transit Plan

The SWTRP was last updated in 2020. The SWTRP identifies transit needs and opportunities, reviews local, county, and regional plans, and recommends policy and priority projects for implementation across the state. The plan describes the different types of transit service provided in the state, including:

- Demand response
- Fixed route
- Vanpool
- Flex route
- Microtransit
- Express bus
- Intercity transit
- Heavy rail
- Streetcar
- Ferry

Demand response refers to small bus operations that require advance reservation and provide door-to-door service. Demand-response service does not operate on a fixed route or schedule but rather meets passengers' needs by picking up and dropping off at desired locations. In rural areas of Georgia, transit service is focused on the demand-response model. The SWTRP notes that there were 80 transit systems across the state which provide demand-response service at the time of publication. Five of these 80 cover multiple counties (26 counties). The demand-response systems provided 1.8 million trips to Georgians in 2017.

Fixed route typically refers to small bus operations that follow a determined route with known stops and a set schedule. Fixed-route service is a good option for an urbanized area with multiple destinations, such as a downtown shopping area or route with businesses.

The SWTRP reported that there were 222,441 rural demand response transit trips in the CSRA region in 2017. This is more than all but two other regions across the state. The regions with more trips were Northwest Georgia (262,208 trips) and Southwest Georgia (351,572 trips).

Other trends reported in the SWTRP include the following:

- **The rising populations of minority, disabled, zero-car and elderly.** In the CSRA region, minority, disabled, zero-car, and elderly populations were higher than the state average in several counties. LEP populations were largely below the state average.

- **Advances in transportation-related technological advances.** Ridesharing programs are becoming more accepted as a viable means of travel and both accompany transit as well as compete with it. Digital platforms that aid trip scheduling have the potential to meaningfully impact ride scheduling and reliability. Connected and autonomous vehicles need to be part of the transit conversation.
- **Rural areas that are growing in population may be absorbed into urban areas.** This changes the federal transit funding calculation.

Additionally, the SWTRP contains an Implementation Report that is updated annually to report on transit performance. The last Implementation Report was published in 2022 and includes transit service information for 2021 and 2022. This report details statewide goals, performance measures, and strategies. Goals identified in this report that are relevant to the Central Savannah River Area include the following:

- Expanding service to counties without local public transit,
- Increasing the capacity of existing regional and multi-county transit systems,
- Coordination between GDOT and Department of Human Services (DHS) transit systems,
- Allowing rural providers to cross county lines,
- Implementing zero-emission transit vehicles,
- Increasing revenue service hours and trips per service hour, and
- Utilizing smartphone apps (such as GDOT’s Let’s Ride App) for trip planning.

6.2 GDOT Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan/Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan

Updated in 2021, the combined Georgia 2050 Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) and Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP) focus on how GDOT will carry out Governor Kemp’s strategic goals for the state, specifically focused on meeting the transportation needs of all Georgians. These plans detail the status of the statewide transportation system and future trends, opportunities, and challenges through 2050.

The public outreach for these planning efforts identified Georgia residents’ top three transportation concerns for the future, which include:

- More public transportation options,
- Reduction in traffic congestion, and
- Better roadway system connectivity.

The plans are broken into sections such as Statewide Freight and Logistics, People Mobility in Metro Atlanta, and People Mobility in Emerging Metros and Rural Georgia. One of Governor Kemp’s goals is to strengthen rural areas in the state, and GDOT sees regional teaming and partnerships as vital to improve life in rural communities. Additionally, increasing access to jobs, goods, and services throughout emerging metro areas and rural areas is a theme that runs through this report.

In terms of transit and shared mobility, these reports focus on the state’s urban transit systems but present a wealth of content regarding the changing dynamics in rural areas. These trends include, but are not limited to, increasing population and employment, an aging population, an increase in individuals with disabilities, and a high vehicular crash rate.

6.3 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

Completed in 2023, the Georgia 2050 Rural and Human Services Transportation (RHST) Plan was a joint effort of GDOT, DHS, and the Department of Community Health (DCH) to develop a five-year update to the state’s RHST Coordination Plan. This plan provides a framework for coordination among Georgia’s agencies interested in delivering rural mobility services. The focus areas of the plan are the state’s three systems for rural mobility services: rural public transit, administered by GDOT; human services transportation, administered by DHS; and non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT), administered by DCH.

6.4 GDOT Group Transit Asset Management Plan

The Group Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan Update was completed in September 2022. TAM is a business model which prioritizes funding for transit projects based on the condition of assets, with the goal of maintaining a state of good repair (SGR) for all participating transit networks.

As required by the FTA, the TAM Plan covers a four-year period. The Group TAM Plan is from fiscal year 2023 and ends in fiscal year 2026, and consists of the following elements:

- Inventory of Capital Assets: The three categories of public transit assets are Rolling Stock, Equipment, and Facilities
- Condition Assessment: Each asset within a provider’s inventory for which it has direct capital responsibility is evaluated

- Decision Support Tool: This section analyzes data from the previous sections and comes up with a methodology for prioritizing SGR re-investment needs among the assets
- Prioritized List of Investments: Based on the decision support tool and projected funding over the four-year period, this section concludes the TAM Plan

Federal law requires GDOT, as the Group Plan sponsor, to set annual SGR performance targets for each type of asset, which are updated on an annual basis. These performance measures are as follows:

- Rolling Stock: Percentage of revenue vehicles that have either met or exceeded their Useful Life Benchmark (ULB), as determined by their asset type
- Equipment: Percentage of non-revenue, support-service, and maintenance vehicle equipment that has either met or exceeded their ULB
- Facilities: Percentage of facilities rated below condition 3.0 on the Transit Economic Requirements Model scale

All transit providers within the Central Savannah River Area were included in the 2022 Group TAM Plan. Buses and cutaway buses were among the proposed investments for the region’s participants; most of these projects were prioritized for fiscal years 2024 through 2026.

6.5 Augusta Transit Climate Action Plan

In February 2021, Mayor Hardie Davis Jr. of Augusta, Georgia proposed the conversion of the City of Augusta’s motor vehicle fleet to fully zero-emission electric vehicles by 2031.

Augusta Transit, the operator providing fixed-route and demand-response transit to Augusta-Richmond County, responded by developing a Climate Action Plan to create a framework that defines specific activities Augusta Transit can accomplish to reduce its carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

The Climate Action Plan consists of an emissions inventory of both revenue-earning and non-revenue earning fleet, as well as facilities owned by the agency. It also summarizes past and current initiatives relevant to the Plan, including *Future Mobility 2050*, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan of the Augusta Regional Transportation Study.

The Climate Action Plan includes three goals to accomplish by 2033:

- Transition to clean energy fueled revenue and non-revenue vehicles;
- Increase operational efficiencies and renewable energy use at all facilities; and
- Increase the proportion of Augusta-Richmond County population living within three quarters of a mile of a clean energy transit service.

The plan includes several strategies to achieve these goals. Overarching strategies include:

- Data harvesting, monitoring, and performance assessment;
- Stakeholder engagement and partnerships; and
- Transit service expansion, including potential microtransit service in South Augusta.

6.6 ARTS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) MPO developed the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for 2050, which is the official multimodal transportation plan for the Augusta GA – Aiken SC metropolitan area. The MTP recommends transportation projects to improve, maintain, and operate roadways and bridges, public transit, and other public assets. This document is federally mandated and serves as a prerequisite for receiving federal transportation funding. The MTP presents transit-related goals and objectives, including:

- Support regional connectivity and ridesharing through investment in intercity bus service, intercity bus facilities, and commuter vanpool;
- Prioritize transportation improvements that support access to the urban core;
- Increase access, expand, and improve the reliability of public transportation;
- Provide viable public transportation options to meet daily travel needs; and
- Provide transportation linkages to employment, business, retail activity, and other activity centers.

The MTP also provides a list of capital improvements for 2021 through 2050. These projects were selected and prioritized based on need, cost, and funding availability. Among the transit capital projects are a relocation of the primary Augusta Transit hub from Broad Street to downtown Augusta and the development of new transit hubs and park and ride facilities.

