

# In the REGION

## Eleven Southern Georgia Communities Awarded Over \$9.1 Million in CDBG Funds

On September 23rd, Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Christopher Nunn announced that forty (40) local governments would be awarded more than \$35 million in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to help improve their communities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) allocated the annual funds to Georgia's CDBG program, which is administered by DCA.

“Community Development Block Grants are impactful tools that benefit all parts of the state, especially rural Georgia,” said Commissioner Nunn. “These awards represent local-driven city and county solutions that will improve the quality of life for many Georgians.”

Just over \$9.1 million in CDBG funds were awarded to local governments in the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's region. The

CDBG monies were granted to Atkinson, Charlton, Coffee, Cook, and Lanier Counties, and the Cities of Ashburn, Blackshear, Douglas, Lakeland, Lenox, and Nahunta.



**Eston Pescott Road in Charlton County will be improved with CDBG funds. Upon completion of the project, neighborhood residents will no longer be endangered by this frequently flooded roadway.**

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*The Southern Georgia Regional Commission proudly serves Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.*

# Community and Economic Development

## Eleven Southern Georgia Communities Awarded Over \$9.1 Million in CDBG Funds (continued)

The following is a description of the awards in Southern Georgia:

- City of Ashburn - \$1,000,000 – Water & Sewer Improvements
- Atkinson County - \$1,000,000 – Street Paving & Drainage Improvements
- City of Blackshear - \$574,220 – Neighborhood Revitalization
- Charlton County - \$211,857 – Street Paving & Drainage Improvements
- Coffee County - \$1,000,000 – Street Paving & Drainage Improvements
- Cook County - \$335,812 – Street Paving and Drainage Improvements
- City of Douglas - \$1,000,000 – Head Start Facility
- City of Lakeland - \$1,000,000 – Water & Sewer Improvements
- Lanier County - \$1,000,000 – Health Department Facility
- City of Lenox - \$1,000,000 – Street Paving & Drainage Improvements
- City of Nahunta - \$1,000,000 – Water System Improvements



**An area in the southern portion of Nahunta will have adequate fire protection, improved water quality, and increased water pressure upon completion of this project.**

The Southern Georgia RC's Community & Economic Development Division prepared eight of the eleven approved CDBG applications in this region. DCA will host a virtual Recipients' Workshop on October 26th. In addition, DCA will be hosting awards recognition events at three locations across the state. The events are scheduled for October 18th in Douglas, October 19th in Albany, and November 1st in Forsyth.

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# Community and Economic Development

Eleven Southern Georgia Communities Awarded Over \$9.1 Million in CDBG Funds (continued)



**The City of Blackshear's Neighborhood Revitalization Project will repair blighted housing including the home pictured here.**

# Workforce Development

## WorkSource Southern Georgia Staff Attends Southeastern Employment and Training Association Event

Members of the WorkSource Southern Georgia team had the opportunity to attend the Southeastern Employment and Training Association (SETA) conference in Louisville, KY in August. SETA's mission is to provide professional training opportunities for all workforce development partners across an eight state alliance. During the four day event, Roberta Lovett, Deputy Executive Director of Human Services, Savannah Bennett, Workforce Development Program Assistant, and Amy Jones, Business Services/Sector Partnership Coordinator, learned of best practices in the field, recent legislation updates, and new strategies from peers to best facilitate work.

Lovett and Jones had the privilege of offering training to peers during a breakout session entitled, "Emotional Intelligence; Empowering Skills to Transform Lives." In 1990 scientists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer coined the term Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Described as, "a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action."



**Amy Jones and Roberta Lovett (left to right) presentation for the 2022 SETA conference.**



**A group shot of Region 11's representation at the SETA conference.**



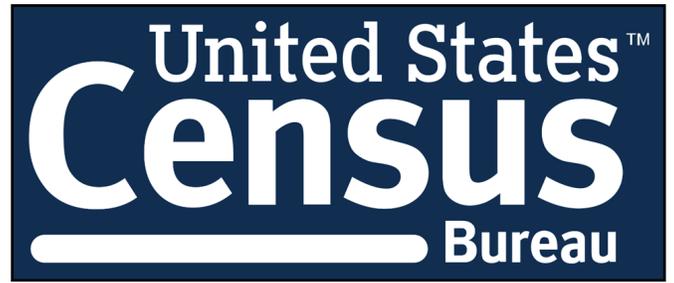
**WorkSource Southern Georgia Staff (left to right) Savannah, Amy, and Roberta enjoying the Kentucky Derby themed dinner reception.**

# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Urges Communities to Prepare Now for the 2023 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS)

Communities will receive documents in the next few months from the Census Bureau, so now is the time to start preparing for the 2023 Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS). A response from each local government is required. Participation in the 2023 BAS is strongly encouraged for the following reasons:

- Boundary updates are vital to the success of the 2030 Census population count!
- The federal government allocates more than \$675 billion in federal funds across the nation, state, and region that depend on data acquired during this initiative.



