

# Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Report of Accomplishments

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Prepared by Southern Georgia Regional Commission

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## Report of Accomplishments

### Introduction

The Goals and Objectives of the Valdosta-Lowndes Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) were established in the plan update process and were developed to expand upon the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) planning factors and provide Measures of Effectiveness (MOE's) from which alternatives could be evaluated and subsequently prioritized.

By assessing the goals and their objectives it allows us to see where we started, how much we have accomplished and if we are heading in the right direction. It also allows us to gauge whether the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) has achieved or is achieving their desired effect on the transportation needs of City of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

This report is meant to look back at the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan first adopted in 2005, and later amended in 2007. The information presented here will be used by planners, engineers, and elected officials as we develop a new Long Range Transportation Plan.

***Households/Person per Household***  
*[www.georgiastats.uga.edu](http://www.georgiastats.uga.edu)*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Households</b>	<b>Persons per Household</b>
<b>1960</b>	13,179	3.63
<b>1970</b>	15,945	3.31
<b>1980</b>	22,627	2.89
<b>1990</b>	26,311	2.72
<b>2000</b>	32,654	2.61
<b>2010</b>	39,747	2.59

The number of households increased from 32,654 in 2000 to 39,747 in 2010, which is an increase of 7,093 or 21.7% increase. This chart shows that number of households is increasing but size of households are decreasing.

<b>Population</b> <i>www.georgiastats.uga.edu</i>				
<b>County</b>	<b>Census Estimate, July 1, 2010</b>	<b>Projection, State Office of Planning &amp; Budget, 2015</b>	<b>Projection, State Office of Planning &amp; Budget, 2020</b>	<b>Projection, State Office of Planning &amp; Budget, 2025</b>
<b>Lowndes</b>	109,734	119,055	130,607	143,138

Population from the 2000 census included in the 2030 LRTP for Lowndes County was 92,115, in the chart above the census population for Lowndes County, for 2010 is 109,734. This is an increase in ten years of 17,619 persons or a 19% increase in population since 2000.

<b>Median Income</b> <i>www.georgiastats.uga.edu</i>		
<b>County</b>	<b>Median Household Income, Total, 2009</b>	<b>Median Household Income, Total, 2010 Model-based Estimate</b>
<b>Lowndes</b>	39,200	36,486

From the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, median household income for 2000 was \$32,132. 2009 median household income, which is listed in the table above, is \$39,200, which is an increase of \$7,068 or a 22% growth in the median household income. Even with income growing poverty rates have increased from 18.3 percent as reported in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to 22.4 percent as reported in the U.S. 2010 Census. Weekly wages have increased from a reported \$428 in the 2030 LRTP to \$614 referenced in the Lowndes County 2012 Labor Profile issued by the Georgia Department of Labor.

## Employment

Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	%Unemployed
2003	47,300	45,853	4,447	9.4%
2010	51,794	47,036	4,758	9.1%
2011	51,446	46,659	4,787	9.3%

### ***Goal I: Economic Vitality***

**Ensure the economic growth and competitiveness of this metropolitan area by providing a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation system.**



**\*Traffic Management Center**

### ***Objective I:***

**Improve the operating efficiency of the existing infrastructure.**

Valdosta and Lowndes County continue to improve the operation and efficiency of local transportation infrastructure through operational improvements at intersections ( River Street at ST Augustine Road, Northside Drive at Bemiss Road) and through technological improvements like continued investments in the Valdosta Traffic Management Center.