6.7 Envision Augusta

Envision Augusta is a comprehensive plan for Augusta-Richmond County that aims to guide the sustainable and resilient development of the city and county. It focuses on addressing various aspects such as transportation, economic development, cultural and natural resources, and land use issues. The comprehensive plan, covering a 20-year planning horizon, serves as a blueprint for decision-making and provides a coordinated approach to address various aspects of community development.

The plan was updated in 2023 based on an analysis of recent socio-economic data and through a series of public meetings, both in-person and online. It includes the sections listed below:

- Existing conditions, including a community profile and key trends related to population, housing, and community/economic development;
- Needs and opportunities, including a vision statement, goals, and objectives of the plan; and
- A community work program that identifies strategies that enable the community to achieve its goals effectively.

Several public transit projects are included in the community work program, with Augusta Transit identified as the responsible party for all projects. The projects identified, along with horizon years, are:

- Purchase five new electric buses (2027);
- Install three new charging stations (2024);
- Launch microtransit pilot program (2025);
- Bus transfer facility improvements (2026);
- Install cameras at transit facilities (2025); and
- Purchase larger bus shelters with benches and solar lighting (2025).

7.0 Existing Transit Services

Twelve transit systems currently serve the residents of the CSRA region. One of these, Augusta Transit, is classified as an urban provider, while the other eleven operate in the rural areas of the region.

The transit agencies that provide these services are detailed in the section below. No commuter bus or rail transit services are provided within the region. All profiled agencies are open to the general public and are funded through local and FTA grant programs. Additional shared transportation services that target certain population groups such as seniors or those with disabilities also operate within the region. **Figure 22:** Augusta Transit Summary

Augusta Transit

Urban Public Transit Service (Section 5307)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Fixed Route, Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Augusta-Richmond County

FARES

\$1.25

One-Way Trip

\$0.50

Transit between Routes

\$0.60

One-Way for Adults Ages 65+, Students and Handicapped

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Saturday 6:30 am – 7pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book demand-response rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 19 vehicles



Sources: Augusta Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan.

FUNDING

Fare Revenues

Local Funds

Federal Assistance & State Funds

Other Funds

Total Operating Funds

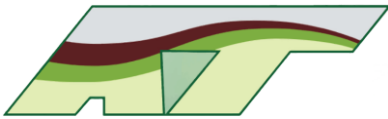
Source: Funding

Figure 23-33 display the transit agencies' summaries.

7.1 Local Services

This section profiles the twelve local public transit providers in the CSRA region.

7.1.1 Augusta Transit



Operated by the Augusta-Richmond County consolidated government, Augusta Transit provides public transit services to residents in both the urbanized and rural portions of the county. August Transit operates nine fixed routes. Buses run Monday through Saturday between the hours of 6:30 AM and 7:00 PM. Fares are \$1.25, and transfers between routes cost \$0.50. Weekly and monthly passes are available, and fare discounts are available for seniors, students, and riders with a disability.

7.1.2 Burke Transit

Burke Transit provides demand-response transit services within Burke County, along with trips to Richmond County for an increased fare. Buses run on weekdays between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM, with 36-hour advance notification required to reserve a trip.

Fares are \$8.00 round-trip for in-county medical trips, and \$10.00 round trip for general transportation. Trips to Richmond County are \$22.00 round trip. For seniors ages 60 and up, in-county round trips are \$6.00 and Richmond County round trips are \$18.00.

7.1.3 Columbia County Transit

Columbia County Transit is the region's largest rural transit service provider by trip volume. Service runs weekdays between 10:00 AM and 3:30 PM, with service in Columbia County and to certain parts of Richmond County. To reserve a ride, users must call at least one business day in advance of the requested trip. One-way fares are \$4.50 for the general public, \$3.00 for seniors ages 60 and older, and \$1.00 for children under 12.

7.1.4 Glascock County Transit

Glascock County Transit provides rural demand-response services across Glasscock County, along with service to most surrounding counties. Trips can be booked on weekdays between 8:00 AM and 4:00 PM, except Wednesdays, when buses run from 8:00 AM to noon. Typical fares are \$3.00 in-county and \$6.00 to neighboring counties. Trips to Augusta are \$15.00.

7.1.5 Hancock County Transit

As the rural transit provider for Sparta and Hancock County, Hancock County Transit provides demand-response service between 4:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Saturday. Service is available throughout the county, and with destinations to nearby counties available. Within Hancock County, fares are \$5.00 round trip. Round-trip fares to Baldwin, Putnam, Warren, Greene, and Washington Counties are \$15.00. Round trips to McDuffie County are \$20.00, Jefferson County is \$30.00, and trips to Richmond, Bibb, and Laurens Counties are available for a \$50.00 fare.

7.1.6 Jefferson Transit

Jefferson Transit provides rural demand-response services in Jefferson County, along with trips to Augusta for an additional fare. Rides are available between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM on weekdays with a 24-hour reservation window. Jefferson Transit uses a distance-based fare system that begins at \$3.00 for one-way trips under five miles, topping out at \$5.25 for trips up to 20 miles. Trips to Augusta are \$20.00 for a round trip.

7.1.7 Jenkins County Transit

Jenkins County Transit offers demand-response transportation for all county residents to all destinations within the county. Service is available on weekdays from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM, and riders must schedule their rides one business day in advance. Fares are \$1.50 for trips within the City of Millen, \$2.00 for trips that travel one to five miles outside of the city limits, and \$3.00 for trips exceeding five miles.

7.1.8 Lincoln County Transit

Lincoln County Transit provides residents with demand-response transportation services on weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Fares are \$5.00 within Lincoln County and \$10.00 for trips to Thomson or Washington. Trips to Augusta are available, with fares of \$5.00 for those ages 60 and older and \$18.00 for the general public.

7.1.9 McDuffie County Transit System

The McDuffie County Transit System, also known as McDuffie County Rural Transportation System, provides service within McDuffie County and to Richmond and Warren Counties on weekdays from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Round-trip fares for the general public are \$6.00 within McDuffie County and \$12.00 to Richmond or Warren Counties. Those over 60 pay \$2.00 for a round trip within McDuffie County and \$5.00 for round trips to Richmond or Warren Counties. Round-trip fares for children under 6 are \$3.00 to all destinations.

7.1.10 Taliaferro County Transit

Taliaferro County Transit buses run from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Tuesdays through Fridays. Fares are \$3.00 for trips within Crawfordville or Taliaferro County.

7.1.11 Warren County Transit

Warren County Transit, also known as Warren County Commission Transit, operates weekdays between the hours of 4:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Like with most rural systems in the region, riders need to give 24 hours advance notice. One-way fares are \$1.50 in Warren County, \$2.50 to Thomson County, and \$5.00 to Columbia or Richmond Counties.

7.1.12 Wilkes County Transit

Wilkes County Transit provides demand-response public transportation to all destinations within Wilkes County. Service is available Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM and on Friday from 7:30 AM to noon. Riders must call at least 24 hours in advance to schedule their trip. One-way fares are \$3.00 for the general public, \$2.00 for children under 16, and \$1.00 for seniors ages 60 and up.

DRAFT

Figure 22: Augusta Transit Summary

Augusta Transit

Urban Public Transit Service (Section 5307)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Fixed Route, Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Augusta-Richmond County

FARES

\$1.25

One-Way Trip

\$0.50

Transit between Routes

\$0.60

One-Way for Adults Ages 65+, Students and Handicapped

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

668,888 Trips in 2019

56,356 Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

715,543 Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$7.01 Average Cost Per Trip

\$83.22 Average Cost Per Hour

\$6.55 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Saturday 6:30 am – 7pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book demand-response rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 19 vehicles



Sources: Augusta Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan.

