

2017-2021

FY2022 Annual Crash Report

Valdosta-Lowndes
Metropolitan Planning Organization

July 2022



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REGIONAL COMMISSION

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Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization FY2022 Annual Crash Report

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On behalf of the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO)

July 2022

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Introduction

Since 2007, the Southern Georgia Regional Commission (SGRC), as the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Valdosta Urbanized Area (also referred to as the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO, or VLMPO), has produced an annual Crash Report analyzing motor vehicle crash trends within the MPO's Metropolitan Planning Area. The report is used to supplement the development of the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan and to inform efforts to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities through a comprehensive range of actions.

This year's report, like the previous year's, includes data from a five-year period. The timeframe covered by this report is January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021.

During this 2017 to 2021 timeframe, according to the data available, 18,203 crashes occurred in the Metropolitan Planning Area. There were 92 fatal crashes and 202 serious injury crashes. In terms of vehicle miles traveled, collector roads remain the most dangerous road type, with the highest rates of crashes, injuries, and fatalities, while the interstate highway has the lowest rates.

This report examines various characteristics of crash data to determine trends in location, time, contributing factors, crash severity, and vehicle types, among other variables. The report also identifies the highest-frequency crash locations in the MPO area.

This report can be used to inform local governments and public agencies of the most pressing issues in the safety of the area's transportation system. It will serve as a background for identifying actions that can be taken to reduce crashes, injuries, and fatalities, from the standpoints of education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical services.

The report can also be used by the MPO and local jurisdictions to evaluate projects for the Vision2045 Transportation Plan and annual Transportation Improvement Program updates. It will help identify future safety-related infrastructure projects and make data available to the MPO and local jurisdictions to allow analysis of the most beneficial projects and actions based on past crashes at specific locations.

Local jurisdictions, agencies, and other groups can use this report to inform education and enforcement efforts to help reduce crashes of all types on the roadways of the MPO area. The past Crash Reports have identified particular geographic areas of concern, population groups, and crash types that are prevalent in the region. This report continues to evaluate particular areas of concern and works to determine crash causes and what can be done to improve these areas.

Comparison to Prior Period of Analysis

The total number of crashes that occurred in the Metropolitan Planning Area within publicly-owned right-of-way during the 2017-2021 period decreased from the previous five-year (2016-2020) timeframe by 2.3%, with 18,632 crashes having occurred from 2016 through 2020. However, the number of serious injuries between the two timeframes increased from 205 to 240 (a 17.1% increase) and the number of fatalities as a result of crashes increased by 14, to 99 fatalities between 2017 and 2021. While crashes decreased within the VLMPO area, there were a greater number of serious injuries and fatalities, especially after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. While the shelter-in-place orders and subsequent patterns of more people working from home decreased overall traffic volumes for a period of time, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration found that drivers tended to engage in riskier behaviors, such as speeding, failure to wear seat belts, and driving under the influence of alcohol or other

drugs.¹ These may be contributing factors to the increase in serious injury and fatal crashes in Valdosta and Lowndes County.

While the overall number of fatalities increased compared to the previous five-year timeframe, the statistics for categories of fatalities largely between the two time periods, including unrestrained, alcohol-related, motorcyclist (including un-helmeted), and under-21 fatalities. Although a greater percentage of the motorcyclist fatalities were reported as being un-helmeted in 2017-2021 (30%) compared to 2016-2020 (27%), the overall rate of helmet usage for motorcyclists in crashes greatly increased, with 9.4% of motorcyclists reported as being un-helmeted in 2017-2021, versus 31% in 2016-2020.

There was a slight increase in the number of crashes attributed to Driving Under the Influence (DUI) in 2017-2021. From 2017 to 2021, 593 crashes (3.2% of all crashes) were attributed to DUI, resulting in eight fatalities and 26 serious injuries. This is a 24% increase in the number of DUI crashes from 2016 to 2020, during which there were 478 crashes attributed to DUI (2.6% of all crashes), resulting in six fatalities and 13 serious injuries.

There was a 25% decrease in the number of speed-related crashes between the two time periods, from 492 crashes in 2016-2020 to 393 crashes in 2017-2021.

The greatest decrease in raw number of crashes among the categories was observed for crashes involving young drivers; there were 4,800 crashes involving young drivers from 2016 to 2020, and 4,338 crashes between 2017 and 2021, representing 462 fewer crashes between the two time periods. While fatalities among young drivers were consistent, the number of serious injuries dropped from 66 to 45 between the two time periods (representing a 47% decrease).

There was a 40% decrease in the number of crashes involving pedestrians, from 139 (2016-2020) to 99 (2017-2021). While the number of pedestrian fatalities was consistent, there was a significant decrease in the number of serious injuries for this crash type (22 in 2016-2020, and 12 in 2017-2021). There was a 36% increase in crashes involving bicyclists (73 in 2016-2020, and 99 in 2017-2021).

There was a 19% decrease in the number of crashes involving tractor-trailers and log trucks between the two time periods, with 792 crashes from 2016 to 2020 and 667 crashes from 2017 to 2021. The number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from this crash type were largely consistent between the two timeframes.

2022-24 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan

This report is designed to be consistent with the 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan², which outlines measures to reduce highway crashes on Georgia roads. It strives towards zero deaths and serious injuries for all road users in Georgia. Currently, Georgia ranks 4th among all states for the number of traffic fatalities.³

The Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan utilizes the “4-E” approach to reduce crashes in Georgia. Crash prevention and response is not the duty of just one agency, but of many different agencies with different priorities and responsibilities. Each agency must respond accordingly to crash reduction efforts in their

¹ Update to Special Reports on Traffic Safety during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency: Fourth Quarter Data [Traffic Safety Facts] (bts.gov). June 2021. US Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

² 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan <http://www.gahighwaysafety.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SHSP-2022-24.pdf>

³ Ibid, p. 13.

own areas of expertise. The 4 E's of Highway Safety – Education, Engineering, Enforcement and Emergency Medical Services – are where those many different responsible agencies come together to each do their own part in reducing crash frequency and severity.⁴

Education involves working with both youth and the elderly by educating drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and passengers of the rules of the road and other important safety factors. Education includes diversion programs for underage drinking; general public education campaigns; safety belt and child seat inspections; and expanded and improved driver training courses and materials.

Engineering involves working with local and state departments concerned with transportation systems to improve the physical characteristics of the roadway and right-of-way. The Engineering “E” focuses on improving the infrastructure of intersections and roadway corridors.

Enforcement involves working with law enforcement agencies to educate drivers on how to help prevent crashes, as well as improving the efficiency of response and analyzing crash sites. The Enforcement “E” includes employing checkpoints for DUI or seatbelt usage; enforcement of laws for underage and excessive drinking; targeted speed and intersection use enforcement; and proper data collection for future analysis.

Emergency Medical Services involves all first responders to crash sites and the medical treatment victims receive immediately after a crash. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) “E” includes efficient response by medical personnel to crash sites, rapid evacuation of victims to trauma centers, and education of the public on proper usage of safety restraints.

Each of the 4 E's is not mutually exclusive to the various agencies described above. For example, education is spread out between all the different agency partners, including law enforcement agencies, highway departments, and EMS responders. Also, engineers may get ideas or suggestions from law enforcement agencies or school bus drivers on how to design safer facilities for children walking to school. Each of the various agencies has its own role to play, as well as an interconnected role with other agencies, to reduce crash frequency and severity on our roadways.

In addition to the 4 E's, Georgia is incorporating a Safe Systems Approach in transportation planning and implementation, emphasizing the reduction of fatalities and serious injuries. The goal of a safe system is to ensure that if crashes do occur, then they do not result in serious human injury.⁵ The five elements of a safe system include safe road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads, and post-crash care.

It should be noted that while the 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan does strive for reduced fatalities and serious injuries on the state's transportation system, because vehicle miles traveled are projected to increase, fatalities and serious injuries are projected to increase through 2024. The plan projects 1,770 traffic fatalities in the State in 2024, a 17.61% increase from the 1,505 fatalities that occurred in 2019. The plan's goal with regard to fatalities is merely “To maintain the 5-year moving average traffic fatalities under the projected 1,770 (2020-2024) 5-year average by 2024.”⁶ In this sense, if there are 1,669 or fewer fatalities on average per year from 2017 to 2021, the State would consider its safety plan goals to have been achieved. In contrast, 30 other states have set goals to reduce the number

⁴ Developing a Transportation Safety Plan, Federal Highway Safety Administration
https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/processes/tribal/planning_modules/safety/chapter02.cfm

⁵ 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan, p. 12.

⁶ 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan, p. 10.

of traffic fatalities,⁷ and one state (Washington)⁸ and several cities⁹ (including Macon, GA)¹⁰ have “vision zero” goals, aiming to achieve zero fatalities. The Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan goals are listed in Table 1.

Safety Performance Measures

In March 2016, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) published regulations outlining performance safety measure targets in accordance with the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) along with MAP-21.¹¹ This final rule went into effect in April 2016 and required all state DOTs and MPOs to establish safety performance measure targets by August 2017 and February 2018, respectively. The safety performance measures are consistent with national highway planning goals aimed at reducing fatalities and injuries along the nation’s highways and shall examine the following based on 5-year rolling averages:

- Number of fatalities
- Rate of fatalities per 100 million (vehicle miles traveled) VMT
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and non-motorized serious injuries

The MPO can fulfill this federal requirement either through programming projects that support the state of Georgia’s safety performance measure targets, developing independent safety performance measure targets, or a combination of these two options. In February 2018, the MPO Policy Committee chose to support the state’s targets and has continued to do so. This will continue after the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was signed into law by President Joe Biden on November 15, 2021.

As previously mentioned, the 2022–2024 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan does not predict a reduction in crashes or fatalities, but it does strive to reduce fatalities and serious injuries. The State’s goals, along with the relevant statistics to show the MPO’s attainment of those goals, are shown in Table 1.

In order to calculate the MPO’s attainment of these performance measures, 2020 estimates of daily VMT (representing the most recent data available) were used for all of the MPO area.¹² The MPO area consists of all of Lowndes County (including the five cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta), plus small portions of Berrien, Brooks, and Lanier Counties. (The portion of Lanier County also includes a small area that is within the city limits of Ray City.)

To estimate VMT in those portions of Berrien, Brooks, and Lanier Counties, the total VMT for those counties was multiplied by the percentage of the total mileage of roads for each county that is within the

⁷ Smart Growth America. “Dangerous by Design 2020.” <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/app/uploads/2020/01/DbD-2020-Report.pdf>

⁸ Washington State Department of Transportation. “Target Zero: Strategic Highway Safety Plan.” <https://www.wsdot.wa.gov/planning/SHSP.htm>

⁹ Vision Zero Network. Vision Zero Cities Map. <https://visionzeronet.org/resources/vision-zero-cities/>

¹⁰ 41NBC. “Vision Zero: a plan to keep pedestrians safe.” By Chip Matthews, October 16, 2019. <https://41nbc.com/2019/10/16/vision-zero-a-plan-to-keep-pedestrians-safe/>

¹¹ National Performance Management Measures: Highway Safety Improvement Program, Federal Highway Administration <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/03/15/2016-05202/national-performance-management-measures-highway-safety-improvement-program>

¹² Georgia Department of Transportation. Mileage by Route and Road System Report 445 for 2019. http://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/Data/Documents/400%20Series/445/445_Report_2018.pdf (accessed 5/19/2020).

MPO portion of those counties, broken down by roadway functional classification. For example, the estimated total 2020 VMT on minor arterial roads in all of Brooks County was 170,587, and 7.15% of the total mileage of minor arterial roads in Brooks County are within the MPO area; therefore, the estimated VMT on minor arterial roads in the portion of Brooks County that lies within the VLMPO area is 12,197. Table 1 shows the VMT and road miles in the MPO area.