The first action step is to review and/or update BAS contact forms. On this form, cities or counties indicate whether there are “No Changes” or “Yes, we have changes” to report for the area. If “Yes, we have changes” is marked, the next step would be to follow the Census Bureau’s steps to digitally submit the communities' changes.

On the BAS website, there are step-by-step instructions on how to start the boundary updating process and respond to the 2023 BAS. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/bas.html>.

Following are some key dates:

- January 1, 2023**      Boundary updates must be legally in effect on or before this date to be reported in the 2023 BAS.
- March 1, 2023**      Boundary updates submitted by this date will be reflected in the ACS and PEP data estimates and in next year’s BAS materials.
- May 31, 2023**      Boundary updates submitted by this date will be reflected in next year’s BAS materials.

The SGRC-GIS Division can assist any community through any and/or all parts of the BAS process. If requested by the community, the SGRC GIS will submit the digital annexation/de-annexation changes to the Census Bureau. Due to previous and new state legislation, all annexations and de-annexations must be submitted to the GA State Department of Community Affairs and the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office before the Census Bureau will accept boundary changes. Please contact SGRC-GIS Division Director Rachel Strom at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us) for assistance.

# Small Business Lending

## SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists Book and Table Inn with RLF Loan

Able Strength, LLC is a sole proprietorship located at 120 N Patterson St. in Valdosta, and was formed in August of 2019 for the purpose of non-residential investment real estate. Able Strength, LLC operates in public as the Book and Table Inn for all of the company's Airbnb rentals. Located in close proximity to all of Downtown Valdosta's local attractions, the Book and Table Inn offers a peaceful getaway for Valdosta residents looking for a stay-cation or travelers who are simply passing through and want a great place to relax.

Mr. and Mrs. Phelps sought funding to enable them to purchase commercial real estate, which they currently lease for operations and an owner occupied business. The Southern Georgia Area Resource Development Agency (SGARDA) worked in partnership with Commercial Banking Company of Valdosta to finance the loan. SGARDA's Revolving Loan Fund provided forty percent of the loan at a below market, fixed interest rate and for an extended period, greater than conventionally offered.



**Pictured are rooms at the Book and Table Inn in Historic Downtown Valdosta.**

# Small Business Lending

## SGRC Small Business Lending Program Offers Helpful Tips for Business Loan Applicants

To assist applicants with the Small Business Loan process, the SGRC-Small Business Lending Division shared the following common examples of why loan requests are often denied:

1. The application lacks the required documentation to support the loan proposal. The item most commonly omitted is a sound business plan.
2. The applicant for the loan does not know exactly how much money they wish to borrow. Applicants should be prepared with a specific itemized cost projection showing how the funds would be utilized.
3. The applicant fails to provide three years of historical financial statements and a current financial statement to demonstrate repayment; or for a start-up businesses, a borrower projection for the first two to three years of operation.
4. The applicant is not realistic about how much and what type of asset-based collateral is needed to give the application the best chance for success. Applicants are advised to be prepared to reach into their personal net worth and put up hard collateral, mostly real estate.
5. The applicant for the loan fails to realize that aggressive tax strategies that result in no year-end tax obligations, because of no profits claimed by the firm, will result in no evidence of repayment ability in an application. Applicants are advised that tax returns are the final determinant of the company's performance and management integrity. For start up companies, a very specific borrower projection for two to three years will assist in an application being funded.
6. The Applicant asks the bank to finance too much. If the loan request puts the bank in over four times a borrower's net worth, the application will be less viable. Typically, banks require borrowers to make investments so they should be prepared to inject 10-25% of their money into the loan.



SGRC Small Business Lending Division Director Lance Wilcher said, “Don’t be reluctant to tap into the vast amount of help to get a first-class loan proposal pulled together. You may need an accountant, consultant and an attorney. Lean on the experts to help guide you to a successful business.”