FUNDING

Sources of Operating Funds Expended			Sources of Capital Funds Expended		
Fare Revenues	\$1,125,597	24.0%	Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$1,999,570	42.6%	Local Funds	\$1,207,070	20.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$1,564,646	33.4%	Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$4,828,278	80.0%
Other Funds	\$0	0%	Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$5,639,721	100%	Total Capital Funds	\$6,035,348	100%

Figure 23: Burke Transit Summary

Burke Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Burke County

FARES

\$10.00
Round-Trip

\$8.00
Round-Trip for
Medical

\$6.00
Round-Trip for
Ages 60+

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 7am – 6pm



Available to
all county residents



Book rides
36 hours in advance

Fleet Size: 7 vehicles



Sources: Burke Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

26,062 Trips in 2019

12,133
Annual Vehicle
Revenue Hours

207,527
Annual Vehicle
Revenue Miles

\$15.33 Average Cost Per Trip

\$32.93 Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.93 Average Expense Per Mile

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$26,866	6.7%
Local Funds	\$140,572	35.2%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$232,088	58.1%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$399,526	100%

Sources of Operating
Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	-
Local Funds	\$0	-
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$0	-
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$0	-

Sources of Capital
Funds Expended

Figure 24: Columbia County Transit Summary

Columbia County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Columbia County

FARES

\$4.50

One Way

\$3.00

One Way for Ages 60+

\$1.00

One Way for Children under 12

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

46,963 Trips in 2019

17,365

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

281,470

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$12.51

Average Cost Per Trip

\$33.83

Average Cost Per Hour

\$2.09

Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 10am – 3:30pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 10 vehicles



Sources: Columbia County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$31,227	5.3%
Local Funds	\$231,630	39.4%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$324,531	55.2%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$587,388	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$13,105	10.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$117,948	90.0%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Capital Funds	\$131,053	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 25: Glascock County Transit

Glascock County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Glascock County

FARES

\$3.00

Round Trip

\$6.00

Round Trip to Select Out-of-County Destinations

\$15.00

Round Trip to Augusta

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

4,577 Trips in 2019

3,828

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

39,638

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$19.43 Average Cost Per Trip

\$23.23 Average Cost Per Hour

\$2.24 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 8am - 4pm

Wednesdays 8am - 12pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 2 vehicles



Sources: Glascock County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$4,770	5.4%
Local Funds	\$42,083	47.3%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$42,083	47.3%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$88,936	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	-
Local Funds	\$0	-
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$0	-
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$0	-

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 26: Hancock County Transit Summary

Hancock County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Hancock County

FARES

\$5.00

Round Trip

\$15.00

Round Trip to Select Out-of-County Destinations

\$50.00

Round Trip to Augusta

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

13,397 Trips in 2019

7,949

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

170,092

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$19.27 Average Cost Per Trip

\$32.47 Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.52 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Saturday 4am – 5pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 4 vehicles



Sources: Hancock County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$12,374	4.8%
Local Funds	\$81,868	31.7%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$73,851	28.6%
Other Funds	\$90,029	34.9%
Total Operating Funds	\$258,122	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$4,654	10.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$41,885	90.0%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Capital Funds	\$46,539	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 27: Jefferson Transit Summary

Jefferson Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Jefferson County

FARES

\$3.00

One-Way Under 5 Miles

\$0.25

Each Additional Two Miles

\$20.00

Round Trip to Augusta

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

27,155 Trips in 2019

14,443

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

203,207

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$13.45 Average Cost Per Trip

\$25.29 Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.80 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 6am – 5pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 6 vehicles



Sources: Jefferson Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$44,116	12.1%
Local Funds	\$127,012	34.8%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$194,180	53.2%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$365,308	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$4,654	10.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$41,885	90.0%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Capital Funds	\$46,539	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 28: Jenkins County Transit Summary

Jenkins County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Jenkins County

FARES

\$1.50

One-Way Within City of Millen

\$2.00

1 to 5 Miles Out of City Limits

\$3.00

Over 5 Miles Out of City Limits

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

3,157 Trips in 2019

1,876

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

27,747

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$21.11 Average Cost Per Trip

\$35.52 Average Cost Per Hour

\$2.40 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 8:30am – 4:30pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 1 vehicle



Sources: Jenkins County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$7,125	10.7%
Local Funds	\$29,808	44.7%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$29,702	44.6%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$66,635	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	-
Local Funds	\$0	-
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$0	-
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$46,539	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 29: Lincoln County Transit Summary

Lincoln County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Lincoln County

FARES

\$5.00

Round Trip Within Lincoln County

\$18.00

Round Trip to Augusta

\$10.00

Round Trip to Thomson or Washington

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

11,520 Trips in 2019

5,408

Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours

61,966

Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$7.76

Average Cost Per Trip

\$16.53

Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.44

Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 9am – 5pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 3 vehicles



Sources: Lincoln County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$2,920	3.3%
Local Funds	\$33,396	37.3%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$53,105	59.4%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$89,421	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$9,308	10.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$83,771	90.0%
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$93,079	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 30: McDuffie County Transit System Summary

McDuffie County Transit System

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: McDuffie County

FARES

\$6.00

Round Trip Within
McDuffie County

\$2.00

Round Trip for
Ages 60+

\$12.00

Round Trip to Augusta or
Warren County

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

24,967 Trips in 2019

8,447

Annual Vehicle
Revenue Hours

117,343

Annual Vehicle
Revenue Miles

\$11.11

Average Cost Per Trip

\$32.84

Average Cost Per Hour

\$2.36

Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Monday-Friday 8:00am – 4pm



Available to
all county residents



Book rides
24 hours in advance

Fleet Size: 5 vehicles



Sources: McDuffie County Transit System Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$20,204	7.3%
Local Funds	\$94,533	34.1%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$162,653	58.6%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$277,390	100%

Sources of Operating
Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	-
Local Funds	\$0	-
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$0	-
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$0	-

Sources of Capital
Funds Expended

Figure 31: Taliaferro County Transit

Taliaferro County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Taliaferro County

FARES

\$3.00
Round Trip

OPERATING TIME

Tuesday-Friday 8am – 5pm



Available to
all county residents



Book rides
24 hours in advance

Fleet Size: 2 vehicles



Sources: Taliaferro County Transit System Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

3,476 Trips in 2019

2,807 Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours
35,144 Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$15.42 Average Cost Per Trip

\$19.09 Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.52 Average Expense Per Mile

FUNDING

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage
Fare Revenues	\$2,414	4.5%
Local Funds	\$24,737	46.2%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$26,433	49.3%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$53,584	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Funding Source	Amount	Percentage
Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$4,279	10.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$38,513	90%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Capital Funds	\$42,792	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 32: Warren County Transit

Warren County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Warren County

FARES

\$1.50
One-Way

\$2.50
One-Way to Thomson

\$5.00
One-Way to Columbia or Richmond County

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

5,295 Trips in 2019

3,277 Annual Vehicle Revenue Hours **43,192** Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles

\$21.68 Average Cost Per Trip

\$35.03 Average Cost Per Hour

\$2.66 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Mon-Friday 4am – 3pm



Available to **all county residents**



Book rides **24 hours in advance**

Fleet Size: 2 vehicles



Sources: Warren County Transit Brochure, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$3,883	3.4%
Local Funds	\$50,503	44.0%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$60,420	52.6%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$114,806	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	-
Local Funds	\$0	-
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$0	-
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$0	-

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

Figure 33: Wilkes County Transit Summary

Wilkes County Transit

Rural Public Transit Service (Section 5311)

SERVICE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✓ Service Type: Demand Response
- ✓ Service Area: Wilkes County

FARES

\$3.00
One-Way

\$2.00
One Way for
Children Under 16

\$1.00
One-Way for Adults
Ages 60+

OPERATIONS SUMMARY

13,446 Trips in 2019

5,128
Annual Vehicle
Revenue Hours

97,915
Annual Vehicle
Revenue Miles

\$14.01 Average Cost Per Trip

\$36.73 Average Cost Per Hour

\$1.92 Average Expense Per Mile

OPERATING TIME

Mon-Thu 7:30am – 5:00pm
Friday 7:30am - 12:00pm



Available to
all county residents

24 Book rides
24 hours in advance

Fleet Size: 3 vehicles



Sources: Wilkes County Transit Website, 2019 FTA National Transit Database, 2050 GDOT Rural and Human Services Transportation Plan

FUNDING

Fare Revenues	\$17,733	8.9%
Local Funds	\$85,812	45.6%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$85,812	45.6%
Other Funds	\$0	0%
Total Operating Funds	\$188,357	100%

Sources of Operating Funds Expended

Fare Revenues	\$0	0%
Local Funds	\$4,279	10%
Federal Assistance and State Funds	\$38,513	90.0%
Other Funds	\$0	-
Total Capital Funds	\$42,792	100%

Sources of Capital Funds Expended

7.2 Transit Services in Surrounding Communities

Several transit agencies in surrounding communities were identified for peer comparison purposes. These agencies have similarities to the various systems located within the CSRA region and can provide useful performance measure comparisons and potential best practices.