As of 2020, the MPO has 1.12% of the total VMT in the state.¹³ The current estimated VLMPO area population is 122,410,¹⁴ which is 1.14% of Georgia's total population as of the 2020 Decennial Census. These percentages are used to evaluate the MPO area's attainment of state goals. Table 2 shows the VLMPO's share of each state goal, both by VMT and by population. The value of metrics that are normally measured as integers (such as numbers of fatalities and injuries) are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Several other local plans and policies aspire to improve the safety of the transportation system in the MPO area, including the 2014 Common Community Vision (CCV). The CCV's Aspirational Goal and Transportation Objective 18 is to provide regional connectivity through an efficient, safe, accessible, and affordable multi-modal transportation system that is developed through a fully funded transportation plan that identifies multi-modal transportation options. The MPO's current Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Joint Comprehensive Plan for Lowndes County and the cities of Dasher, Hahira, Lake Park, Remerton, and Valdosta also identify road safety as a priority item.

¹³ VMT for 2020 was utilized throughout this crash report, which was collected during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic within Georgia in March 2020.

¹⁴ The Census Bureau's 2020 population estimate for Lowndes County is 118,251. The estimated combined population of the portions of the VLMPO area that are in Brooks, Berrien, and Lanier Counties is 4,159, according to block group data from the 2020 U.S. Decennial Census.

TABLE 1: VLMPO AREA DAILY VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED AND ROAD MILES, 2020

County	Road Type	Total road miles	Road miles in VLMPO area	Percent of road miles in VLMPO area	Total 2020 VMT (whole county)	2020 VMT within VLMPO area (extrapolated for Berrien, Brooks, and Lanier)	2020 VMT per road mile in VLMPO area
Berrien	Local	597.45	0.75	0.13%	126,115	164	218.67
	Total	597.45	0.75	0.13%	126,115	164	218.67
Brooks	Minor Arterial	79.01	5.65	7.15%	170,587	12,197	2,158.76
	Collector	167.86	3.39	2.02%	113,951	2,302	679.06
	Local	503.82	23.94	4.75%	101,259	4,810	200.92
	Total	750.69	32.98	4.39%	385,797	16,936	513.52
Lanier	Minor Arterial	33.80	2.65	7.84%	92,338	7,239	2,731.70
	Collector	71.87	0.44	0.61%	77,990	476	1,081.82
	Local	228.44	28.91	12.66%	43,846	5,551	192.01
	Total	339.77	32.00	9.42%	214,174	13,590	424.69
Lowndes	Interstate	31.36	31.36	100.00%	1,436,034	1,436,034	45,508.92
	Principal Arterial	61.61	61.61	100.00%	768,189	768,189	12,469.18
	Minor Arterial	103.33	103.33	100.00%	667,362	667,362	6,458.62
	Collector	226.98	226.98	100.00%	362,130	362,130	1,595.42
	Local	896.51	896.51	100.00%	523,403	523,403	583.82
	Total	1,319.79	1,319.79	100.00%	3,757,119	3,757,119	2,846.76
MPO Area	Total	-	1,384.8	-	-	3,770,709	2,722.93

TABLE 2: 2022-2024 GEORGIA STRATEGIC HIGHWAY SAFETY PLAN GOALS AND VLMPO ATTAINMENT MEASURES

Goal	Performance Measure	VLMPO share of state goal by VMT (1.12%)	VLMPO share of state goal by population (1.14%)	VLMPO 5-year total, 2017–2021	VLMPO annual average, 2017–2021
1. To maintain traffic fatalities under the projected 1,770 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Traffic Fatalities	21.1	20.2	99	19.8
2. To maintain traffic fatalities per 100M VMT under the projected 1.22 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Fatalities per 100M VMT	1.2	1.2	-	1.4
3. To maintain serious injuries in traffic crashes under the projected 11,069 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Serious Injuries	131.7	126.5	240	48.0
4. To maintain serious injuries in traffic crashes per 100M VMT under the projected 7.68 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Serious Injuries per 100M VMT	7.7	7.7	-	3.5
5. To maintain non-motorist serious injuries and fatalities under the projected 1,025 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Non-Motorized Serious Injuries and Fatalities	12.2	11.7	13	2.6
6. To maintain pedestrian fatalities under the projected 306 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Pedestrian Fatalities	3.6	3.5	9	1.8
7. To maintain bicyclist fatalities under the projected 26 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Bicyclist Fatalities	0.3	0.3	4	0.8
8. To maintain the unrestrained traffic fatalities under the projected 440 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Unrestrained Passenger Vehicle Occupant Fatalities	5.2	5.0	34	6.8
9. To maintain the annual observed seat belt use for passenger vehicles, front seat outboard occupants above 96% by 2024.	Seatbelt Usage	96%	96%	-	90.7
10. To maintain alcohol-related fatalities under the projected 415 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities	4.9	4.7	8	1.6
11. To maintain speeding-related fatalities under the projected 326 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Speeding-Related Fatalities	3.9	3.7	7	1.4
12. To maintain motorcyclist fatalities under the projected 201 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Motorcyclist Fatalities	2.4	2.0	13	2.6
13. To maintain the un-helmeted motorcyclist fatalities under the projected 38 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Un-Helmeted Motorcyclist Fatalities	0.4	0.4	4	0.8
14. To maintain young drivers involved in fatal crashes under the projected 214 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Drivers Age 20 or Younger Involved in Fatal Crashes	2.5	2.4	12	2.4
15. To maintain the 5-year moving average number of drivers age 65+ in fatal crashes under the projected 453 (2020-2024 rolling average) by 2024.	Drives Age 65 or Older Involved in Fatal Crashes	5.4	5.2	23	4.6

Crash Analysis

The following sections examines crash trends in the MPO area, organized in the same order as the Strategic Highway Safety Plan goals and metrics listed in Table 2, followed by some additional factors. Crash data has been accessed through the Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS) Portal¹⁵.

Crash Overview

Between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2021, 18,203 reported crashes occurred in the Metropolitan Planning Area. There were 92 fatal crashes and 202 serious injury crashes. Crashes increased between 2017 (3,157 crashes) and 2019 (3,839 crashes) before a decrease in 2020 during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the VLMPO area. This was followed by a sharp increase in crashes in 2021 during which 4,104 crashes were reported. Figure 1 provides a 5-year crash overview for the VLMPO planning area including all of Lowndes County and portions of Berrien, Brooks, and Lanier Counties.

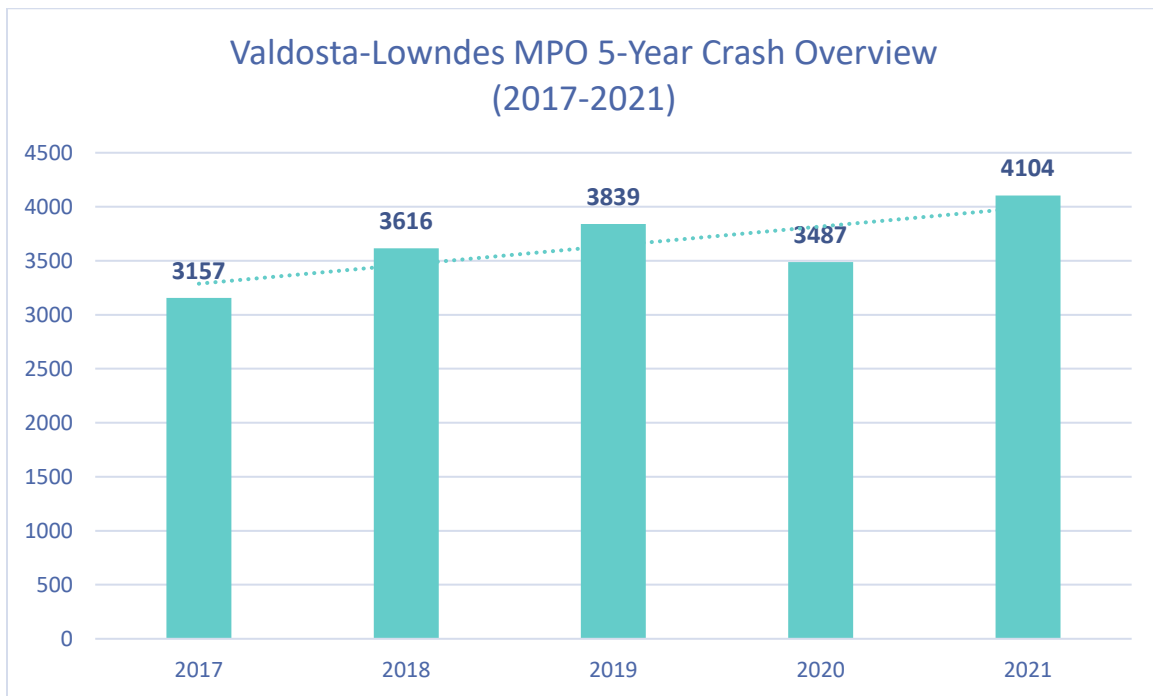


FIGURE 1: VALDOSTA-LOWNDES MPO 5-YEAR CRASH OVERVIEW (2017-2021)

The total number of crashes that occurred in the Metropolitan Planning Area within publicly-owned right-of-way during the 2017-2021 period decreased from the previous five-year (2016-2020) timeframe by 2.3%; however, the number of serious injuries increased from 205 to 240 (a 17.1% increase) and the number of fatalities as a result of crashes increased by 14 people, to 99 fatalities during the 2017-2021 reporting period. While crashes decreased within the VLMPO area, their severity increased based on the increase in serious injuries and fatalities, especially after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Figure 2 and Figure 3 depict crashes by severity within the VLMPO area for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