For more information on SGRC Lending and the programs offered, contact us today at (229) 333-5277 or [lwilcher@sgrc.us](mailto:lwilcher@sgrc.us).

# Planning and Transportation

## SGRC Planning and Transportation Staff Attend the Clean Energy Roadshow

Public Service Commissioner Tim Echols kicked off the 12th annual Clean Energy Roadshow on August 18th. The City of Valdosta was chosen as one of the locations where this year's Clean Energy Roadshow Lunch and Learn Series would take place.

The Clean Energy Roadshow Lunch and Learn Series is an event that provides a first-hand experience of the latest electric, propane, and natural gas vehicles to local city and county governments, as well as car industry officials and the general public. The event provides various presentations and information from knowledgeable officials within the electric, alternative fuels, and fleet vehicle industry as well as from citizens who purchase and drive such vehicles.

This year, Planning and Transportation staff attended and participated in the Roadshow and provided valuable input about Electric Vehicle (EV) and Alternative Fuel Vehicles (AFV) during an open discussion.

Staff also participated in test driving and riding in a number of Alternative Fuel and Electric Vehicles. The ability of staff to plan and prepare for various alternative modes of transportation is important to the SGRC Region and having first-hand experience and knowledge is beneficial for the decisions that local government and the public will make regarding alternative vehicle implementation.

Recently, the Planning and Transportation Department has released both an Electric Vehicle Planning Framework Report and the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization Electric Vehicle Strategy. These reports provide goals and objectives necessary for communities and rural areas to be prepared to implement EV charging infrastructure policies, programs, and projects ahead of any broad need from the traveling public. Through considering and implementing these types of regulations and programs early, communities can be ready to access new funding opportunities and attract private investment related to EV and AFV infrastructure, which also is beneficial in the effort to improve overall economic development of the region.



**Pictured left to right: Amy Martin, Senior Transportation Planner; Tim Echols, Public Service Commissioner; Elizabeth Backe, Planning and Transportation Director.**

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# Planning and Transportation

## SGRC Planning and Transportation Staff Attend the Clean Energy Roadshow (continued)

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Planning and Transportation Department perform the day-to-day functions of comprehensive and transportation planning activities within the 18- county region. For more information about planning and transportation documents, please visit our website at: [www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us) or contact Elizabeth Backe at [ebacke@sgrc.us](mailto:ebacke@sgrc.us) or 229-333-5277.

## SGRC and Georgia Bikes Partner for Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Presentations

The SGRC Transportation Division's Bicycle and Pedestrian Department recently partnered with Georgia Bikes to facilitate two Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Presentations in the region.

The first presentation was held in Valdosta and hosted by Valdosta Main Street and the second was held in Douglas hosted by Douglas Main Street. The presentations provided information on bicycle and pedestrian safety with a particular focus on downtowns and Main Streets in the region.

James Horton of SGRC and Justin Bristol of Georgia Bikes conducted the workshops which were held on August 15th in Valdosta and August 16th in Douglas. Horton focused on Pedestrian Safety and Bristol covered Bicycle Safety.



**James Horton presents in Douglas on bicycle and pedestrian safety in downtown and main street areas.**

Those in attendance at the meetings ranged from Georgia DOT officials, five Main Street Managers from the Region, VSU faculty, and a number of city officials.

# Area Agency on Aging

## Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging Holds Aging Advisory Council Meeting

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) held its quarterly Aging Advisory Council meeting on August 24 in Nashville at the Nashville Community Center.

Scott Courson, Aging Services Director welcomed new council members Lee Larko from Brooks County, Dennis Jefferson from the City of Fitzgerald, Rachael Wade from the City of Alma, and Gary McCurdy from Tift County. Courson said, "We are so grateful to have them serving with us and we welcome the new and reappointed Aging Council Members to the first meeting of FY 2023 and of their three year terms."



**Rachael Wade, Aging Advisory Council Member and Shawn Taylor, Lead Aging Program Manager for the SGRC-AAA are pictured above with a Georgia Gerontology Society 2022 Citation of Merit awarded to Wade for her work with senior citizens in Bacon County.**

Shawn Taylor, Lead Aging Program Manager presented a Georgia Gerontology Society Merit Award to Rachael Wade for her work with Bacon County seniors.