The FTA's National Transit Database (NTD) provides standardized performance data for all federally funded transit agencies in the United States. Though the most recent available FTA NTD dataset is from 2021, this report uses 2019 data. Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, transit ridership was greatly reduced, so 2020 and 2021 data may not give an accurate representation of transit funding and operations.

7.2.1 Columbus Metropolitan Transit System

The Columbus Metropolitan (METRA) Transit System serves the general public within the City of Columbus, with service to the US Army installation at Fort Benning. Fort Benning and Columbus make up the entirety of the area of Muscogee County. METRA provides fixed-route bus service to the general public across ten routes, as well as ADA comparable paratransit service for qualifying individuals. Services operate between 4:30 AM and 8:30 PM Monday through Saturday. Standard adult fare is \$1.30, with reduced fares available to students and seniors. Weekly, biweekly, and monthly passes are also available.

7.2.2 Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority

Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority (MTA) offers fixed-route service along nine routes, two of which are also served by limited-stop express buses. MTA also runs a shuttle service connecting the Mercer University campus with Downtown Macon. Most routes run from around 5:30 AM to 9:00 PM Monday through Friday. Saturday service ends around 7:00 PM for most routes.

Fares are \$1.25 one way, with a \$0.50 fee to transfer buses. Paratransit rides are \$2.50. Reduced fares are available for students, children, and seniors. For frequent riders, ride passes and unlimited monthly passes are also available at discounted prices.

7.2.3 Albany Transit System

The Albany Transit System (ATS) operates 11 city bus routes within the Albany urbanized area, as well as the Ram Rush, a dedicated shuttle that moves students between the East and West Campuses of Albany State University. ATS also operates ADA comparable paratransit service for those unable to ride ATS fixed-route service.

Most routes run hourly between 5:00 AM and 7:00 PM during weekdays, with service starting at 6:00 AM on Saturdays. The Ram Rush operates every 45 minutes from 6:45 AM to 9:40 PM. There is currently no Sunday service. Fares are \$1.70 per trip, with seniors and children's fares available for \$0.50. Monthly passes are available for \$45.00.

7.2.4 Wayne County Transit

Wayne County Transit provides demand-response transit services to the general public within Wayne County. Transit services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Fares are \$4.00 for a trip between 0-10 miles, \$6.00 for a trip between 10-25 miles, \$13.00 for a trip between 26-50 miles, \$20.00 for a trip between 51-100 miles. These prices are all doubled when it is a round trip. For the elderly, handicapped individuals, or children five and under, the prices are half of what is listed for each section except for a trip between 26-50 miles, where the cost for a one-way trip is \$6.00. Wayne County Transit provides out-of-county transit services based on the fares listed above.

7.2.5 Twiggs County Transit

Twiggs County Transit operates demand-response transit available to all county residents. Transportation services are available from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday through Friday. Riders must make a reservation 24 hours prior to their trip. Fares are \$1.00 for one-way, in-county trips and \$4.00 for round trips that leave Twiggs County.

7.2.6 Rabun Transit

Rabun Transit offers demand-response service throughout Rabun County. The service is available to all residents and runs from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM on weekdays. Customers must call to reserve a ride at least 24 to 48 hours in advance, and reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis.

7.3 Performance Measures

Along with US Census data, FTA NTD datasets can be used to analyze performance measures that track how efficiently or effectively transit systems operate. Though performance measures are effective in quantifying operational characteristics of transit operators, every community and every transit operator faces a different series of operating conditions and challenges. Recognizing that these performance measures cannot convey every aspect of a system's operation is an important factor in analyzing systems' past operation.

The region contains a large number of rural transit systems, some of which provide substantially more transit trips than others. For the purpose of the peer analysis, the rural operators were divided into cohorts depending on whether unlinked passenger trips were above or below the rural regional average of 23,201 trips. The higher ridership rural cohort is comprised of:

- Burke Transit,
- Columbia County Transit,
- Glascock County Transit, and
- Hancock County Transit.

The lower ridership rural cohort is made up of:

- Jefferson Transit,
- Jenkins County Transit,
- Lincoln County Transit,
- McDuffie County Transit System,
- Taliaferro County Transit,
- Warren County Transit, and
- Wilkes County Transit.

Table 19 shows several performance measures for Augusta Transit, along with that data for the peers discussed above. Data is also provided for the two regional rural system averages and their respective peers.

Table 19: Performance Metrics for the CSRA Transit Systems and Selected Peers (2019)

	Urban Systems			Higher Ridership Rural Systems			Lower Ridership Rural Systems		
	Augusta Transit	METRA	MTA	CSRA Average	Troup Transit	Wayne County Transit	CSRA Average	Twiggs County Transit	Rabun Transit
Service Data									
Service Area Population	201,852	230,208	153,691	46,184	69,919	29,788	10,068	7,955	16,915
Population Density (per sq. mi.)	622.4	2,195.6	1,744.0	106.6	168.9	46.4	30.8	22.2	45.7
Annual Operating Budget	\$4,689,813	\$5,639,721	\$4,768,349	\$407,403	\$309,224	\$499,152	\$122,837	\$111,223	\$199,717
Unlinked Passenger Trips	668,888	592,201	1,313,727	31,287	32,249	45,739	7,838	7,274	8,195
Vehicle Revenue Miles	715,543	1,119,955	1,413,534	202,387	154,162	368,694	67,956	56,570	78,557
Vehicle Revenue Hours	56,356	64,260	120,027	13,097	9,521	16,997	4,325	2,920	6,042
Population Metrics									
Trips per Capita	3.31	5.71	3.85	0.68	0.46	1.54	0.78	0.91	0.48
Revenue Hours per Capita	0.28	0.52	0.42	0.28	0.14	0.57	0.43	0.37	0.36
Cost Metrics									
Cost per Trip	\$7.01	\$3.63	\$9.52	\$13.02	\$9.59	\$10.91	\$15.67	\$15.29	\$24.37
Cost per Mile	\$6.55	\$3.37	\$5.04	\$2.01	\$2.01	\$1.35	\$1.81	\$1.97	\$2.54
Cost per Hour	\$83.22	\$39.73	\$87.76	\$31.11	\$32.48	\$29.37	\$28.40	\$38.09	\$33.05
Fare Metrics									
Fare Revenue per Trip	\$0.90	\$0.76	\$1.03	\$0.98	\$0.49	\$1.17	\$0.92	\$1.00	\$1.52
Recovery Ratio	12.9%	21.0%	10.8%	7.5%	5.1%	10.7%	5.8%	6.5%	6.2%

Source: FTA NTD, 2019 Annual Data Tables

8.0 Transit-Supportive Land Use and Development

This section analyzes zoning and land uses in the CSRA region to determine where transit-supportive land uses are within the region and where future development could occur. Information for land use, including areas requiring special attention, is referenced from the CSRA Regional Plan 2040. Plus, key destinations and essential services, Developments of Regional Impact (DRI), affordable housing, and senior centers are also identified and discussed in this section.