**Objective II:**

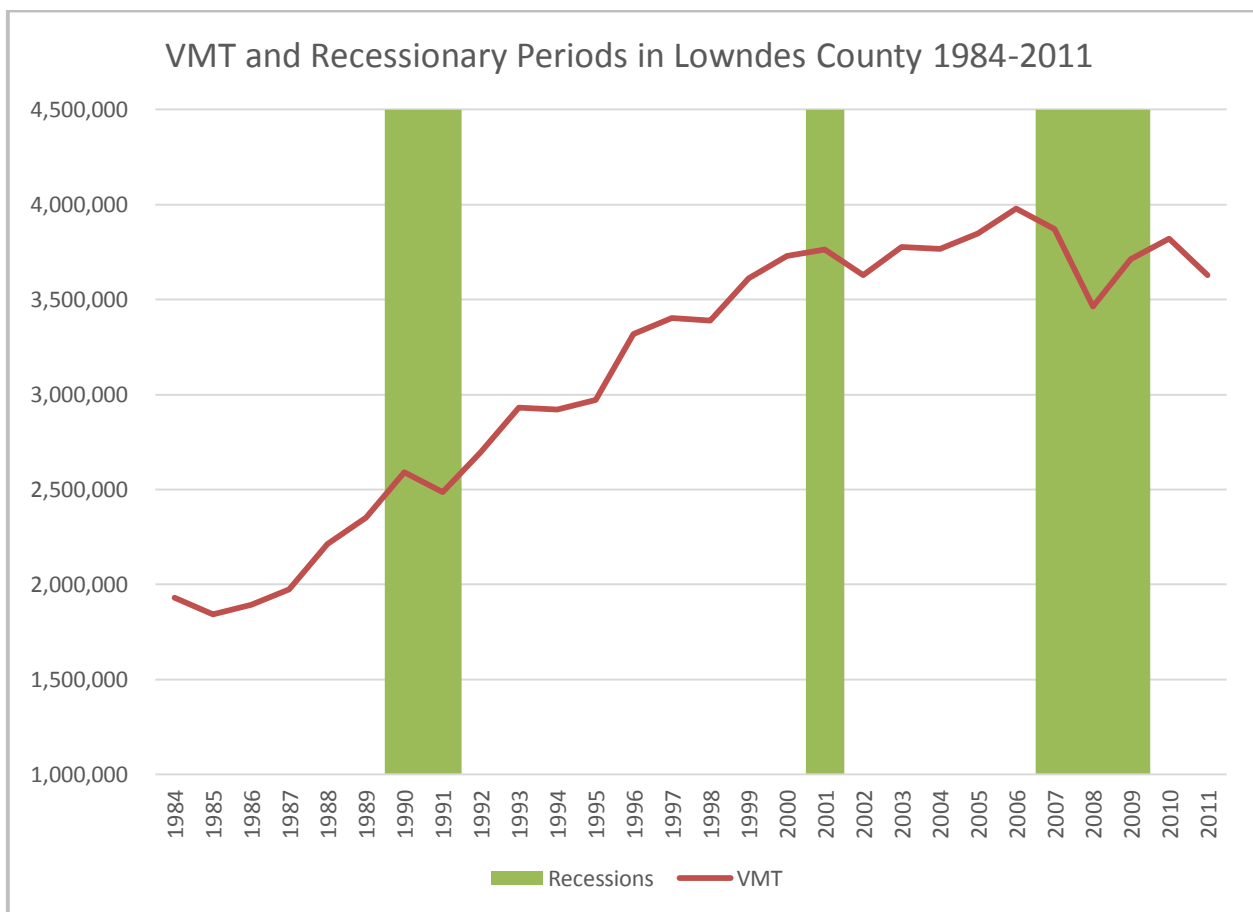
**Reduce travel time and delay.**

No studies have been completed to determine if projects have reduced travel time and delay. It's known anecdotally that some projections will reduce delay, but no hard data exists at this time.

**Objective III:**

**Reduce Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT).**

VMT has decreased from 2003 to 2010 in the Valdosta Urbanized Area. It should be noted that the economic recession of the late 2000's, had a significant impact on VMT nationwide. As can be seen in the chart below, VMT in the Valdosta Urbanized Area continues a recent downward trend.



**Objective IV:**

**Collaborate with other agencies to foster business development.**

The Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority (VLCIA) has developed a community-wide workable business plan geared towards marketing the community to regional, national, and global high-wage employers. Lowndes County and City of Valdosta through their Unified Land Development Code and Land Development Regulations

respectively continue to facilitate interconnected development and shared parking to lessen traffic congestion and improve circulation.