¹⁵ Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS). www.gearsportal.com

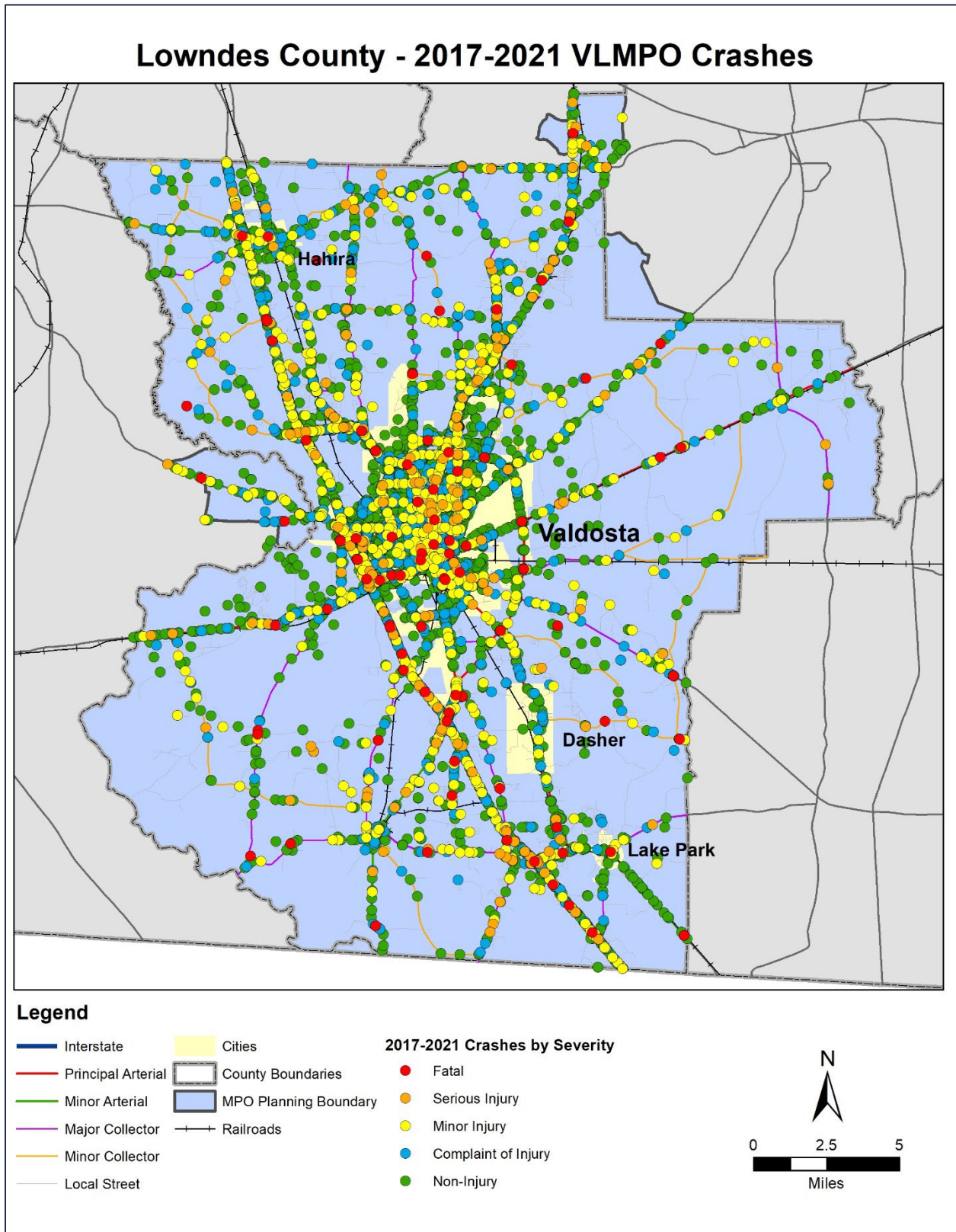


FIGURE 2: LOWNDES COUNTY – 2017-2021 VLMPO CRASHES

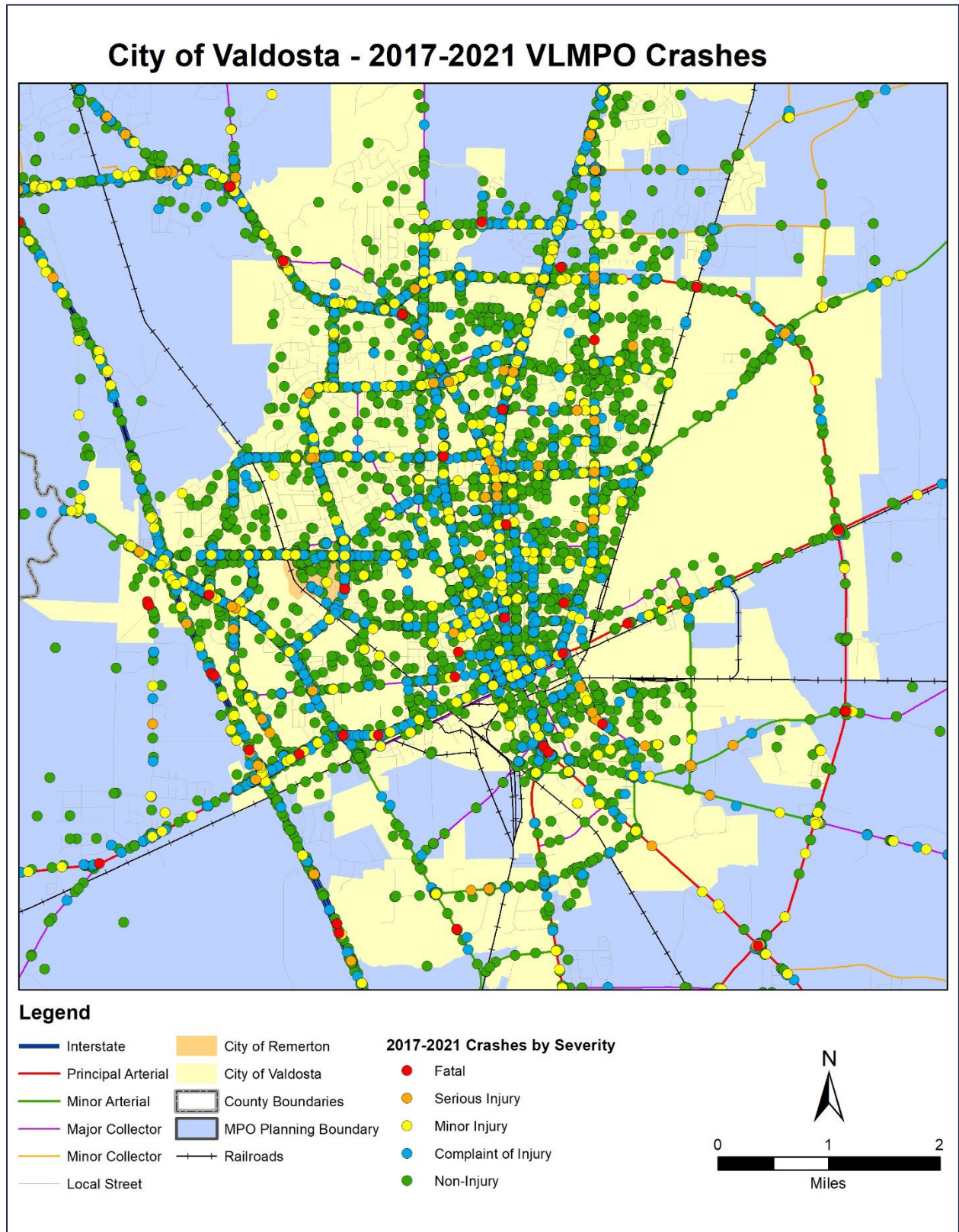


FIGURE 3: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO CRASHES

CRASH HOTSPOTS

Crash density within the VLMPO planning area was calculated based on the crashes occurring between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2021. In relative terms, this helps the VLMPO and local partners understand where crashes are happening the most within the MPO boundaries. This exercise was completed both for the entire MPO as well as the City of Valdosta and its immediate surroundings. Figure 4 and Figure 5 show crash density for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

In Lowndes County and other portions of the MPO, crashes are most frequent along the following corridors:

- Bemiss Road (SR 125) from the Valdosta City limits near Guest Road to SR 122 north of Moody AFB
- Interstate 75 throughout Lowndes County
- North Valdosta Road (US 41/SR 7) in the vicinity of I-75
- Lakes Boulevard (SR 376) from Loch Laurel Road to Mill Store Road near Lake Park
- Madison Highway (SR 31) in the vicinity of I-75
- West Main Street (SR 122) from I-75 to Church Street within Hahira

In the City of Valdosta, crashes are most frequent along the following corridors:

- Barack Obama Boulevard from East Hill Avenue (US 84/US 221/SR 38) to East Park Avenue
- Baytree Road (SR 125) from Gornto Road to North Oak Street
- Bemiss Road
- Interstate 75 within Valdosta, especially near West Hill Avenue (US 84/US 221/SR 38) and North St. Augustine Road (SR 133)
- Hill Avenue (US 84/US 221/SR 38) from Briarwood Road to Fry Street
- Jerry Jones Drive from Baytree Road to Country Club Drive
- North Ashley Street (US 41/SR 7 Bus) from East Hill Avenue (US 84/US 221/SR 38) to Smithbriar Drive
- North St. Augustine Road (SR 133) from River Street to James Road
- North Valdosta Road from North Oak Street Extension to the City limit
- South Patterson Street (US 41/SR 7 Bus) from Madison Highway to James Beck Overpass

Many of these locations listed above are among the highest crash locations ranked for the 2017 through 2021 reporting period. Further detail about location-specific crash patterns is provided in the High-Crash Locations section of this annual crash report.

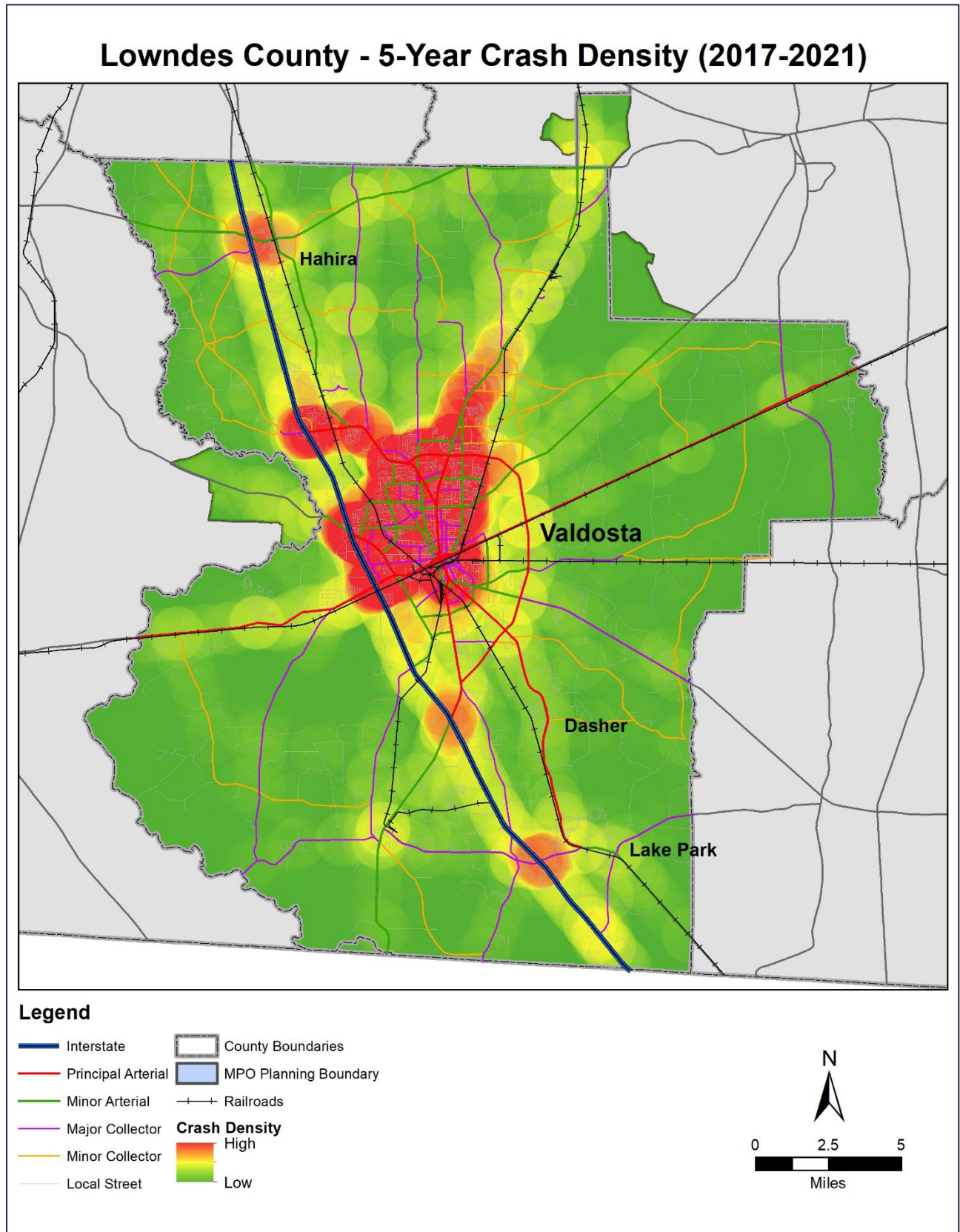
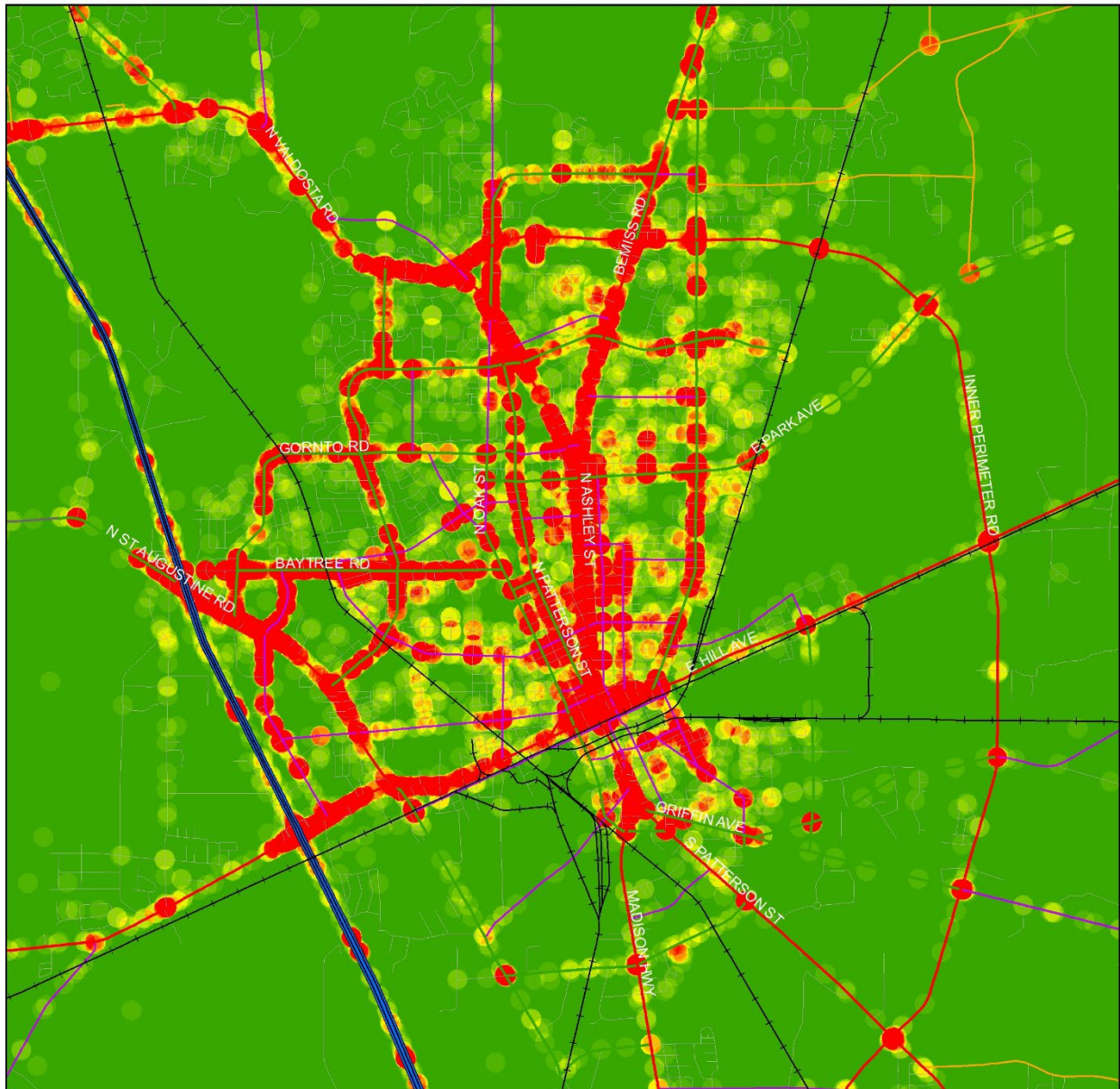