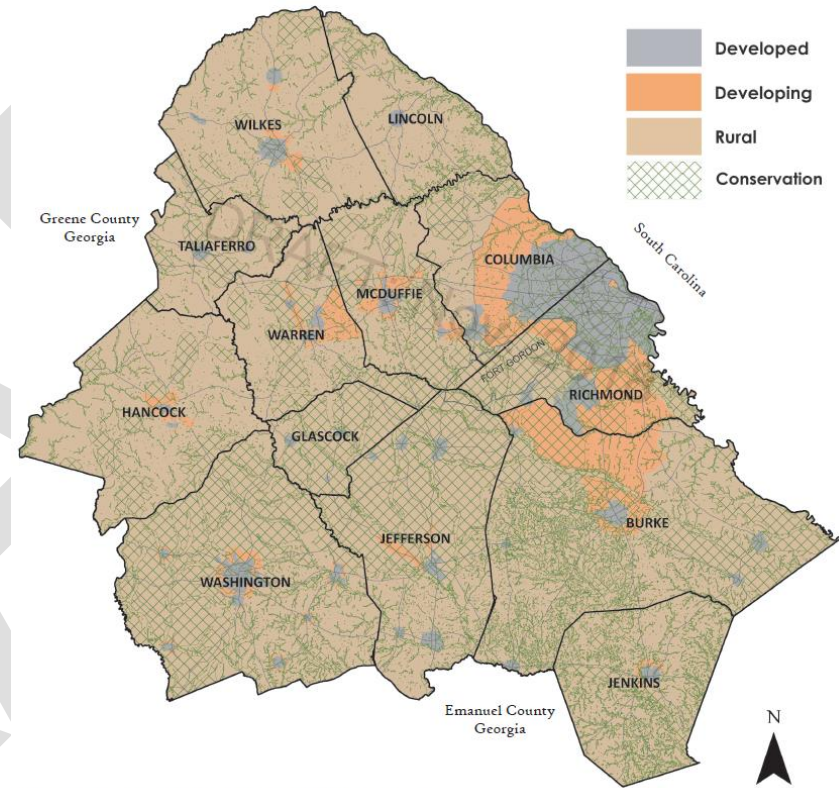
8.1 Existing Land Use and Zoning

Land use areas for the CSRA region include developed, developing, rural, and conservation:

- **Developed:** Areas exhibiting increasingly dense development patterns and where higher levels of public services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) are already being provided at the time of plan preparation
- **Developing:** Areas that will exhibit increasingly dense development patterns and will require provision of new public services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) during the planning period
- **Rural:** Areas not expected to become developed or require increased provision of public services during the planning period
- **Conservation:** Important natural and cultural resources and environmentally sensitive areas of the region, including wetlands and groundwater recharge areas

The region can largely be classified as rural, as displayed in **Figure 34**, with conservation areas throughout. Most cities in the CSRA region have developing areas outside of their city limits; the largest areas that are developing are in central Columbia County, southern Richmond County, and northern Burke County. The developed and developing areas are most likely to have land uses that can support the need for transit.

Figure 34: Existing Land Use



Prepared: November 2018 by CSRA RC Planning Department
 Source: CSRA Regional Plan 2040

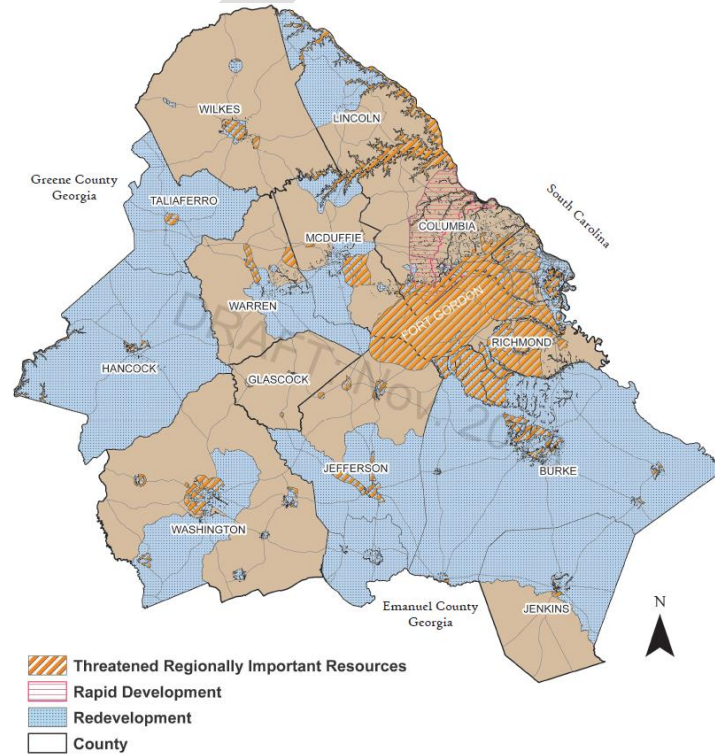
8.2 Areas Requiring Special Attention

Areas requiring special attention are areas that need monitoring because of potential development conflicts, opportunities for economic growth, change of land uses, rapid development, poverty, potential for infill, or redevelopment needs. These areas, displayed in **Figure 35**, in the CSRA region consist of the following categories:

- **Threatened Regionally Important Resources:** Areas where significant natural or cultural resources are likely to be impacted by development.
- **Rapid Development:** Areas where rapid development or change of land uses are likely to occur, especially where the pace of development has or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation.
- **Redevelopment:** Areas in need of or currently experiencing redevelopment. These areas include: The need for significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness; the potential for infill development; and levels of poverty and/or unemployment that are substantially higher than the region as a whole, indicating significant disinvestment.⁹

Most cities and the Fort Eisenhower area are threatened regionally important resources. Central Columbia County, outside the cities of Grovetown and Evans, is in rapid development. Every county has an area of redevelopment; Burke, Hancock, and Taliaferro Counties are entirely in redevelopment areas.

Figure 35: Areas Requiring Special Attention



Prepared: November 2018 by CSRA RC Planning Department
 Source: CSRA Regional Plan 2040

⁹ CSRA Regional Plan 2040, Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission, https://csrarc.ga.gov/sites/default/files/csrarc/planning/06062019_csrarc_regional_plan_update_adopded.pdf

8.3 Key Destinations and Essential Services

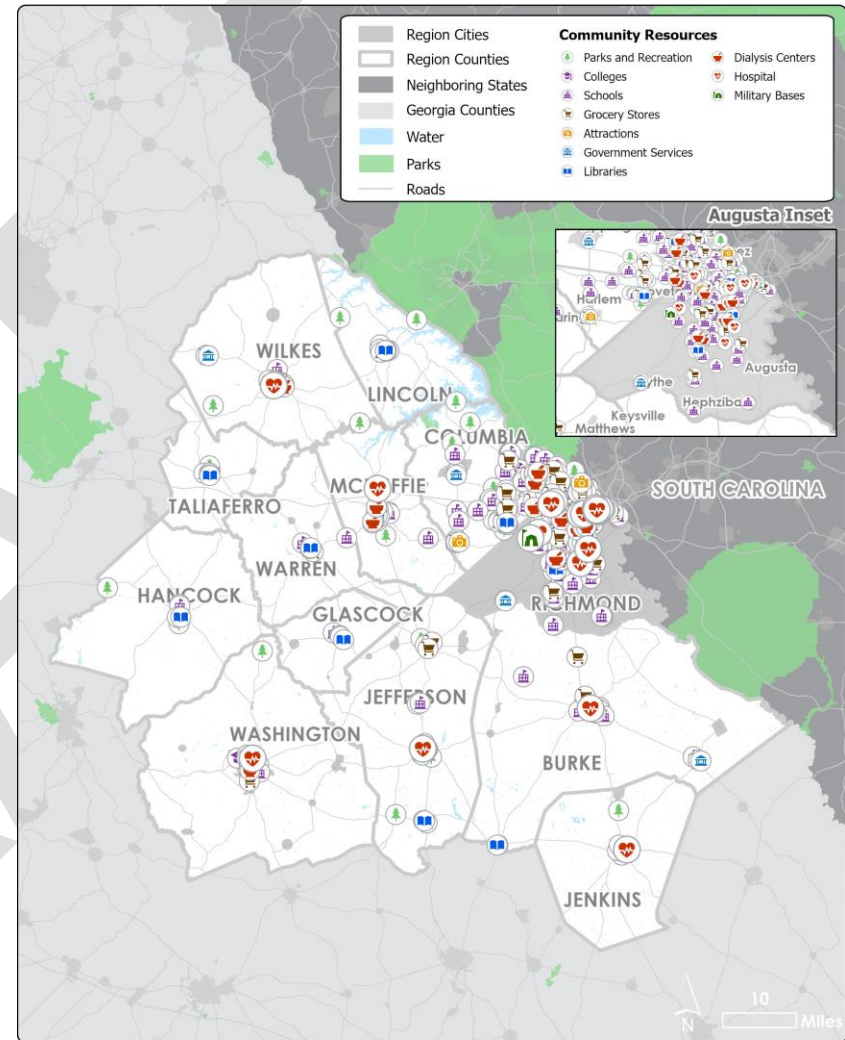
Key destinations and essential services (shown in **Figure 36**) are used by residents or visitors for commercial, social, religious, public safety, recreation, or governmental needs. This region has a total 382 key destinations and resources. Each county has schools, grocery stores, libraries, and government facilities. Hospitals are available in seven counties, including Burke, Jefferson, Jenkins, McDuffie, Richmond, Washington, and Wilkes Counties. Dialysis centers are located in the same seven counties and in Columbia County. The region has one military installation in Richmond County, Fort Eisenhower. **Table 20** presents the key destinations by number and percentage. The top three most common destinations: schools (36.4 percent), parks and recreation (19.6 percent), and grocery stores (15.4 percent). Transit is available for all services and destinations in the region except those in Washington County.