**Goal II: Regionalism and Tourism**

**Support local and regional transportation needs as well as promote tourism efforts.**

**Objective I:**

**Promote the efficient movement of people and goods by linking the various modes of transportation.**

The VLMPO has studied linking various modes of transportation including the development of a Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and public transit feasibility and implementation plans. Local governments continue to implement bike and pedestrian projects as funding becomes available. The VLMPO continues to search for funding for the start up of a transit system in the Valdosta Urban Area.

**Objective II:**

**Promote connections between transportation modes that support the effective shipment of freight.**

In 2009 the VLMPO implemented a Freight Movement Study and Report Series that focused on goods movement in Lowndes County topics included; **Freight Business Survey, Existing Freight Study, Rail Traffic, Other Freight Transportation, Land Use and Growth, Current Transportation Plans, Freight Movement: The State Perspective and Study Outcomes.** This report series has led to cooperation between the VLMPO and VLCIA to promote freight related economic development. In 2012 this Freight Study and Report Series received the National Association of Development Organizations Innovation in Regional Transportation Award.

**Objective III:**

**Preserve corridors for future transportation system development.**

The VLMPO has worked with local governments and GDOT to promote access management on arterial corridors throughout the community especially on Inner Perimeter Road; however no formal policies have been adopted at this time by the MPO or local governments.

**Objective IV:**

**Ensure compatibility with the transportation facilities of adjacent municipalities and counties.**

The VLMPO works to insure continuity of the transportation system amongst all jurisdictions within the MPO Planning area and in adjacent communities as well.

**Objective V:**

**Support statewide transportation initiatives that affect transportation in the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan area.**

The VLMPO works closely with GDOT on project development and statewide initiatives such as: the state freight plan, the Coordinated Human Services–Public Transit Transportation Plans, and the Transportation Investment Act of 2010.

**Objective VI:**

**Develop strategies that link freight planning and operations within the context of the transportation planning process.**

A part of the VLMPO Freight Study and Report Series included evaluation and analysis of crash locations and crash circumstances; recommendations from this report are forwarded to local governments and will be reviewed for inclusion in the 2040 Transportation Plan.

**Objective VI:**

**Focus transportation system improvements to support and promote tourism.**

The VLMPO has played an active role with the Valdosta/Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce and the Keep Lowndes Valdosta Beautiful to promote gateways into the City and County.

**Goal III: Accessibility & Mobility**

**Promote alternative transportation options for area residents and employers that are reliable and accessible to all citizens.**

**Objective I:**

**Enhance existing transit services by providing reliable service, passenger information and additional routes to communities outside the city core.**

The VLMPO completed Public Transit Studies for an urban fixed route transit service in the Valdosta Urban Area; however, a reliable funding source has not yet been identified to implement this service. Georgia Transit Day was hosted by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC) in 2010 and 2011. Georgia Transit Day was designed to educate local and state elected officials, regional stakeholders, and the public about the benefits of public transportation, with the goal of starting a discussion on what transit should look like in Georgia and to motivate stakeholders into involvement in developing a statewide transit plan. Information on Transit providers, which operate in our region, is maintained on the SGRC Transportation website. Information includes contact info for providers, which services are covered under Section 5311 Rural Public Transit and which are covered under DHS, and what qualifies for trips under each.

[http://www.sgrc.us/transportation/5311\\_dhstransportation.htm](http://www.sgrc.us/transportation/5311_dhstransportation.htm)

**Objective II:**

**Encourage communities to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian facilities/amenities in the development review process and in general roadway design.**

The VLMPO adopted a Bike and Pedestrian Plan in 2007 that included project design elements and recommend policies for local governments to develop and incorporate into their own processes. The VLMPO continues to promote bike safety and accessibility

on the SGRC website and in print media. As part of a greater regional effort in 2012 the SGRC completed an assessment of State Bicycle Route 15 which included recommendations for local governments to improve this route in their communities.

**Objective III:**

**Place a high priority on serving the needs of the transportation disadvantaged.**

The VLMPO continues to work with rural public transit providers and regional coordination providers to promote transportation to meet the needs of minority and low income populations.