FIGURE 4: LOWNDES COUNTY – 5-YEAR CRASH DENSITY (2017-2021)

City of Valdosta - 5-Year Crash Density (2017-2021)



Legend

- +— Railroads
 - Interstate
 - Principal Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
 - Local Street
 - County Boundaries
 - MPO Planning Boundary
- Crash Density**
- High
 - Low

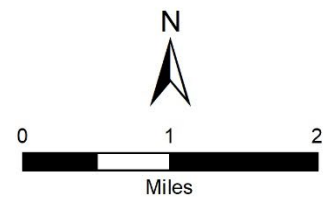


FIGURE 5: CITY OF VALDOSTA – 5-YEAR CRASH DENSITY (2017-2021)

ANALYSIS OF 2021 CRASHES

An analysis of 2021 crash patterns provides an overview of more recent crash patterns within the MPO planning area and helps to illustrate trends following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the area. Between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, there were 4,104 reported crashes which occurred within the VLMPO boundaries. Figure 6 shows 2021 crashes by road surface conditions. Approximately 82% of crashes occurred in dry roadway conditions.

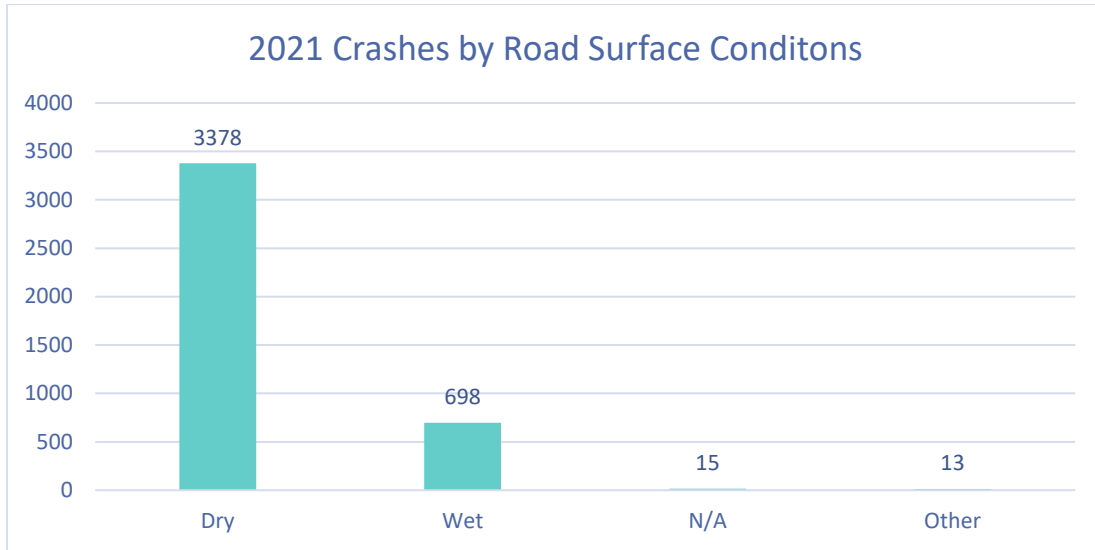


FIGURE 6: 2021 CRASHES BY ROAD SURFACE CONDITION

Figure 7 shows 2021 crashes by lighting conditions. Approximately 74% of crashes occurred during daylight hours. This is followed by 14% for dark, lighted conditions and nine percent for dark, not lighted conditions.

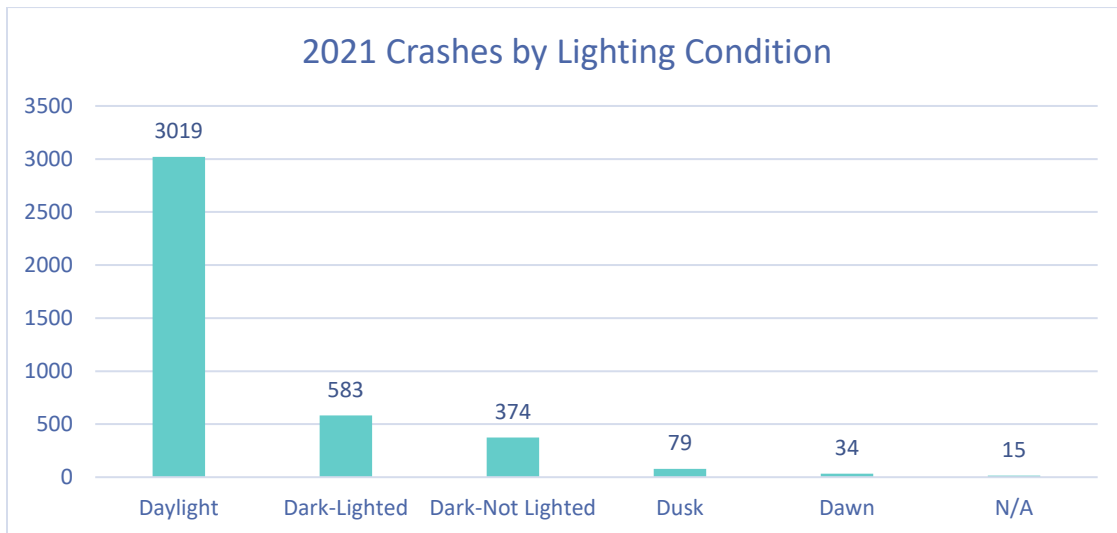


FIGURE 7: 2021 CRASHES BY LIGHTING CONDITION

Figure 8 shows 2021 crashes by manner of collision. Collectively, about 69% of crashes were either angle crashes (35%) or rear-end crashes (34%). Sixteen percent of crashes were single-vehicle crashes (not a collision with a motor vehicle) and ten percent of crashes were same direction sideswipe crashes. Three percent of crashes were head-on collisions and two percent of crashes were opposite direction sideswipe crashes.

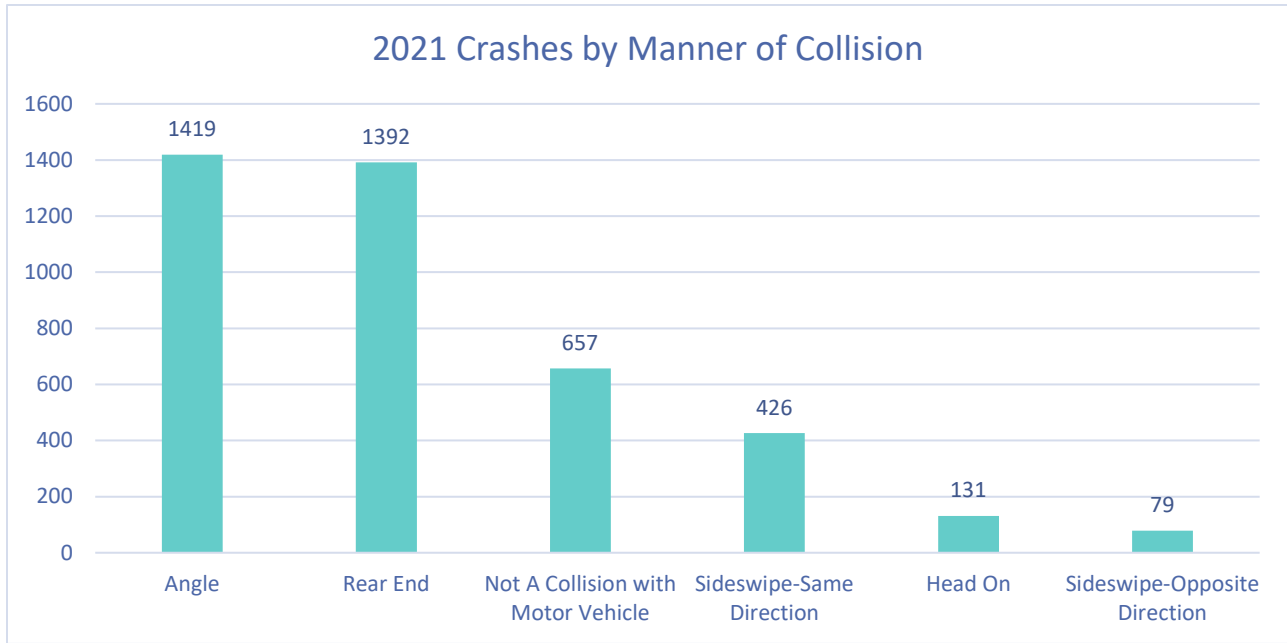


FIGURE 8: 2021 CRASHES BY MANNER OF COLLISION

Contributing Factors

The single most common contributing factor for crashes in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021 was “Following too Close” (29% of crashes). Educational campaigns to educate drivers to increase following distance could result in a considerable reduction in crashes.

“Failed to Yield” was a contributing factor in approximately 23% of crashes. Other major contributing factors were “Changed Lanes Improperly” (seven percent), “Driver Lost Control” (six percent), and Distracted Driving (four percent). The most notable contributing factors to 2021 crashes are shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3: NOTABLE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS FOR 2021 CRASHES

Contributing Factor	Number of 2021 Crashes	Percent of 2021 Crashes
Following too Close	1183	29%
Failure to Yield	930	23%
Changed Lanes Improperly	269	7%
Driver Lost Control	228	7%
Distracted Driving	181	4%

Fatalities

Between January 1, 2017 and December 31, 2021, there were 92 fatal crashes in the MPO area, causing a total of 99 fatalities. This is an average of 19.8 road deaths per year, or approximately one fatality every 2.6 weeks. Most of the fatal crashes caused only one fatality; three crashes (3.3%) resulted in two fatalities, while two crashes (2.2%) resulted in three fatalities each. No single crash resulted in more than three fatalities during the 2017–2021 time period. Approximately 12% of fatal crashes involved young drivers (under age 21), and about 18% of fatal crashes were alcohol-related, according to the available data.