Table 20: Key Destinations and Essential Services

Type	Number of Services	Percent of Total Services
Hospitals	18	4.7%
Grocery Stores	59	15.4%
Libraries	18	4.7%
Dialysis Centers	26	6.8%
Colleges	9	2.4%
Government Services	21	5.5%
Parks and Recreation	75	19.6%
Schools	139	36.4%
Military Installations	1	0.3%
Attractions	16	4.2%
CSRA Total	382	100.0%

Source: CSRA-RC

Figure 36: Key Destinations and Essential Services



Source: CSRA-RC

8.4 Developments of Regional Impact

DRIs are large-scale developments that are likely to have regional effects beyond the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. According to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), there are 15 DRIs in the region, with Columbia County accounting for one third of these DRIs (listed in **Table 21**). DRIs that support transit, mixed-use development, and housing are located in Columbia and Richmond Counties, as shown in **Figure 37**.

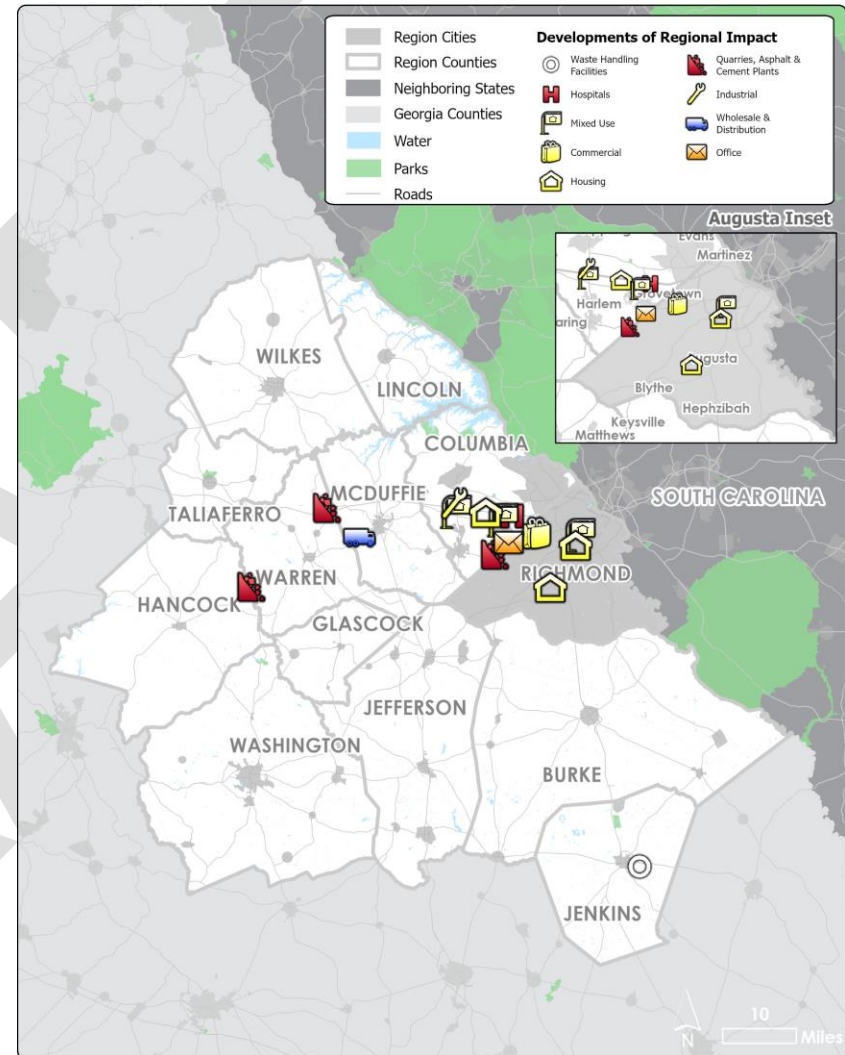
Table 21: Developments of Regional Impact Within Last 5 Years

County	Number*	Types	Status
Columbia	7	Hospitals, Housing, Industrial, Mixed Use, Office, Quarry/Plant	All Completed
Hancock	1	Quarry/Plant	All Completed
Jenkins	1	Waste Facilities	All Completed
McDuffie	1	Wholesale	All Completed
Richmond	4	Commercial, Housing, Mixed Use, Wholesale	3 Completed, 1 Form Submitted
Warren	1	Quarry/Plant	All Completed

Source: DCA

*Excludes DRIs with withdrawn applications.

Figure 37: Developments of Regional Impact



Source: DCA

8.5 Affordable Housing Initiatives

Affordable housing initiatives consist of Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) properties, multi-family assisted properties, and public housing properties. LIHTC properties are properties that have been acquired, rehabilitated, or newly constructed from tax credits to provide rental housing for lower-income households. Multi-family assisted properties consist of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-subsidized multifamily rental housing properties with five or more dwelling units. These typically include apartments or town houses, but can also include nursing homes, hospitals, elderly housing, mobile home parks, retirement service centers, and, occasionally, vacant land. For this section, housing and properties for the elderly have been excluded and are analyzed separately in **Section 8.6**. Public housing properties are housing with aid administered from HUD for low-income residents at rents they can afford.

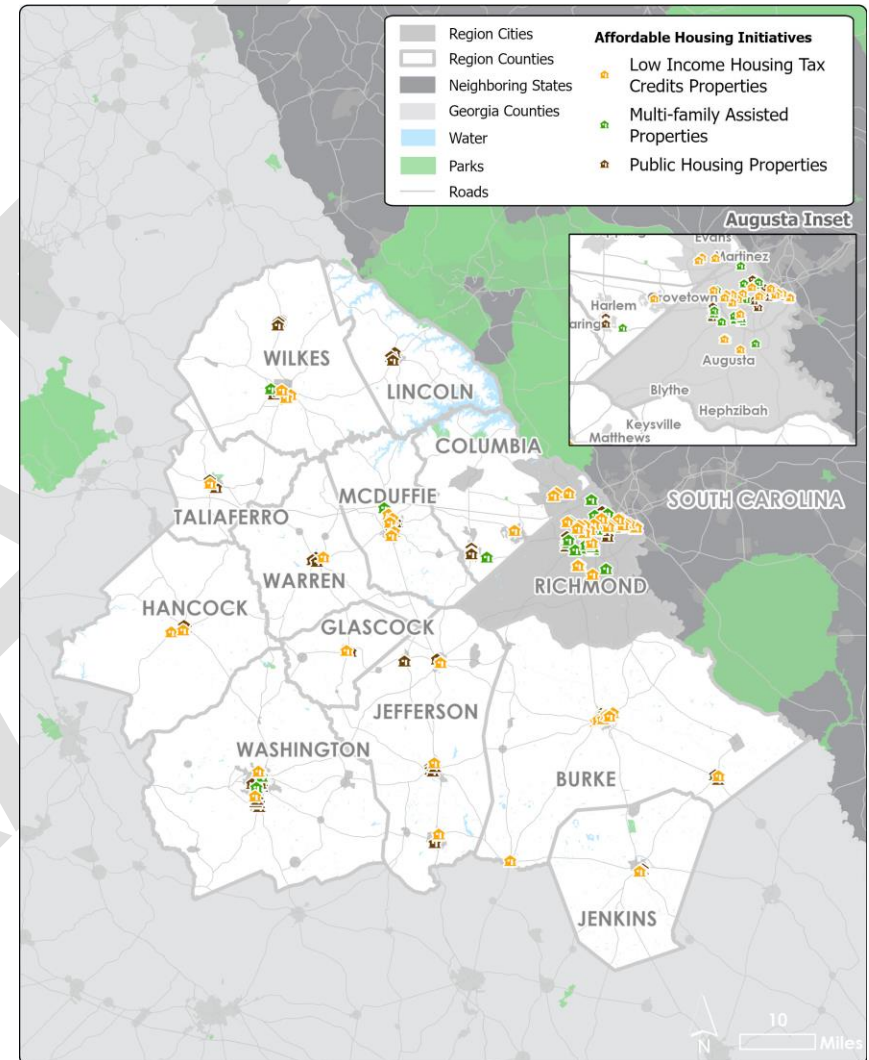
Affordable housing amounts to less than 0.1 percent of the housing in the region, which consists of a total of 211,651 occupied housing units. **Table 22** indicates that most of the affordable housing in the region is public housing (45.3 percent), followed by LIHTC (33.7 percent), and then by multi-family assisted (20.9 percent). Most of this housing is located within and adjacent to city and town limits, displayed in **Figure 38**.