Kimberly Rodgers, Aging Communication and Outreach Specialist shared an Aging Services 101, to share the Aging Services, service descriptions, and other aging resources offered by the AAA. Rodgers also shared the Aging FY2022 Annual Report with Aging Services, utilization data, and general information about Aging Programs. Both newly appointed and reappointed Aging Advisory Council Members were in attendance and received corresponding handouts regarding the information given.

The next Aging Advisory Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 9 at the Nashville Community Center located at 102 N. Jefferson Street in Nashville. The meeting is open to the public.

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# Area Agency on Aging

## Southern Georgia Area Agency on Aging Holds Aging Advisory Council Meeting (continued)



**New Aging Advisory Council Members (l to r) Lee Larko, Dennis Jefferson, Rachael Wade, and Gary McCurdy.**



**Kimberly Rodgers, Aging Communications & Outreach Specialist shares FY2022 Annual Report.**

# Area Agency on Aging



**Pictured above left to right are: LaKenya Andrews, Mona Jean Wainwright, Chris Williams, Patti Gordon, Connie Bass, Lynn Platt, and SGRC-AAA Lead Aging Program Manager Shawn Taylor.**

## **SGRC-AAA Staff and Aging Services Contractors Attend 2022 Meals on Wheels America Conference**

On September 15th and 16th, Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) staff members, along with contracted aging services nutrition provider program staff, attended the 2021-22 Meals on Wheels Association of Georgia Conference at the Senior Citizens, Inc facility in Savannah.

Meals on Wheels and Senior Center Nutrition services staff have long known that they deliver more than just meals. Participants at the conference were excited to hear about best practices for senior nutrition programs including: program design, volunteer recruitment after the pandemic, ageism and the client experience, food services: menu development, quality control, and getting client feedback, best practices, and the latest developments and opportunities from Meals on Wheels America.

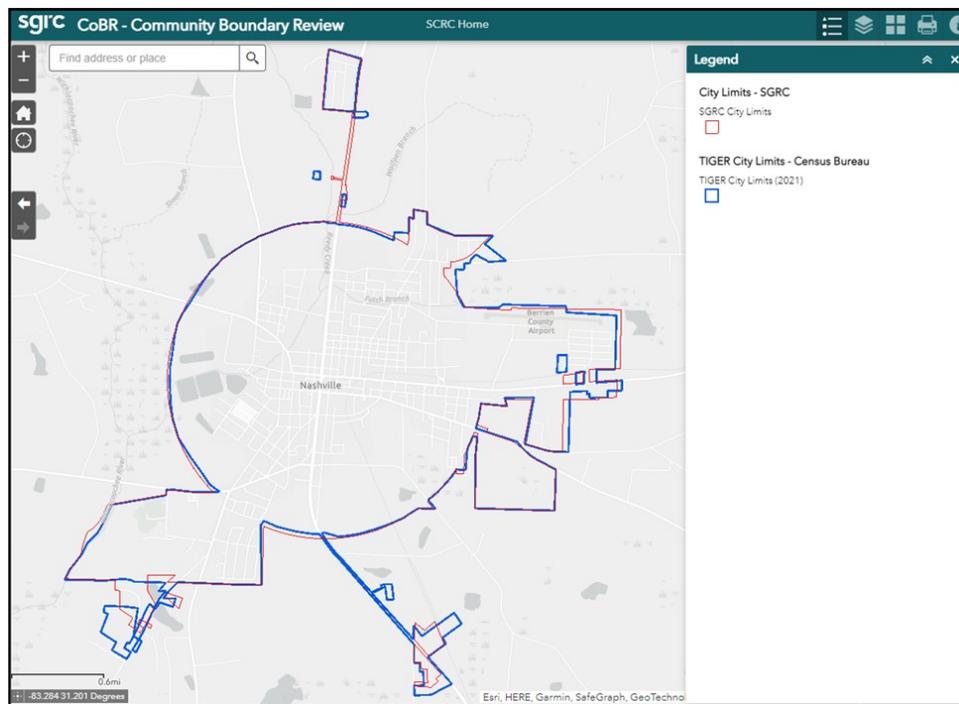
# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Reports Annexation Law Update Coming Soon

The General Assembly recently amended the Georgia Annexation law, effective July 1st through House Bill 1385. The law now requires that a report be filed with the three entities listed below before any de-annexed territory will be added to the state map. A digital shapefile (i.e., a GIS file) must be included with the report. The three entities that must be sent the report include the:

- Department of Community Affairs (DCA) – a web-based, password protected reporting system much be used to submit the report to DCA
- Reapportionment Office of the General Assembly
- Applicable county-level governments

The SGRC Planning Division and GIS Division staff are developing a fact sheet for local governments which will fully explain this process and provide an easy to understand, step by step process for the reporting of de-annexations and annexations. Find more information at: [www.sgrcmaps.com/cobr](http://www.sgrcmaps.com/cobr).