**Goal IV: Funding Mechanisms**

**Develop innovative funding sources and strategies for transportation improvements.**

**Objective I:**

**Ensure adequate funding to preserve and maintain the integrity of the existing transportation infrastructure.**

The priority of the VLMPO has been to fund the preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure prior to the development of any new transportation projects. \$236 million was programmed into the 2035 Transportation Plan for the maintenance of the existing system.

**Objective II:**

**Develop transportation investment decisions that maximize the full benefits of the system while considering the full costs.**

As a part of the development of the 2035 Transportation Plan the VLMPO developed a project selection process and criteria that maximize the consideration of various impacts and costs of a transportation investment in selecting those projects that return the best overall benefit to the community.

**Objective III:**

**Promote public/private partnerships.**

The VLMPO continues to support existing public and private partnerships currently undertaken by Lowndes County and the SGRC in the operation of Rural Public and Coordinated Transit services. GDOT is currently working with public/private partnerships for rest area/welcome center maintenance, one of which is located in Lowndes County.

**Goal V: Land-Use Compatibility**

**Proactive integrated land-use and development to assure compatibility with LRTP.**

**Objective I:**

**Strengthen the connection between land use and transportation planning.**

The VLMPO policy committee has made land use and transportation planning a priority by including MPO staff informally in the decision making process for local comprehensive planning, zoning adjustments, and other community planning efforts.



**Objective II:**

**Encourage the development of strategies regarding the spatial distribution of land use and density of the development.**

The City of Valdosta continues to support and administer Signature Communities, an initiative of public-private partnerships for marketing and redevelopment of unique infill, greyfield and brownfield opportunities including available financing options. City of Valdosta has implemented residential infill zoning districts especially within their designated revitalization areas. City of Valdosta has implemented Mixed-Use Development and Traditional Neighborhood Districts listed in the Land Development Regulations (LDR). The City of Valdosta has reduced development pressures on agricultural land through conservation tools and increased density of new residential development. Both Lowndes and Valdosta annually review and update their land development regulations.

**Goal VI: Environmental Protection**

**Protect the environment, promote energy conservation and improve the quality of life.**

**Objective I:**

**Avoid disproportionate or adverse impact on low income and minority (EJ) populations.**

In 2011 the VLMPO adopted a new Public Participation Policy that addressed how the organization reviews projects and involvement of low income and minority (Environmental Justice) populations as well as Limited English Proficient groups and groups covered under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. The VLMPO reviews projects for impacts throughout the entire community and promotes mitigation measures to reduce any negative impacts.

**Objective II:**

**Support alternative fuels and technologies in motor vehicle, fleet and transit operations.**

The VLMPO has worked to promote alternative fuel technologies including the installation of E85 (Ethanol) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fuel stations in the community.

**Objective III:**

**Preserve and enhance scenic views and access to historic, cultural and other attractions in our region.**

In cooperation with Keep Lowndes/Valdosta Beautiful and the Chamber of Commerce the VLMPO has promoted the development of scenic views and gateways in our community.

**Objective IV:**

**Mitigate affects to the natural environment.**

The SGRC prepared through public nomination process from local governments, non-profit agencies, and private citizens the Regional Important Resources Plan in 2011. The Regional Important Resources Plan furthers the work being done on the local, regional, and state levels to preserve environmental resources, historic sites, and unique cultural landscapes. The Plan also promotes balanced growth and sustainable development practices to enhance the quality of life in communities throughout the region. City of Valdosta with the Valdosta Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) has reevaluated existing boundaries and nature of locally designated historic districts. Lowndes and Valdosta actively enforce regulations pertaining to protected water resources, conserving sensitive areas through the use of conservation zoning and/or buffers in the development review or rezoning process, and supporting storm-water and land-disturbance programs.

**Goal VII: Public Involvement**

**Encourage public participation in the planning process.**

**Objective I:**

**Inform the public about transportation issues in a clear and concise manner.**

In 2011 the VLMPO adopted a new Public Participation Plan which outlined how the organization will provide information about transportation issues to the public. The VLMPO uses various methods for public outreach and information gathering such as; newsletters, press releases, media interviews, website, social media, public meetings, other speaking engagements, etc. The SGRC distributes regular crash data updates and statistical summaries to local governments, educational institutions and school systems to utilize similar data projections in preparing future plans.

