

Southern Georgia Regional Transit Development Plan

Public Meeting #1 Summary

January 2025



1.0 Overview

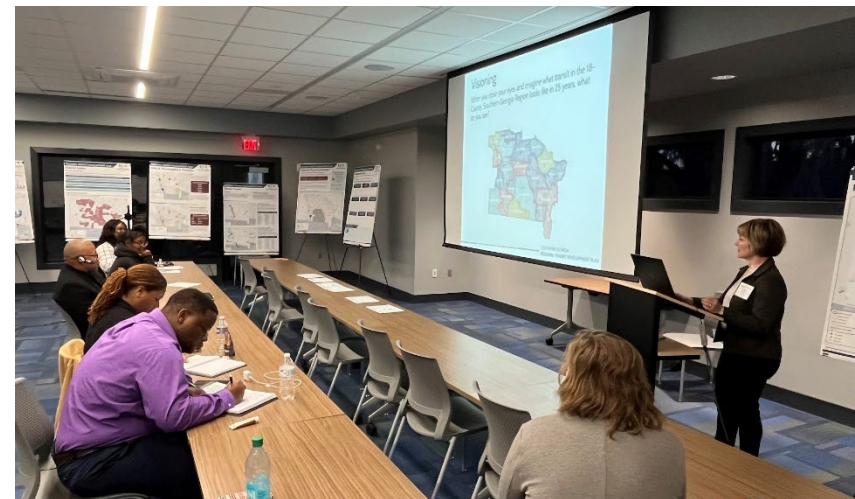
The first public meeting for the Southern Georgia Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP) was held on January 9, 2025 from 4:00 to 6:30 p.m. at the McMullen Southside Library in Valdosta. Informational boards highlighting information about the planning process and outcomes, as well as existing conditions and trends analysis, were displayed around the room. Meeting attendees could peruse the information at their own pace and talk with planning team members. Some of the boards included input activities, which are summarized in this document. The meeting also included two brief project overview presentations, given at 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

1.1 Attendance

Five members of the public, all of whom indicated that they live in Lowndes County, attended the meeting.

Table 1. Meeting Attendees by County

Residential County	Count of Attendees
Lowndes County	5



Presentation and Discussion

The planning team gave a brief presentation twice during the meeting, at 4:30 p.m. and again at 5:30 p.m. Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) streamed the first presentation on its Facebook page. The recorded presentation was also posted to the project website. During the presentation, the team walked through the purpose and goals of the Regional TDP, highlights from the demographic and socioeconomic analyses documented in the existing conditions report, details about the existing transit services in the region, and a discussion of next steps in the planning process.

In-person meeting attendees provided the following comments and questions for the project team after the presentation.

- We should consider safety, sidewalks, lighting, and trash cans in areas in and near transit stops.
- It would be great to have regular [fixed-route] service that comes every 30 minutes or so.
- Consider incentives for non-profits to help support access to or supplement public transit.
- In the New York City area, the transportation system is well-connected with pedestrian-friendly with a comprehensive [local/regional] bus system, train transit system, and greyhound. In nearby Remerton, transit helps people get home safely if they have been drinking. It would be great if this area could build a more comprehensive, connected network like this.
- We should consider technology [use/advancements] in the transit plan.
- Thomasville to Valdosta is a common transit trip.
- We need to plan transportation needs for youth in our region who do not want to drive.
- Can we create hubs for transit use?

- Amy Martin with SGRC responded by highlighting SGRC's Transit Oriented Development Guidelines work and how that work can be built upon.
- Is there money set aside for the plan implementation and how much? How do you make the funding work?
 - Amy Martin spoke to how TSPLOST has helped fund several transportation infrastructure projects in the region.
 - Amanda Hatton with Blue Cypress noted that the Regional TDP will consider costs and funding sources for advancing several transit strategies, but the plan will not be cost constrained, i.e. funding is not necessarily available or identified.



2.0 Public Input

2.1 Existing Conditions & Trends Discussions

As attendees walked around, informal discussions occurred, helping provide insight into existing conditions and trends.

- An attendee representing Lowndes County discussed anticipated growth in housing and development northeast of Moody Air Force Base.
- Growth of South Georgia Medical Center expansion should be considered as a part of evaluating future transit needs.

2.2 Vision and Goals

An input activity asked community members to use three dot stickers to indicate their priorities for transit in the Southern Georgia Region. One meeting attendee participated in this activity. As shown in the following table, only two of the identified focus areas were prioritized by this participant.

Table 2. Vision and Goals Prioritization Activity Results

Focus	Count of Input Dots
Providing connections to existing and future job centers	1
Providing transit throughout the Southern Georgia Region	1

One open-ended comment identified a long-term goal for the region to have trains and long-distance options.

2.3 Key Destinations Activity

The Key Destinations Overview board displayed a map of the 18-county Southern Georgia Region, with key destinations identified. The activity instructed participants to share their residential location, as well as places that they would like to be able to access with transit or locations where they think people with transportation needs may like to access using transit. These results are captured in the following lists.

Where You Live

- Waycross
- Valdosta

Where You Would Like to be Able to Go on Transit

- Valdosta
- Valdosta Regional Airport
- Waycross
- Fitzgerald
- Tifton
- Douglas
- Blackshear
- Homerville

2.3.1 Greater Valdosta Area Transit Destinations

The Greater Valdosta Area board displayed Valdosta and the surrounding areas. Participants provided input on locations around the greater Valdosta area where they would like to go using transit.

Where You Live

- Valdosta State University

Where You Would Like to be Able to go on Transit

- Moody Airforce Base / 23rd Medical Group – Moody AFB
- Valdosta Regional Airport
- McMullen Southside Library
- Valdosta Downtown at Ashley Street and Hwy 84

Comment

- Downtown art center destinations – downtown squares, coffee shop, libraries, airport, Aldi, and other grocery stores

None of the participants provided input on other area-specific boards, which included Tifton, Fitzgerald, Douglas, and Waycross.