**CoBR Community Boundary Review Map.**

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# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

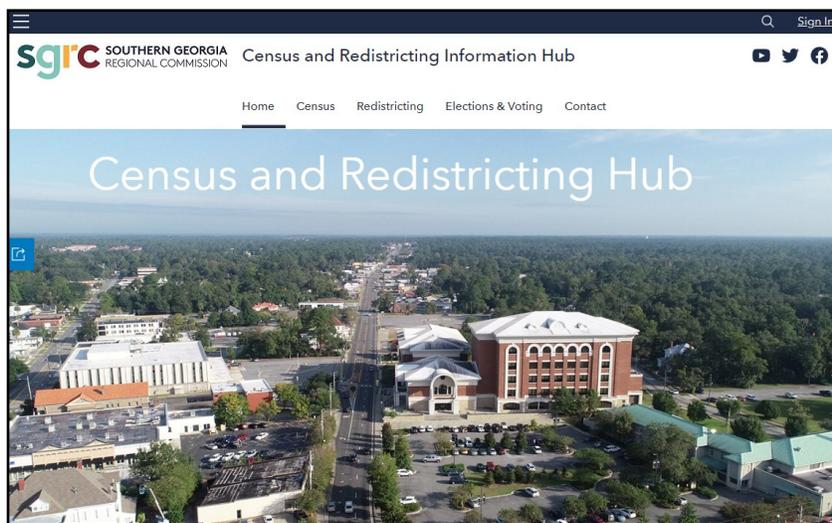
## SGRC GIS Receives a 2022 NADO Impact Award

Each year the National Association of Development Organizations honors members who have exhibited creative and innovative problem solving and/or program delivery to advance regional community, economic development, and improve quality of life. The 2022 list of award recipients include 107 projects from 71 organizations, spanning 28 states across the nation.

This year, SGRC GIS received the award for its “Census and Redistricting Information Hub” submission. This project supports the Economic Development Strategy and vision for economic development by providing easier access to census data. Census data is used to empower community leaders to identify strategies that encourage growth and support existing industries, help to identify areas for improvement and growth, and to retain the current population while attracting new people to their community. Centralizing census data, redistricting, and election data all in one place allows for communities and leaders to engage and collaborate while leveraging their existing GIS data and technology. The website provided Census population information to each of the 53 communities in the Southern Georgia region. A complete list of NADO award recipients can be found at:

<https://www.nado.org/congratulations-to-the-2022-nado-impact-award-recipients/>

For questions about this project, or other GIS solutions, contact Rachel Strom at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us) or (229) 333-5277 for more information.



**SGRC Census and Redistricting Hub home page.**

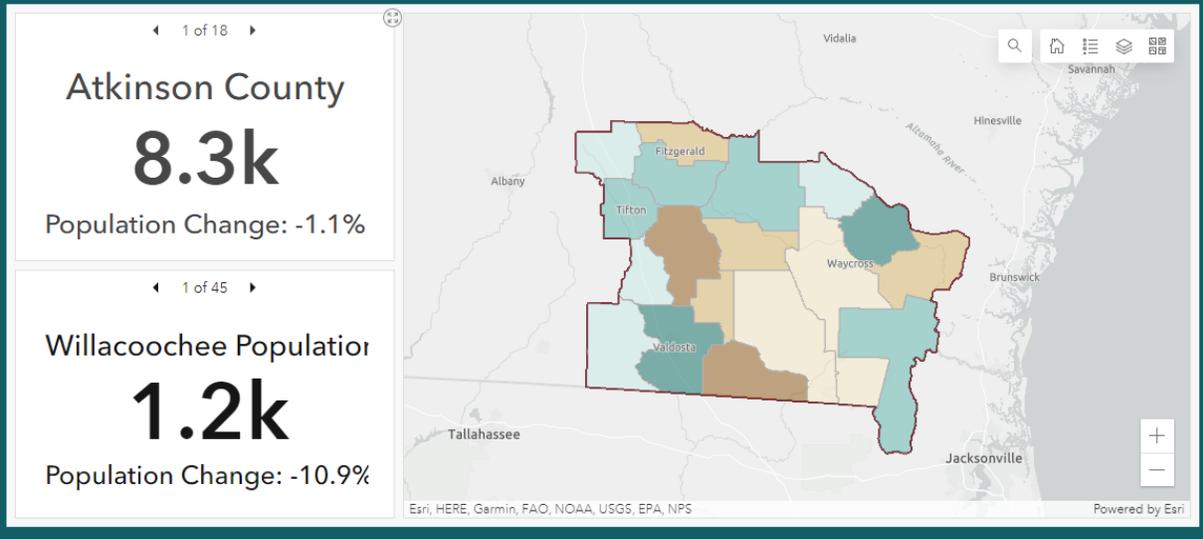
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# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