**Objective II:**

**Create opportunities for public involvement in the planning process.**

The VLMPO regularly hosts public comment periods for documents, plans or specific projects where public comment is solicited. The public is also encouraged to submit comments and interact with MPO staff and committees through phone calls emails social media and during committee meetings. MPO staff regularly conducts speaking engagements where public comment is encouraged.



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Valdosta/Lowndes MPO

**Objective III:**

**Ensure plans respond to the diversity of the community's needs.**

The VLMPO responds to all comments received and addresses those through appropriate plans, studies and other channels as needed.

**Goal VIII: System Management**

**Preserve the existing transportation system and promote Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies.**

**Objective I:**

**Encourage new programs designed to better preserve and maintain the regional infrastructure.**

The VLMPO has made it a priority to preserve and maintain the existing transportation infrastructure. This includes programming more than \$200 million for maintenance in the VLMPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan.

**Objective II:**

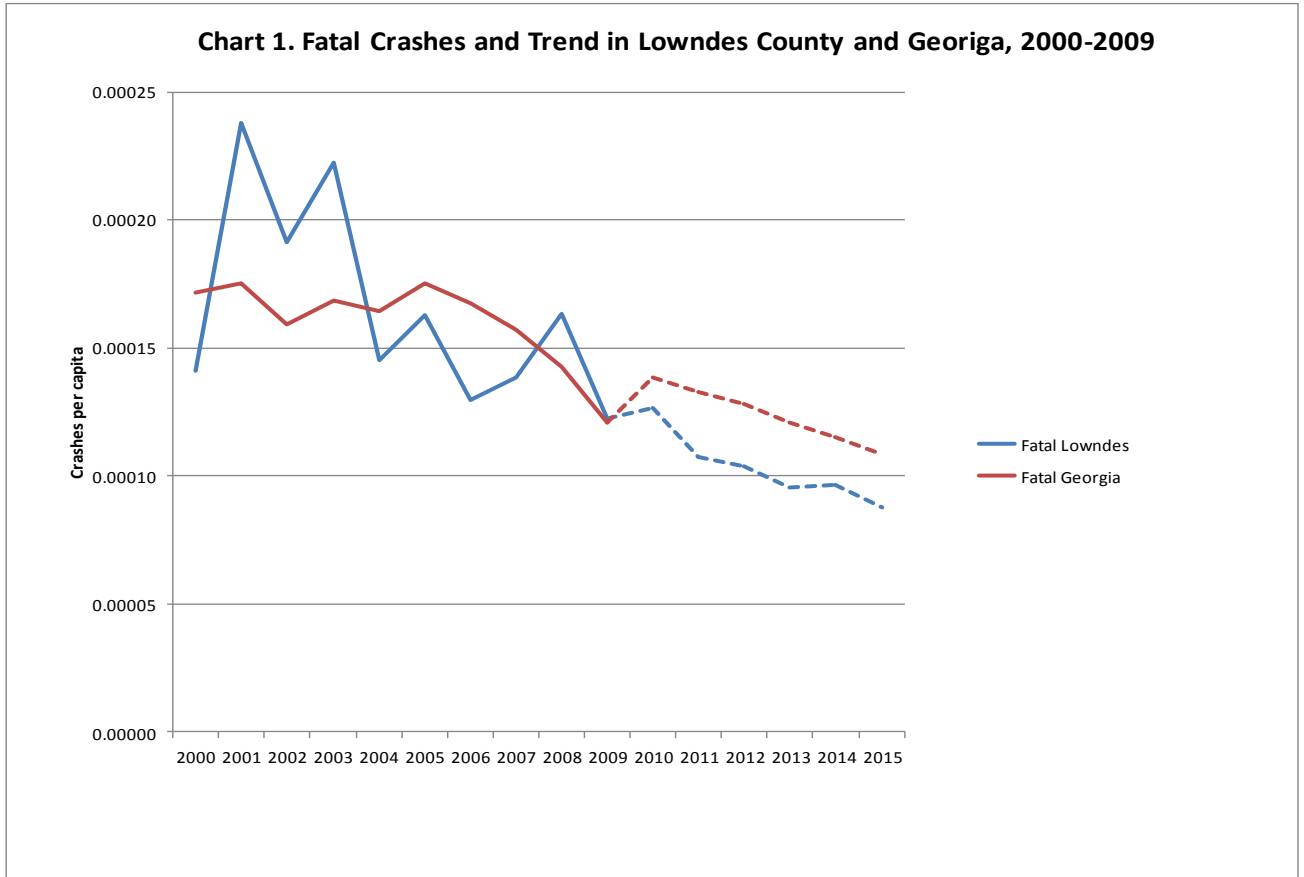
**Continually monitor traffic flow to systematically make operational improvements.**