Locations of fatal crashes are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

FATALITIES PER 100 MILLION VMT

With a total of 99 fatalities in the five-year period examined, and an average of 19.8 fatalities per year, the fatality rate per 100 million VMT can be calculated as follows:

$$\frac{99 / 5}{(3,770,709 * 365) / 100,000,000} = 1.4$$

The rate of fatalities per 100 million VMT in the MPO area from January 1, 2017 to December 13, 2021 is 1.4.

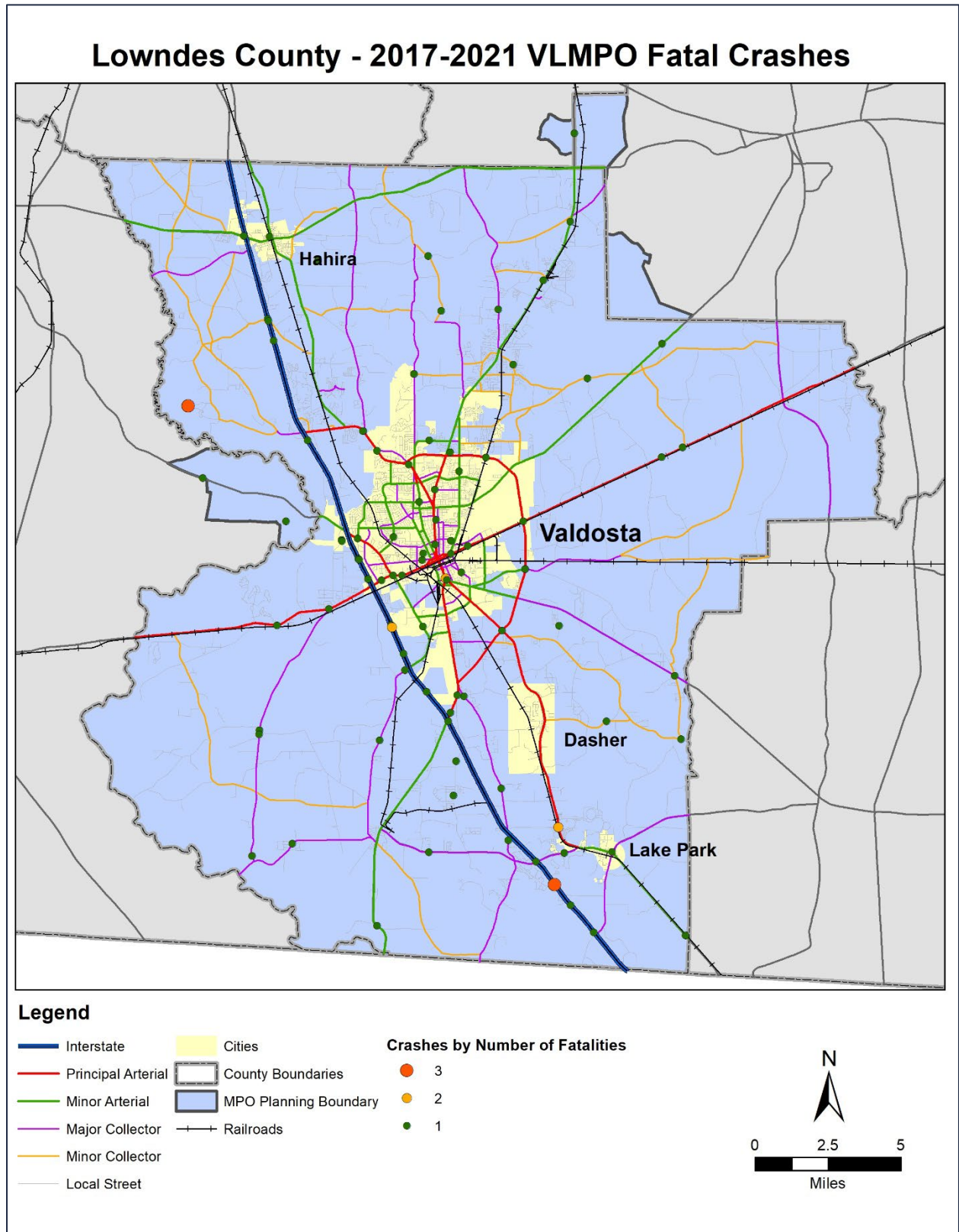


FIGURE 9: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO FATAL CRASHES

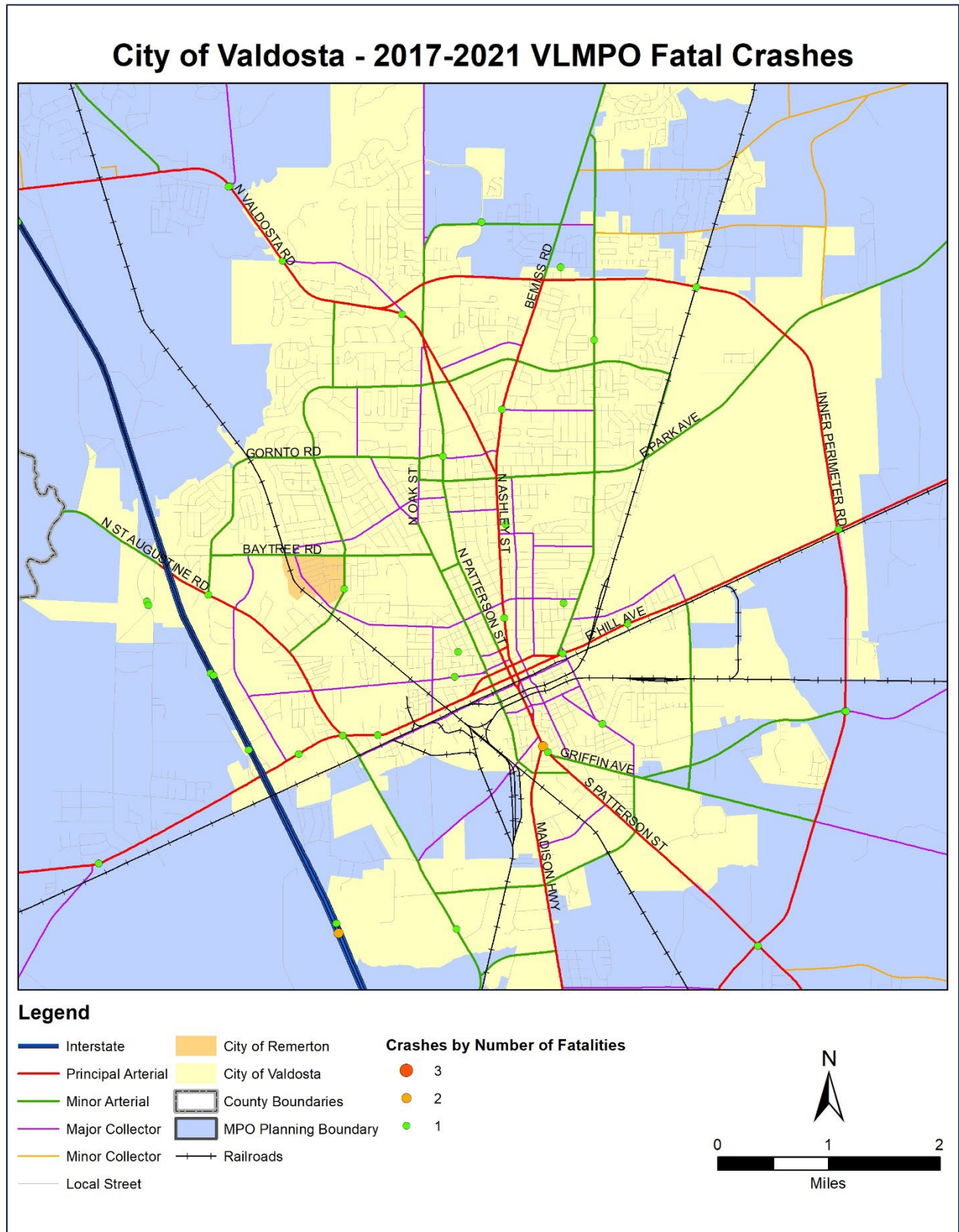


FIGURE 10: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO FATAL CRASHES

Serious Injuries

From 2017 to 2021, in the MPO area, there were 202 crashes in which the injury was recorded as “Suspected Serious Injury,” with a total of 240 people seriously injured. Most of these crashes (85.1%) resulted in only one person being seriously injured.

The locations of serious injury crashes are shown in Figure 11 and Figure 12 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

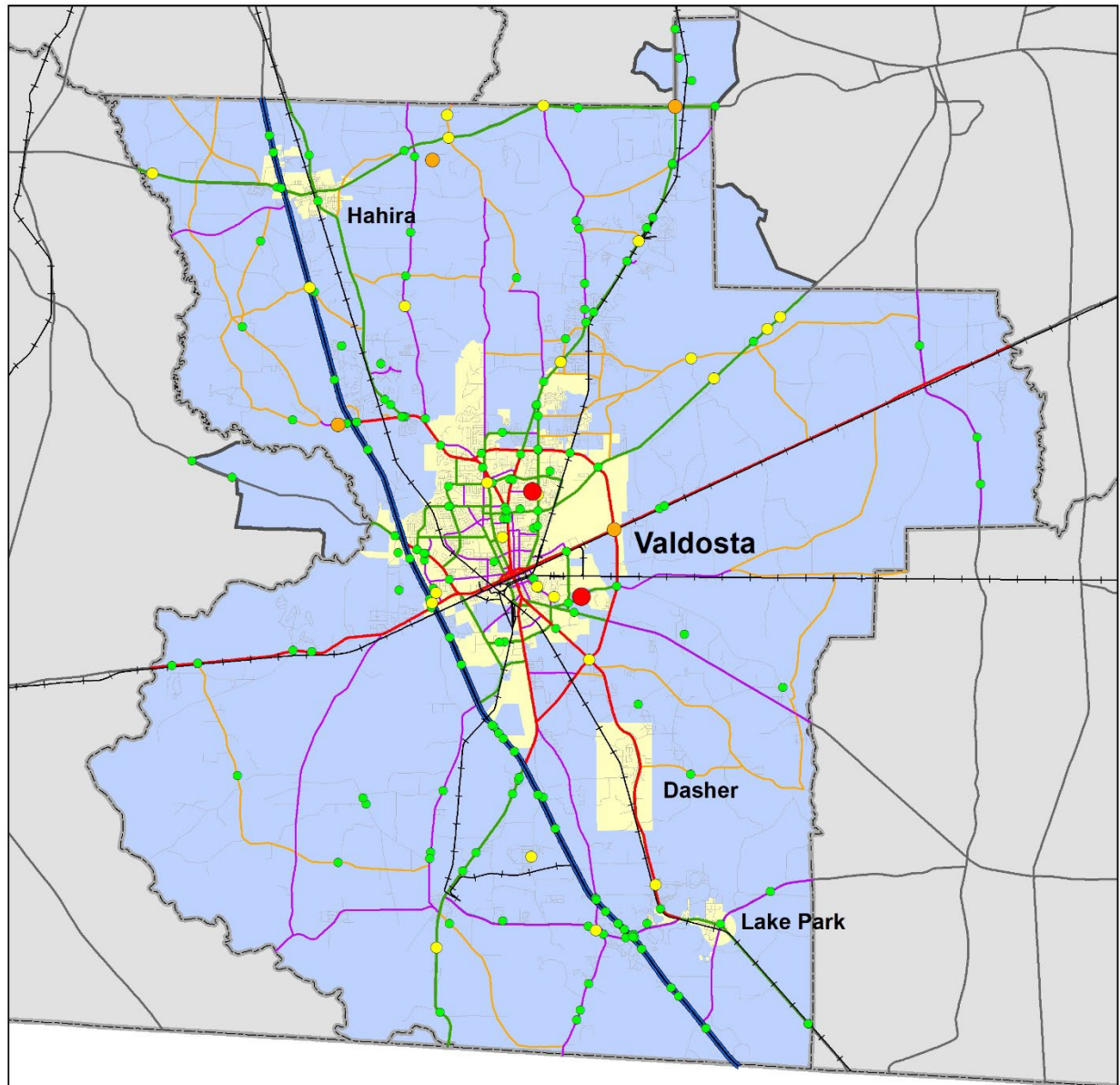
SERIOUS INJURIES PER 100 MILLION VMT

There was a total of 240 serious injuries from January 1, 2017 to December 13, 2021. As shown in Table 2, the total daily Vehicle Miles Traveled in the MPO area in 2020 (the most recent year for which data are available) is estimated at 3,770,709. To obtain the annual figure, the five-year total number of serious injuries is divided by five to calculate an annual average for serious injuries. This figure is divided by the annual average total daily VMT times 365 days in a year, divided by 100 million VMT:

$$\frac{240/5}{(3,770,709 * 365) / 100,000,000} = 3.49$$

The rate of serious injuries per 100 million VMT in the MPO area from January 1, 2017 to December 13, 2021 is 3.49.