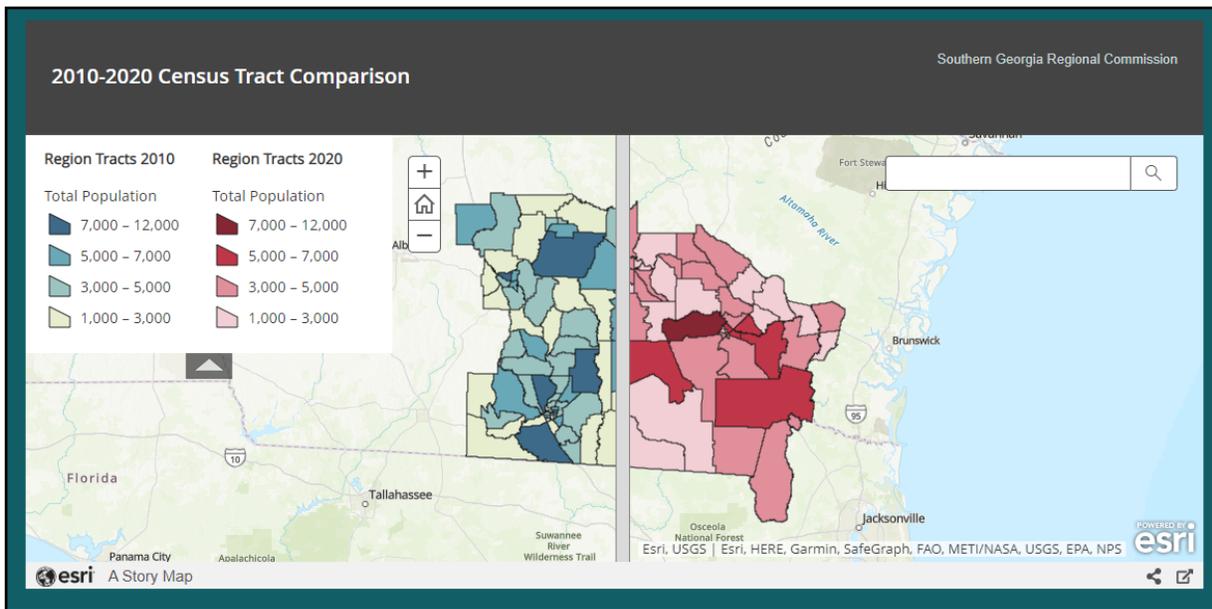
## SGRC GIS Receives a 2022 NADO Impact Award (continued)

### Region Population Dashboard

Interact with the dashboard below by zooming into the area of interest or by clicking a county or city to see more information.



**SGRC Census and Redistricting Hub—Region Population Dashboard.**



**SGRC Census and Redistricting Hub—2010-2020 Census Tract Comparison.**

# Contact the SGRC

## SGRC Council 2022 Meeting Schedule Meeting Locations TBD

No Meeting - October

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner -  
November 9, 2022

November – No meeting (combined with  
December meeting)

December 8, 2022 – 11:00 am  
(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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*want*  
**Getting you where you ~~need~~ to go.**

A map of Southern Georgia counties is shown, with colored arrows indicating transit routes between various locations. The counties labeled are Turner, Ben Hill, Irwin, Coffee, Bacon, Tift, Berrien, Atkinson, Pierce, Cook, Lanier, Ware, Brantley, Brooks, Lowndes, Echols, and Charlton. Three circular inset photos show a transit bus, a person in a wheelchair being assisted, and a person at a transit station.

**sgrc** | REGIONAL TRANSIT

Call 855-360-7475 to schedule your ride today!  
[www.letsridesouthga.org](http://www.letsridesouthga.org)

## Waycross Office

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