The City of Valdosta maintains a traffic management center to monitor traffic and make operational improvements on daily or as needed basis to maintain optimal traffic flow.

**Objective III:**

**Collaborate with various stakeholders to evaluate planning needs and integrate engineering, enforcement and education within our urbanized area.**

Annually the MPO publishes a crash report that evaluates crashes from the perspective of engineers, law enforcement, public education and emergency medical providers that identifies strategies and trends for crash reduction in the community. This report is shared with various public and private stakeholders who work to reduce crashes in our community.



**Objective VI:**

**Incorporate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture and strategies.**

The MPO encourages local governments and GDOT to cooperatively develop Intelligent Transportation Systems that promotes optimal traffic flow strategies throughout the community.

**Goal IX: Traffic Safety & Emergency Management**

**Incorporate safety conscious planning and responsiveness to natural as well as other disasters.**

**Objective I:**

**Encourage lighting and clear signs to promote safer roadways.**

The MPO encourages local governments to maintain lighting and signs with proper retro-reflectively for safe roadways in the community.

**Objective II:**

**Develop prioritization framework that identifies projects that reduce crashes resulting in personal injury or fatalities.**

Through project selection and prioritization the VLMPO works to identify and prioritize projects that reduce crashes in our community.

**Objective III:**

**Sponsor workshops and conferences for public information and education regarding traffic safety issues.**

Through the Technical and Citizens Advisory Committees the MPO works to address safety traffic issues brought forth by residents and distribute public information about general traffic safety issues to the public.

**Objective VI:**

**Collaborate with local agencies to handle emergency response and disaster evacuation needs of the region.**

Through the SGRC, GIS data and technical assistance is provided to emergency responders and local officials on a daily basis. The MPO works to coordinate transportation work activities with emergency responders to assure accessibility during construction periods.

## Assorted Statistics

Following are several sets of statistics examined during the development of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. These items have been updated to examine how they have changed over the years.

According to the Georgia Dept. of Motor Vehicles Lowndes County had 84,391 total registered vehicles which had according to Georgia Stats that had increased to 94,317 in 2011.

The 2000 Census reported that Lowndes County had 2,641 households without a vehicle, 11,107 had one vehicle, 12,767 had two vehicles, and 6,139 had three or greater.

According to the U.S. Census American Community Survey ( ) Survey 2011 for Lowndes, the total number of households is 38, 178 of these 3,063 had no vehicle, 15,055 had one vehicle, 13,112 had two vehicles, and 6,948 had three or more.

Vehicles per Household

Year	Registered Vehicles	0 vehicles	1 vehicle	2 vehicles	3 or more vehicles
2000	84,391	2,641	11,107	12,767	6,139
2011	94,317	3,063	15,055	13,112	6,948
+/-	+9,926	+422	+3,948	+345	+809

The 2000-2004 table represents locations with the highest number of crashes that were identified in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan, while the 2007-2009 tables are locations identified with the highest number of crashes from the 2011 crash data study.

From the tables below we see that high crash locations in 2000-2004 continue to be dangerous intersections for accidents as evidenced by the highlighted intersections in the 2007-2009 table. Comparing the tables total crash numbers allows us to see increases or decreases in the amount of crashes for each corresponding intersection.