Lowndes County - 2017-2021 VLMPO Serious Injury Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- Cities
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- Railroads

Crashes by Number of Serious Injuries

- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1

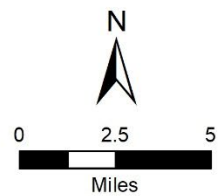


FIGURE 11: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO SERIOUS INJURY CRASHES

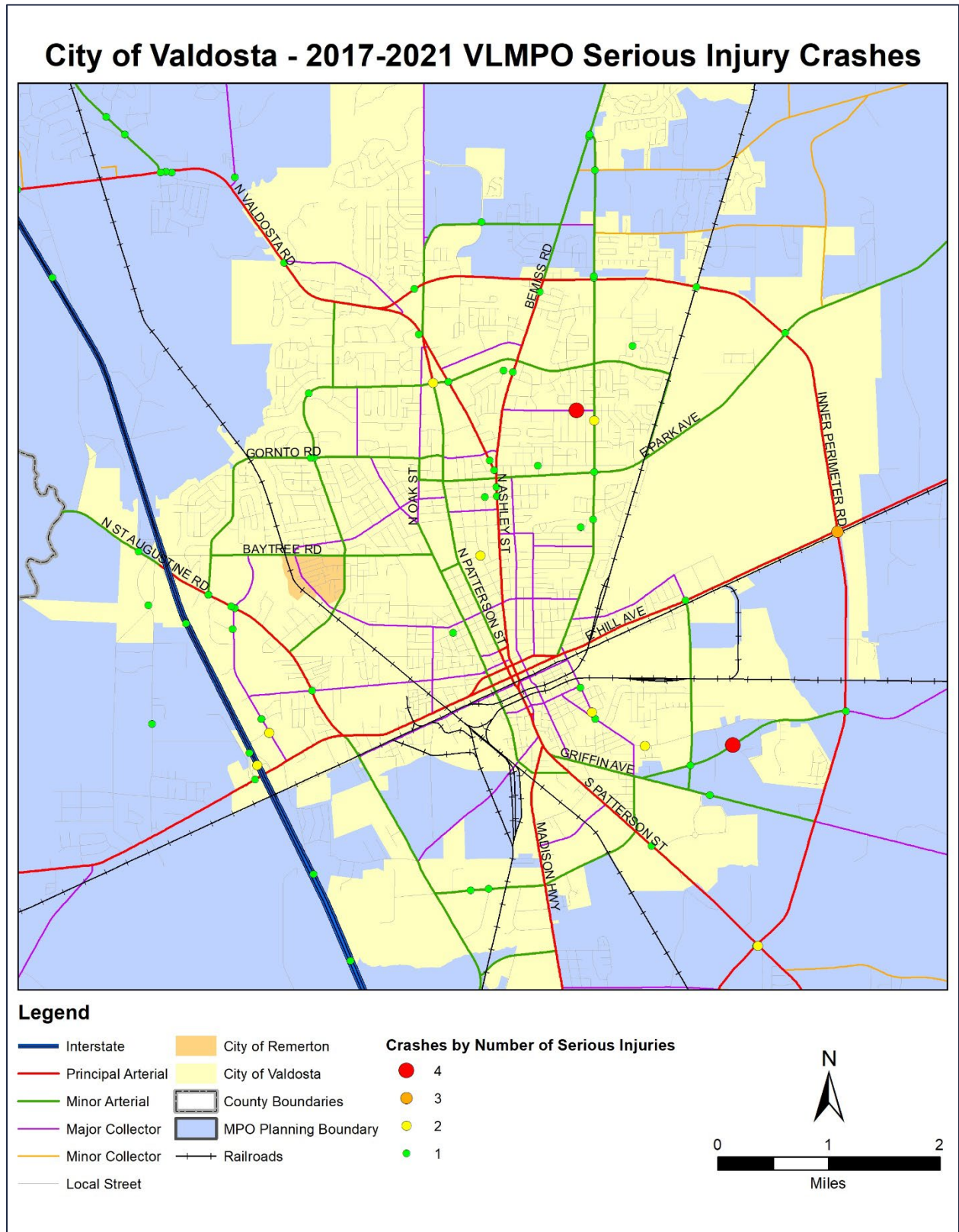


FIGURE 12: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO SERIOUS INJURY CRASHES

Non-Motorized Fatalities

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES

From 2017 to 2021, there were 125 crashes involving pedestrians, resulting in nine fatalities and 12 serious injuries. Figure 13 and Figure 14 show the location of crashes in which drivers hit pedestrians for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Most non-fatal crashes involving pedestrians occurred in the more urban areas of Valdosta.

Since this report focuses on crashes on public roads, these statistics do not include pedestrians hit by trains. However, no pedestrians have been killed in collisions with trains in the MPO area between 2017 and 2021.

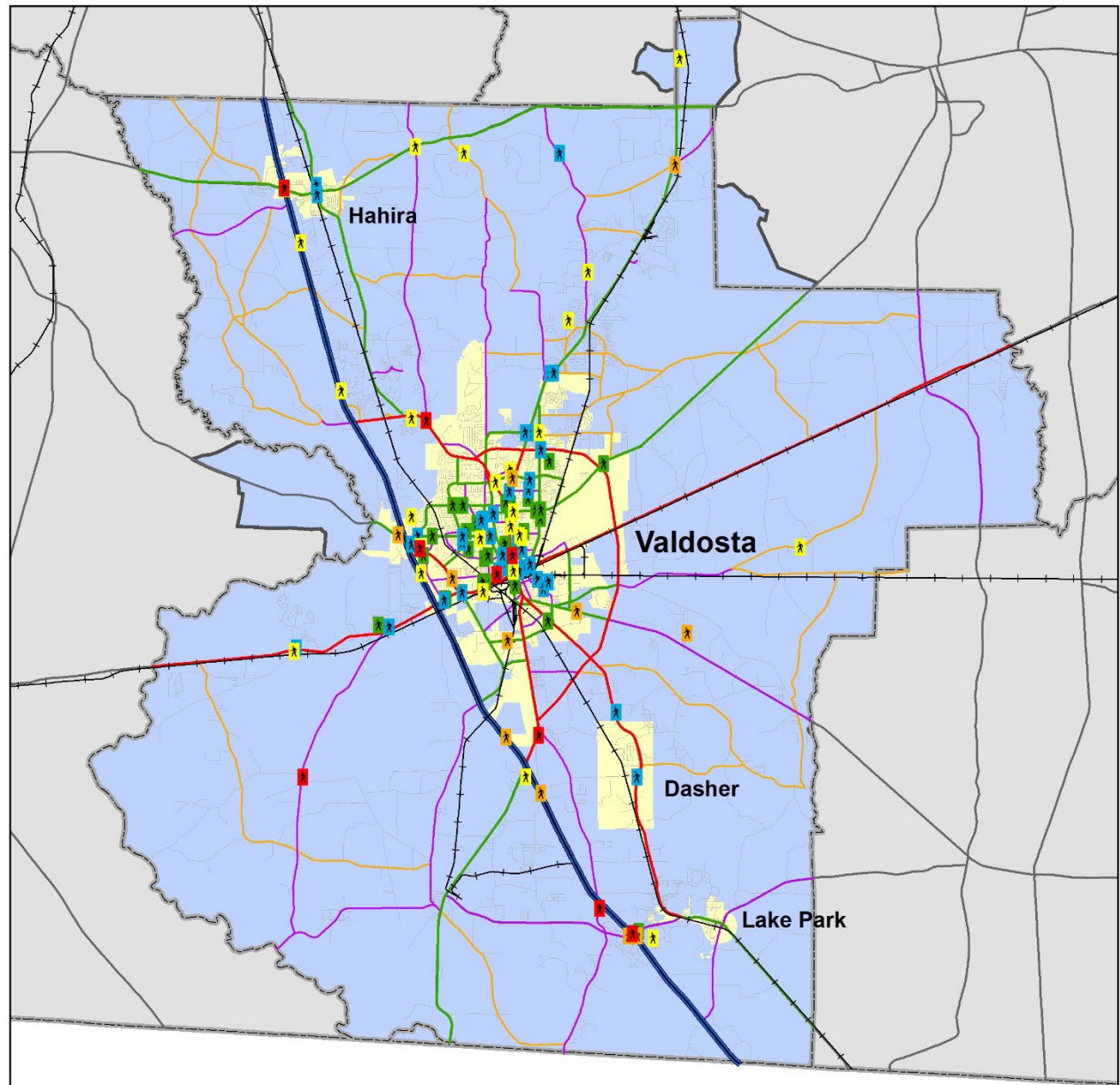
Approximately 70% of crashes involving pedestrians occurred in the central urban areas of Valdosta and Remerton. Figure 14 presents a more detailed view of the crashes within these areas. Notable corridors along which large numbers of pedestrians were hit include: North Ashley Street (ten crashes), Barack Obama Boulevard (five crashes), Hill Avenue (five crashes), North St. Augustine Road (five crashes), Baytree Road (four crashes), Troup Street (four crashes), and Bemiss Road (three crashes). There are also small clusters of pedestrian crashes around the intersection of Gornto Rd. and St. Augustine Rd. (four crashes) and around exit 5 on I-75 (four crashes resulting in two fatalities and two serious injuries).

BICYCLIST FATALITIES

From 2017 to 2021, there were 99 crashes in which motorists struck a bicyclist, resulting in four fatalities and eight serious injuries. Approximately 77% of these crashes occurred in the central urban area of Valdosta and Remerton. Corridors on which notable numbers of bicycle crashes occurred were Lee Street (seven crashes), St. Augustine Road (four crashes), Patterson Street (four crashes), Baytree Road (four crashes), Martin Luther King Jr. Drive (three crashes), Park Avenue (three crashes), and River Street (three crashes). The locations of crashes involving bicyclists are shown in Figure 15 and Figure 16 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

It should be noted that this metric includes only crashes that involved both a bicyclist and a motor vehicle operator. Crashes involving only bicyclists are not reported, nor are crashes involving a collision of a bicyclist with a pedestrian.