Table 22: Affordable Housing Initiatives

Property Type	Number of Properties	Percent of Total Properties
Low-Income Housing Tax Credit	58	33.7%
Multi-Family Assisted	36	20.9%
Public Housing	78	45.3%
CSRA Total	172	100.0%

Source: HUD, 2021 ACS 5-Year Data

Figure 38: Affordable Housing Initiatives



Source: HUD

8.6 Aging Initiatives and Senior Centers

Elderly assisted properties are HUD-subsidized multifamily housing properties specifically for the elderly, excluding insured hospitals with active loans. Nursing homes and assisted living residences are either publicly owned (by the county, for example) or privately owned buildings with multiple dwelling units. In addition to the elderly assisted properties and nursing homes/assisted living residences, there are personal care homes that are privately owned residences, usually containing fewer than six beds for elderly persons. All of these centers require a license from the DCH.

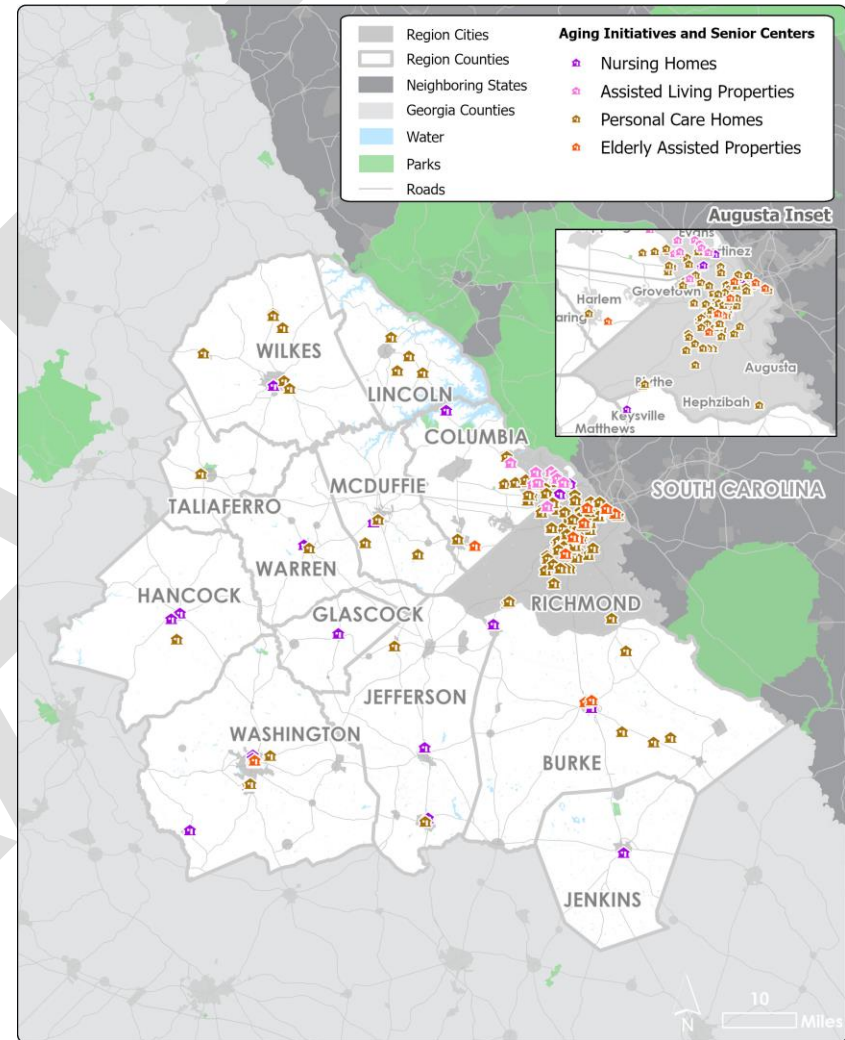
There are a total of 167 senior centers in the region, shown in **Figure 39**. **Table 23** shows that most of the centers are personal care homes (69.5 percent), followed by nursing homes (18.0 percent), elderly assisted properties (7.2 percent), and assisted living residences (5.4 percent). Some of the centers are located in the highest elderly (ages 60+) census tracts in Burke, Warren, and McDuffie Counties. Most centers are located within and adjacent to city and town limits.

Table 23: Aging Initiatives and Senior Centers

Property Type	Number of Properties	Percent of Total Properties
Nursing Homes	30	18.0%
Assisted Living Residences	9	5.4%
Personal Care Homes	116	69.5%
Elderly Assisted	12	7.2%
CSRA Total	167	100.0%

Source: HUD and DCH

Figure 39: Aging Initiatives and Senior Centers



Source: HUD and DCH

9.0 Transit Funding

9.1 Existing Funding for Transit

Public transit in the State of Georgia is funded through several sources, including federal, state, and local funds. Direct revenue, such as fares and coordinated purchased transportation, provide another source of income.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021 greatly increased federal outlays for transit funding. Federal grants fall into two categories: formula, which allocates funds based on certain characteristics of the areas receiving funding, and competitive, which require agencies or governments seeking funding to apply for it. In most cases, regardless of grant type, recipients must demonstrate the ability to provide local matching funds covering some portion of project costs.

In addition to the higher levels of transit funding available through the IIJA, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 further increased federal support for transit projects throughout the country. The IRA establishes and extends a range of competitive grant programs and tax credits for zero-emission vehicles, charging infrastructure, and alternative fuels. These funds may be used to help transition transit fleets to battery electric or hydrogen fuel cell fleets, among other uses.

9.1.1 Section 5311 Rural Formula Funding

FTA provides Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Funding to GDOT to administer to non-urbanized areas with a population of less than 50,000. This funding requires a local match and can be used to provide transit services for all residents and trip types. Funds are allocated based on an area's size, population, low-income population, and revenue vehicle miles. Section 5311 funds can be used for capital, operating, planning, and job access related activities. The federal share is up to 80 percent for capital projects and 50 percent for operating costs; local or state funds must be used to make up the remaining costs. Purchase-of-service contracts can be counted toward the local match, allowing coordinated Section 5311 systems to use Human Services Transportation funding to cover substantial portions of the required local match. Historically, the State of Georgia has provided a 10 percent capital funds match for the purchase of rural transit buses procured under the Section 5311 program. **Table 24** shows five years of Section 5311 distributions for the rural transit providers in the CSRA region.