### High Crash Locations

Intersection		Total Crashes 2000-2004
N. Valdosta Road	Country Club Road	153
Ashley Street	Northside Drive	133
St. Augustine Road	Norman Drive	129
St Augustine Road	Gornto Road	126
Hill Avenue	St. Augustine Road	119
Perimeter Road	Oak Street Extension	105
Ashley Street	Park Avenue	89
Hill Avenue	I-75 Ramps	80
Bemiss Road	Northside Drive	85
Patterson Street	Northside Drive	78

Intersection		Total Crashes 2007-2009
Ashley Street	Bemiss Road/Park Avenue	154
Five Points		116
St. Augustine Road	Norman Drive	105
North Valdosta Road	Country Club Drive	101
St Augustine Road	Gornto Road	76
Inner Perimeter Road	Oak Street Extension	75
Hill Avenue	St. Augustine Road	75
Northside Drive	Bemiss Road	72
Ashley Street	Central Avenue	70
Gornto Road	Jerry Jones Drive	65
Inner Perimeter Road	Park Avenue	60
Ashley Street	Northside Drive	59
Inner Perimeter Road	Forrest Street	54
Patterson Street	Eager Drive	46
Hill Avenue	Norman Drive	44
Norman Drive	Baytree Road	44
Hill Avenue	Troup Street	41
Gornto Road	Baytree Road	39
Oak Street Extension	Murray Road	38
Oak Street	Eager Road	37
North Valdosta Road	Country Club Road	37
Jerry Jones Drive	Country Club Drive	37

\*Highlighted areas represented in both tables

## Project Status Report

The following table shows the project list for the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan and the current status of each of these projects.

Project	Status
SR 122@Cat Creek	Complete
SR 122@Meetinghouse Creek & Little River	Complete
CR 781/Staten Road @ Withlacoochee River	Complete
1-75 @ 5 locations from Florida line to SR 133 Phase II	Engineering and Right of Way Phase
SR 31@Withlacoochee River @ GA/FL line	Under Construction
N Forrest ST from SR 31 (Park Ave) to Bemiss Rd	PE (Engineer) Phase
I-75 from North of SR 133 to Cook Co. Phase II	PE (Engineer) Phase
SR 38/US84/W. Hill Ave Grade Separation @ Norfolk Southern RR	Under Construction
SR38/US84 Median Turn Lanes form Quitman	No Activity

to Valdosta	
CS 119/Tucker Rd @ Dukes Bay Canal in South Valdosta	Complete
CR 784/Jerry Jones Rd from Gornto Rd. to Jaden Place	No Activity
N Oak St Ext/Mt Zion Ch Rd from SR 7/N Valdosta Rd to Forrest St.	No Activity
SR 38/US 84 median turn lanes from Valdosta to Lanier Co.	No Activity
CR 868/Old US 41@ Franks Creek Tributary Approx. 1.5mi S. of Hahira	No Activity
Ashley St. and Patterson St. One Way Pair	Project terminated
CR 868 (Old US 41) from SR 7/N Valdosta Rd. to SR 122	No Activity
Realignment of Roosevelt Dr. and Pendleton Dr	Project terminated
Five Points Intersection Modifications	No Activity
James Rd. Relocation	Complete
Baytree Ext. widening from 2-4 lanes	No Activity
Baytree Flyover	No Activity
Old Clyattville Widening from Mud Creek	No Activity
Realign E. Hill at Clay Rd/Hollywood Dr. Intersection	PE (Engineer) Phase
Baytree widening from 4 to 5 lanes	No Activity
W. Hill right drop lane at St. Augustine (SR 133)	No Activity
Lankford Dr. Extension	No Activity
Northside Dr. Extension	No Activity
N. Valdosta Rd widening	No Activity
Widen Old Clyattville from Exit 13 @ I-75	No Activity
Realign SR 376/Bellville Rd. @ US 41	No Activity
Whitewater Intersection improvement	No Activity
SR 122 widening project	No Activity
St. Augustine Railroad grade separation	No Activity
Woodrow Wilson Extension	Under Construction
CR 777/Cat Creek Rd. @ Beatty Branch West of Moody AF Base	No Activity