Lowndes County - 2017-2021 VLMPO Pedestrian Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- Cities
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- Railroads

Pedestrian Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

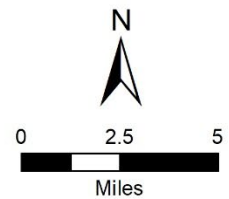
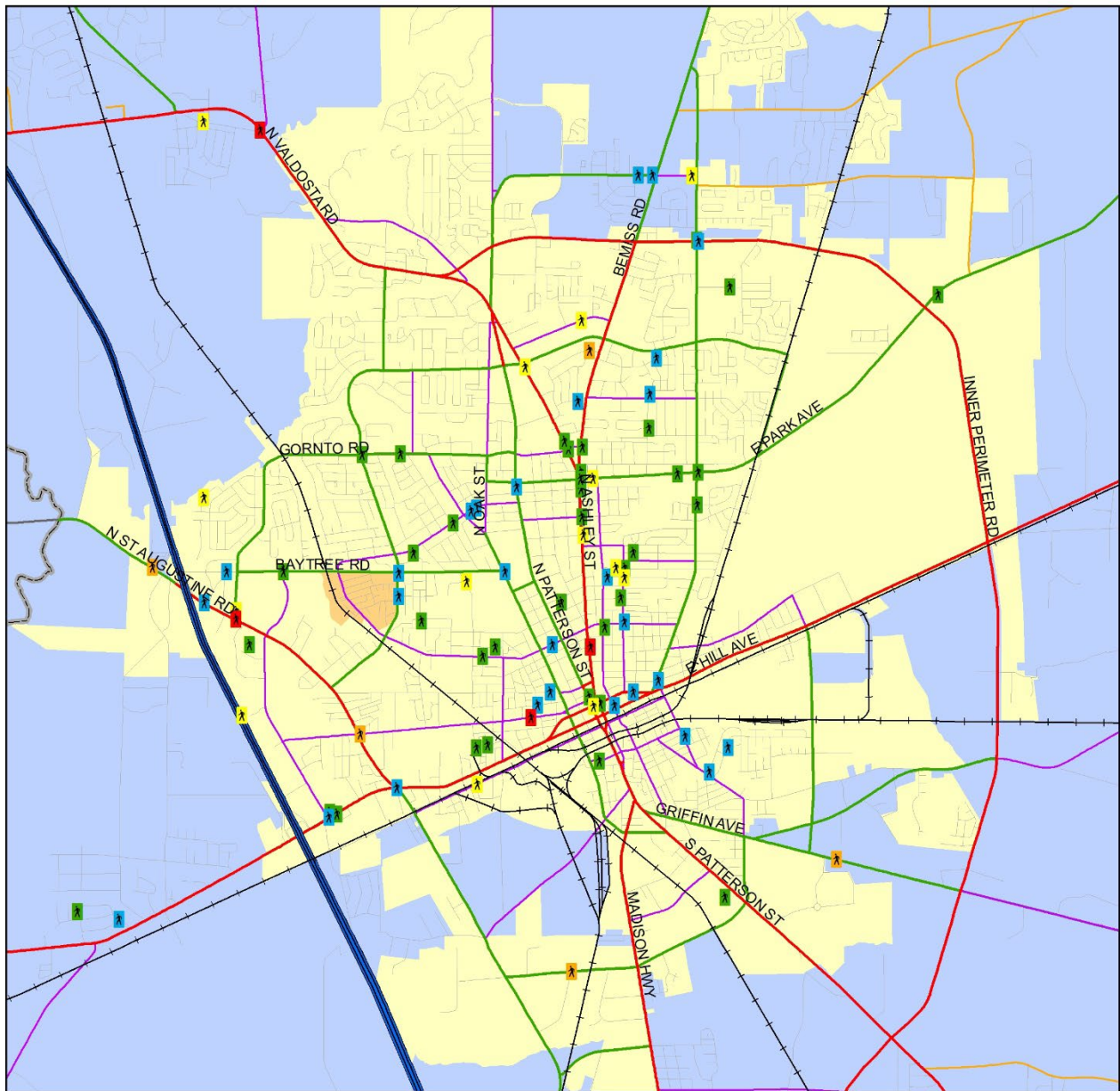


FIGURE 13: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO PEDESTRIAN CRASHES

City of Valdosta - 2017-2021 VLMPO Pedestrian Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- City of Remerton
- City of Valdosta
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- Railroads

Pedestrian Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- ▲ Serious Injury
- ▲ Minor Injury
- ▲ Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

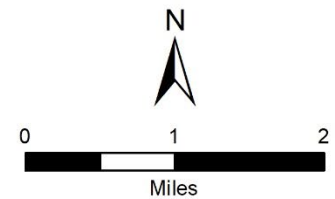


FIGURE 14: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO PEDESTRIAN CRASHES

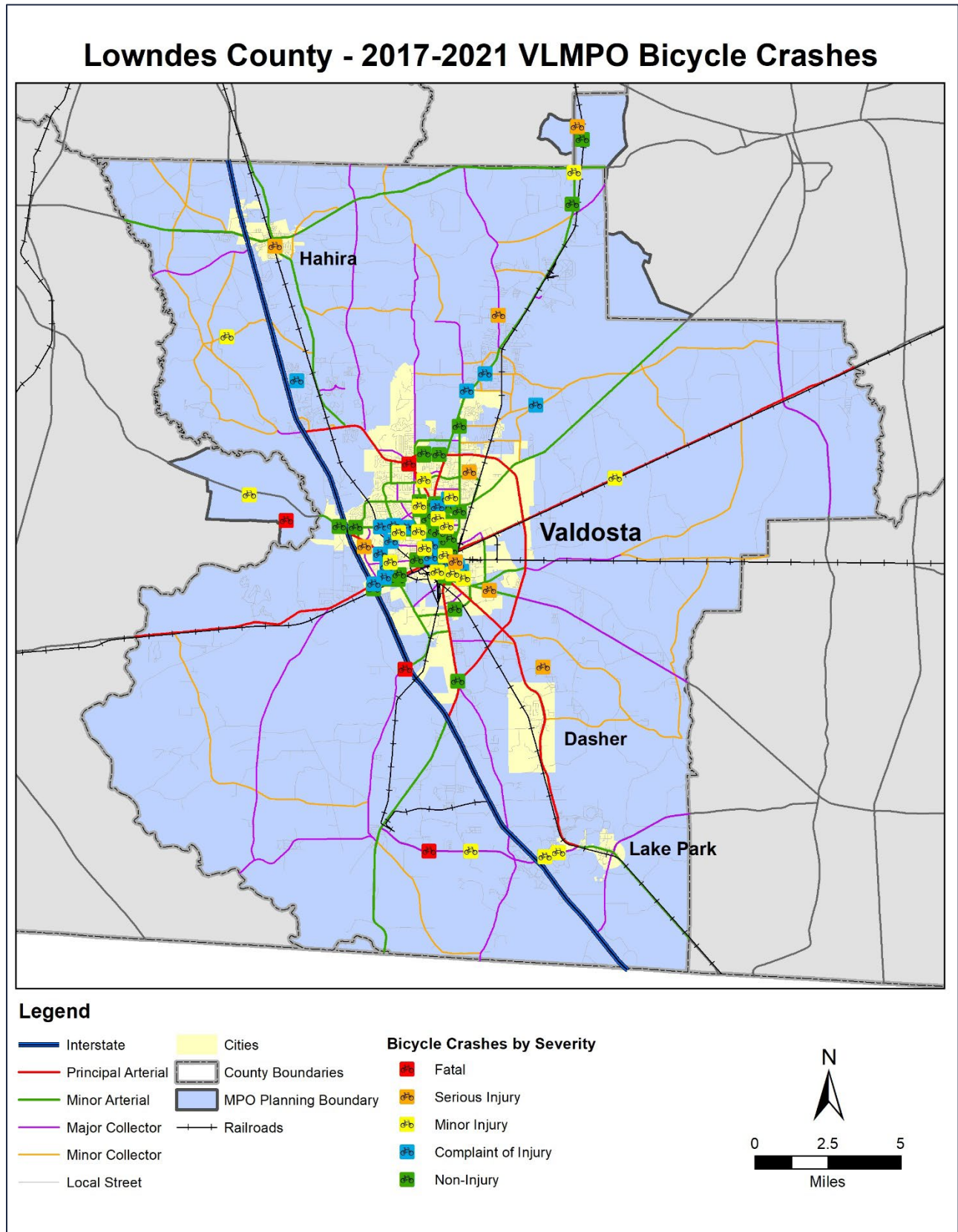
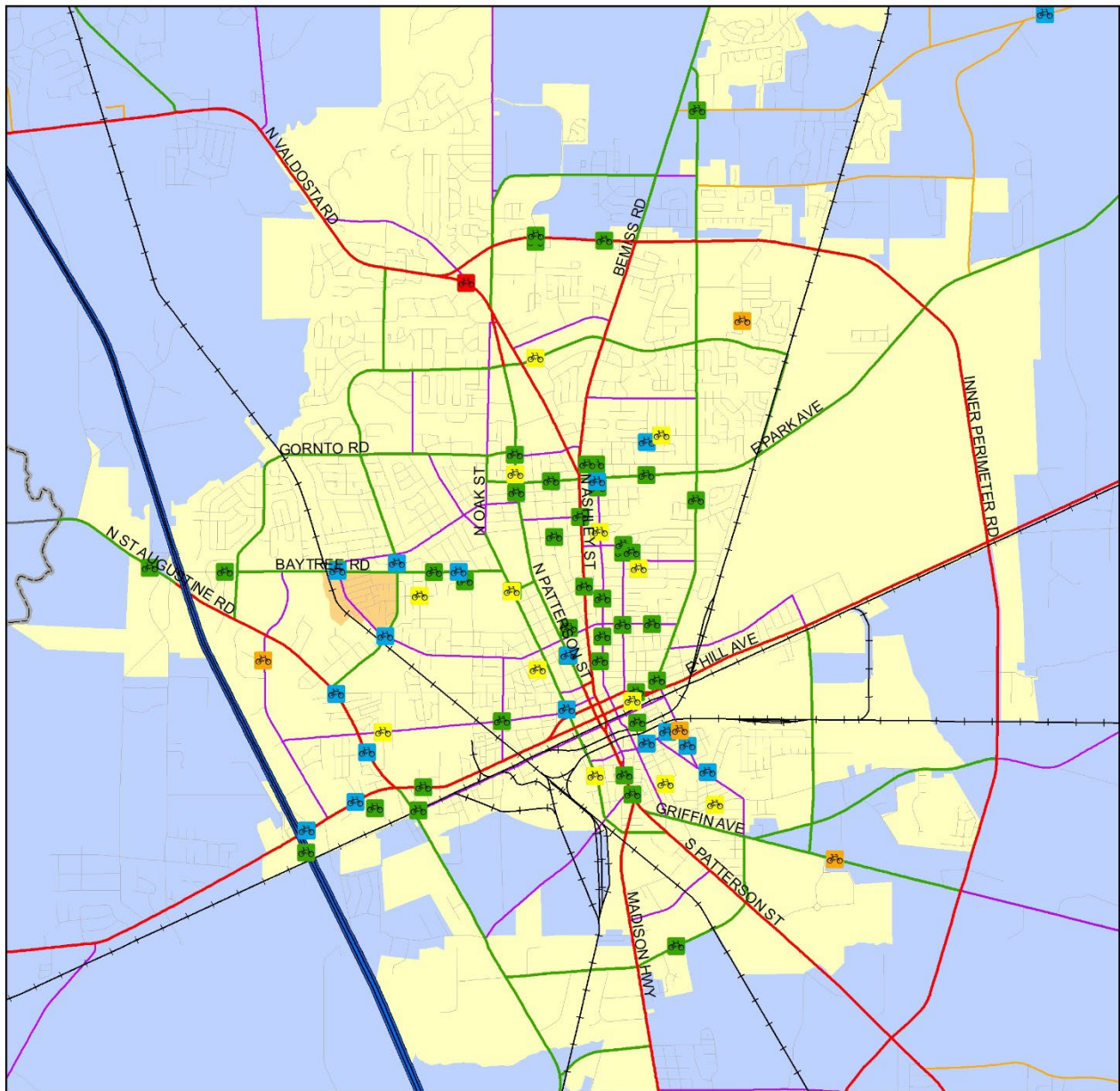


FIGURE 15: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO BICYCLE CRASHES

City of Valdosta - 2017-2021 VLMPO Bicycle Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- City of Remerton
- City of Valdosta
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- Railroads

Bicycle Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

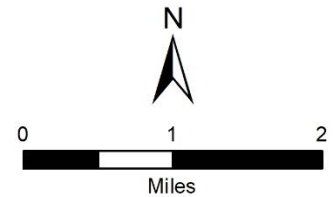


FIGURE 16: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO BICYCLE CRASHES

Unrestrained Fatalities

Of the 99 crash fatalities that occurred in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021, 34 of the motorists killed (34.3%) were recorded as not being properly restrained by seat belts. This statistic highlights the instrumental role seat belts play in saving lives.

Overall, from 2017 to 2021, of the 18,203 crashes that occurred in the VLMPO area, 1,627 (8.9%) involved occupants who were not properly restrained, according to the data available. Of the 240 serious injuries that occurred during this timeframe, 63 of those injured (26.3%) were not using proper restraints.¹⁶

SEAT BELT USAGE

The MPO has not directly collected data on the percentage of vehicle drivers or occupants using seatbelts. However, data on seatbelt use in crashes are available from the GEARS database. The rates of drivers and passengers involved in crashes who were wearing seat belts correctly can be used to estimate seat belt usage rates in the Metropolitan Planning Area.