Table 24: Section 5311 Rural Distributions in the CSRA Region

Funding Recipient	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Burke County	\$117K	\$122K	\$143K	\$152K	\$175K
Columbia County	\$287K	\$235K	\$256K	\$257K	\$265K
Glascocock County	\$44K	\$46K	\$48K	\$50K	\$55K
Hancock County	\$97K	\$78K	\$138K	\$196K	\$214K
Jefferson County	\$202K	\$215K	\$272K	\$212K	\$188K
Jenkins County	\$30K	\$31K	\$41K	\$41K	\$39K
Lincoln County	\$118K	\$88K	\$46K	\$60K	\$60K
McDuffie County	\$110K	\$131K	\$222K	\$138K	\$140K
Taliaferro County	\$69K	\$32K	\$32K	\$79K	\$45K
Warren County	\$52K	\$54K	\$54K	\$144K	\$87K
Wilkes County	\$132K	\$98K	\$151K	\$103K	\$107K

Source: GDOT

9.1.2 Section 5307 Urban Formula Funding

Formula funding for urban areas is provided through the Section 5307 Urban program. Within Georgia, GDOT serves as the designated recipient for Section 5307 funds allocated to urban areas with populations under 200,000. The Augusta metropolitan area’s population is over 200,000 residents, so Augusta Transit receives its Section 5307 funding directly from FTA. Section 5307 provides up to 80 percent of capital funding.

Table 25: Section 5307 Urban Distributions in the CSRA Region

Funding Recipient	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Augusta Transit	\$2.2M	\$2.3M	\$2.3M	\$2.9M	\$3.0M

Source: FTA NTD

9.1.3 Georgia Transit Trust Fund

The Georgia Transit Trust Fund Program (TTFP) is a funding program administered by GDOT that uses a population-based formula to distribute state funds to Georgia’s counties that have existing transit service. Multi-county transit agencies also receive funding distributions based on population, and counties with household incomes below \$45,000 receive additional appropriations. The TTFP is funded through a tax levied on rideshare services and other for-hire ground transportation, as passed by the Georgia General Assembly in 2020. Georgia’s fiscal year 2024 budget is the first budget to distribute these funds to transit agencies statewide, with funds eligible to be used to support both capital and operating expenses.

Table 26: Georgia Transit Trust Fund Program Allocations in the CSRA Region

Funding Recipient	2023	2024
Augusta Transit	\$213,018	\$277,535
Burke County	\$52,968	\$33,040
Columbia County	\$137,187	\$209,568
Glascocock County	\$2,536	\$3,874
Hancock County	\$39,020	\$61,735
Jefferson County	\$45,153	\$71,104
Jenkins County	\$38,967	\$61,654
Lincoln County	\$6,762	\$10,330
McDuffie County	\$19,022	\$79,060
Taliaferro County	\$32,710	\$52,096
Warren County	\$35,925	\$57,007
Wilkes County	\$39,750	\$62,850
CSRA Total	\$663,018	\$979,853

Source: GDOT

9.2 Transit Funding Opportunities

FTA formula funds account for the bulk of transit funding, especially in rural areas. However, FTA provides a number of competitive grant programs that transit agencies may use to leverage additional funding. Section 5339, the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, consists of one formula and two competitive grants. The first, 5339(a), allocates formula funding for capital projects involving the replacement, rehabilitation, or purchase of buses, vans, and bus-related equipment, or for the construction of bus-related facilities to support fixed-route transit service. The other grant under this program is 5339(c), the Low or No Emission Vehicle Program. This competitive grant program provides federal funding for the purchase or lease of zero-emission or low-emission transit buses and the acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities. Federal funds can cover up to 85 percent of the cost of acquiring transit buses and up to 90 percent of the costs associated with acquiring related equipment and facilities.

In January 2021, the Justice40 Initiative outlined the goal of providing 40 percent of federal transportation investment to disadvantaged communities. Many FTA grant programs are being retooled to meet these priorities. The largest of these programs is the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. RAISE grants are aimed at major capital projects that address climate change, equity concerns, and barriers to opportunity. Over \$5.4 billion in RAISE grants have been awarded over the past three years, with \$983 million awarded to 90 projects in 2021, \$2.2 billion awarded to 166 projects in 2022, and \$2.3 billion awarded to 162 projects in 2023. As additional competitive programs come online, FTA will update their Justice40 website.¹⁰

¹⁰ www.transportation.gov/equity-Justice40

10.0 Key Findings and Next Steps

This section summarizes key findings from the Existing Conditions Report. These findings, along with feedback from stakeholders and public involvement activities, are critical to identifying regional transit needs. This section also provides further guidance on the next stage of the Regional TDP.

10.1 Key Findings

- Overall, Richmond, Columbia, and Hancock Counties have a high concentration of transit market demographics in their low-income, elderly, and disabled populations and zero-car-households.
 - High concentrations of low-income populations are found in Richmond and Hancock Counties and in the Augusta area.
 - High concentrations of elderly populations are found in Hancock, Wilkes, Lincoln, Columbia, Richmond, Taliaferro, Warren, Washington, and Jenkins Counties and Lincolnton, Washington, and Augusta areas.
 - High concentrations of zero-car households are found in Richmond and Burke Counties and in the Augusta area.
 - High concentrations of populations with a disability are found in Richmond, Columbia, Warren, and Washington Counties and in the Augusta area.
 - High concentrations of minority populations are found in Hancock, Jefferson, Burke, and Richmond Counties and in the Augusta area.
 - High concentrations of LEP populations are found in Columbia and Wilkes Counties.
 - All counties have Transportation-Disadvantaged census tracts.
- Unemployment in the region is higher than the state average and found at the highest concentrations in Columbia, Richmond, and Burke Counties.
- Population projections show the region experiencing robust growth over the next 40 years, with four counties (Columbia, Burke, Richmond, and McDuffie Counties) expecting the most growth. Jefferson, Glascock, Warren, Washington, and Hancock Counties, though, are predicted to decrease in population by 2060, with Hancock County projecting a 12 percent decrease. The region as a whole is projected to grow by 20 percent by 2060, less than the state's projected growth rate of 31.1 percent over the same time period.
- Key destinations and essential services that can support transit are more commonly found in Burke, Columbia, Jefferson, Jenkins, McDuffie, Richmond, Washington, and Wilkes Counties.
- Rural transit service is available in all counties in the region except Washington County. Most transit agencies in the region provide service to surrounding counties in the region and Augusta. Jenkins, Taliaferro, and Wilkes Counties' transit agencies provide within-county trips only.
- Augusta Transit performs comparably to peer systems in areas similar to Central Savannah River Area. The performance of the region's urban system varies when compared to similar systems in the state, with Augusta Transit exceeding the performance of METRA in unlinked passenger trips, but underperforming both METRA and MTA in population and cost metrics.
- The CSRA region average scores lowest for unlinked passenger trips compared to higher ridership rural systems: Troup County and Wayne County Transit; the CSRA region average is in the middle for lower ridership rural systems: higher than Twiggs County Transit and lower than Rabun Transit.

- Most trips in Central Savannah River Area start and end within the same county (79 percent). Inter-county trips are also common, with Richmond, Columbia, and Burke Counties as the top destinations.
- None of the transit providers in the region are using the Let's Ride smartphone application for transit trip reservations and scheduling. There is an opportunity to better leverage technology to facilitate transit access in the future. Broadband access and accessibility for older adults are important considerations for implementation.
- There are several medical facilities in the region, including the Doctors Hospital of Augusta, Piedmont Healthcare, Regional Medical Centers, and Veteran Affairs Hospital locations. Lincoln, Taliaferro, Hancock, Warren, and Glascock County residents do not have direct access to hospitals or dialysis centers within their counties, but neighboring services can be accessed through transit in the region.
- The top industry in the Central Savannah River Area is Government due to the presence of Fort Eisenhower, the US Army Cyber Center of Excellence. Other major industries include Healthcare and Retail Trade; the CSRA region is home to many Healthcare facilities, with four of the top 10 employers belonging to Healthcare. As for Retail Trade, the region has many Walmart stores located in several counties across the region.

- The region's largest employers in Hospitality and Healthcare are projected to continue creating job opportunities for Central Savannah River Area's labor force.
- There are park and ride lots located in Jefferson, Richmond, and Washington Counties that could serve as regional multimodal hubs or transit transfer points between county systems.
- New funding programs at the federal level, particularly those tied to the Justice40 Initiative, may present opportunities for transit service expansion and enhancement to better serve disadvantaged populations.

10.2 Next Steps

The Existing Conditions Report provides a foundation to identify and prioritize the transit needs for each county as well as the Central Savannah River Area. This documentation and analysis will be utilized in the next steps in Regional TDP development, including the Vision and Goals Statement, in coordination with stakeholder and public input, and the Alternatives Analysis and Recommendations Report.