From 2017 to 2021 of the 18,203 crashes that occurred in the MPO area, 1,706 (9.4%) involved occupants who were not properly restrained, according to the data available. Thus, the rate of seat belt use for vehicle occupants involved in crashes can be estimated at 90.6%.

With these statistics, the benefits of proper seat belt use are clear, and it is recommended that seat belt usage be increased through a combination of educational campaigns and enforcement of existing laws.

Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities

Of the 18,203 crashes, 593 (3.3%) were recorded as involving driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. These crashes resulted in eight fatalities and 26 serious injuries.

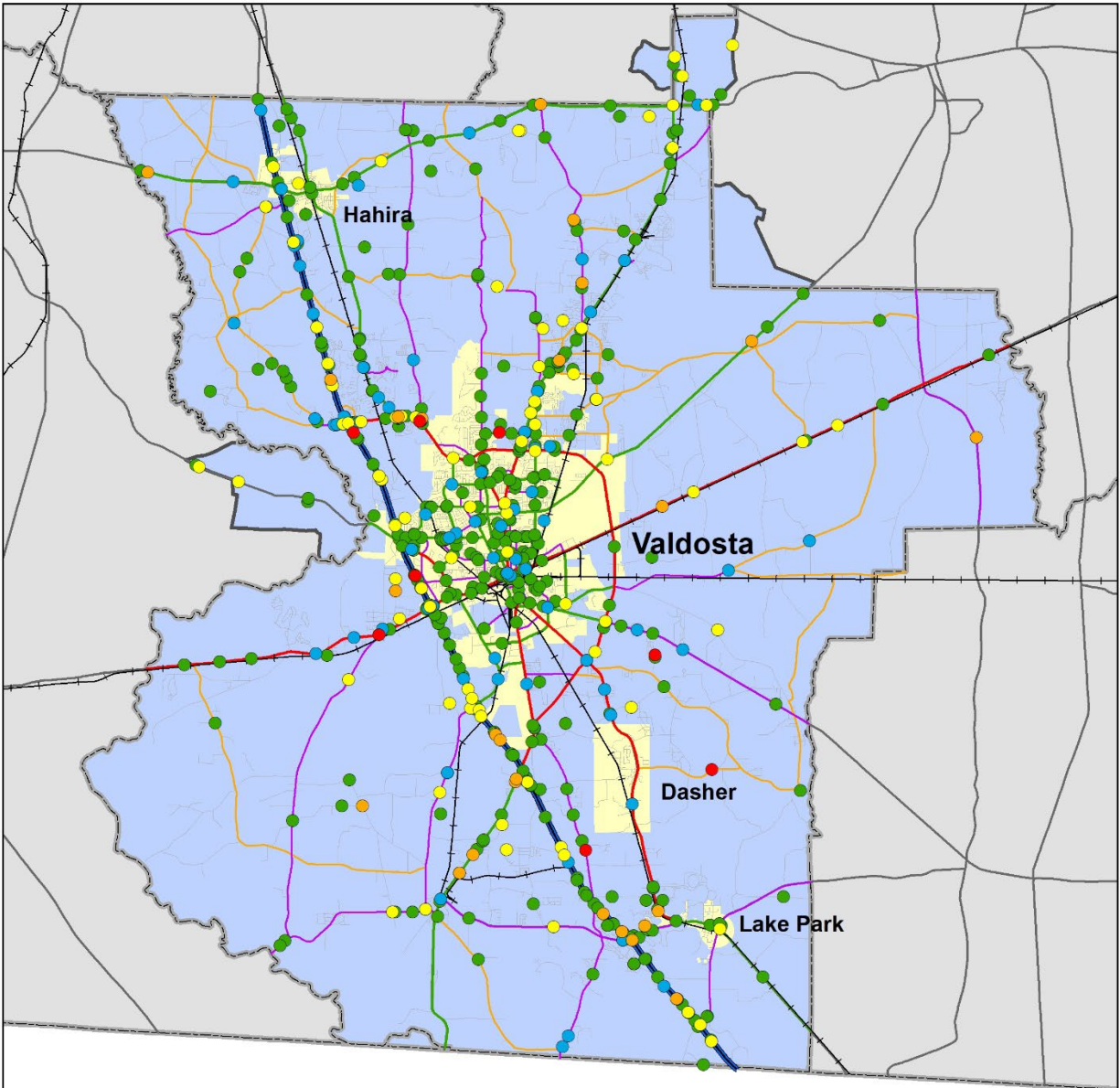
The locations of DUI crashes in the MPO area are shown in Figure 17 and Figure 18 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Almost all the DUI crashes resulting in death or serious injury occurred in more rural areas. This may be a function of higher travel speeds on rural roads compared to urban roads.

Speeding-Related Fatalities

According to the data available, the contributing factors of “exceeding the speed limit”, “racing”, or “too fast for conditions” were implicated in seven fatalities in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021. Speed was a factor in a total of 393 crashes, causing 28 serious injuries.

¹⁶ In addition to the category of “no safety equipment used,” these crashes also include “Booster Seat (Improperly Used)”, Child Restraint System (Improperly Used)”, “Lap Belt Only Used”, and “Shoulder Belt Only Used”.

Lowndes County - 2017-2021 VLMPO Crashes Involving DUI



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- Cities
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- +— Railroads

Crashes Involving DUI by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

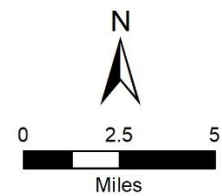


FIGURE 17: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO CRASHES INVOLVING DUI



FIGURE 18: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO CRASHES INVOLVING DUI

Motorcyclist Fatalities

From 2017 to 2021, there were 222 crashes involving motorcyclists in the MPO area, resulting in 13 motorcyclist fatalities and 17 serious injuries. Approximately 14% of all crash fatalities in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021 were motorcyclists.

The locations of motorcycle crashes are shown in Figure 19 and Figure 20 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Geographically, motorcycle crashes tended to be concentrated within the urban area of Valdosta, but a few notable fatalities and serious injuries occurred in rural areas in southern Lowndes County.

In the 13 fatal crashes, driving under the influence was recorded as a factor in one fatality. “Driver lost control” was recorded as a contributing factor in five fatalities, and “failed to yield” was recorded as a factor in two fatalities.

Studies¹⁷ have shown that in motorcycle crashes involving a perception failure or a decision failure, more crashes are caused by the driver of another vehicle than by the motorcyclist. At the national level, another motorist failing to yield to a motorcycle when turning left accounts for about one in every five motorcyclist fatalities.¹⁸ In the MPO area during the time frame examined, two of the motorcyclist fatalities (15.4%) involved a left-turning car or truck driver failing to yield to an oncoming motorcyclist, echoing these national statistics. This confirms the need for more educational and awareness campaigns aimed at car and truck drivers, such as “Look Twice – Save a Life” bumper stickers¹⁹ and the USDOT’s “Share the Road” initiative.²⁰

UN-HELMETED MOTORCYCLIST FATALITIES

Four out of the 13 motorcycle fatalities (30.1%) were recorded as not wearing a helmet. This included one person driving a dirt bike that was not legal for road use.

Helmets were reported as being used by the motorcyclists 201 of the 222 reported crashes, meaning that 9.5% of motorcyclists involved in crashes were presumably un-helmeted.

Future fatalities of this kind may be mitigated through educational campaigns, including statistics on the benefits of helmet use (for example, helmets are estimated to reduce the risk of head injury by 69% and the risk of death by 42%²¹) and increased enforcement of Georgia’s helmet law (Sec. 40-6-315).

¹⁷ For example: National Transportation Safety Board. “Select Risk Factors Associated with Causes of Motorcycle Crashes.” <https://www.nts.gov/safety/safety-studies/Documents/SR1801.pdf> (accessed 7/6/2021).

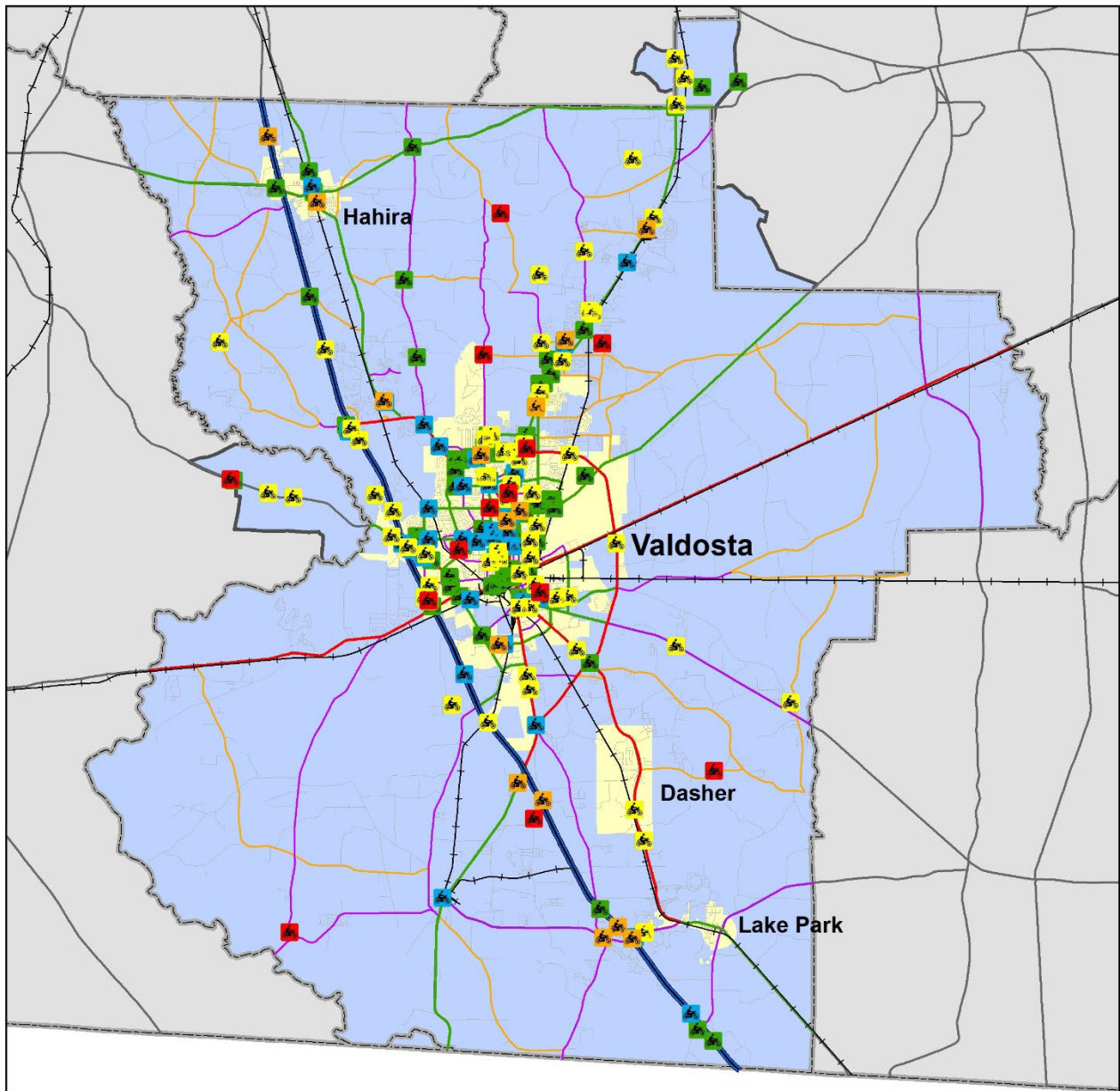
¹⁸ NHTSA. “Traffic Safety Facts: 2017 Data.” <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812785>

¹⁹ Examples of educational materials

²⁰ U.S. Department of Transportation. “Motorcycle Safety: Share The Road.” <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/motorcycle-safety/share-road> (accessed 7/6/2021).

²¹ Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety. “Motorcycle Helmets.” <https://saferoads.org/issues/motorcycle-helmets/> (accessed 6/10/2019).

Lowndes County - 2017-2021 VLMPO Motorcycle Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- Cities
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- Railroads

Motorcycle Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

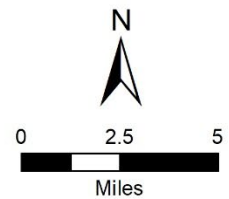
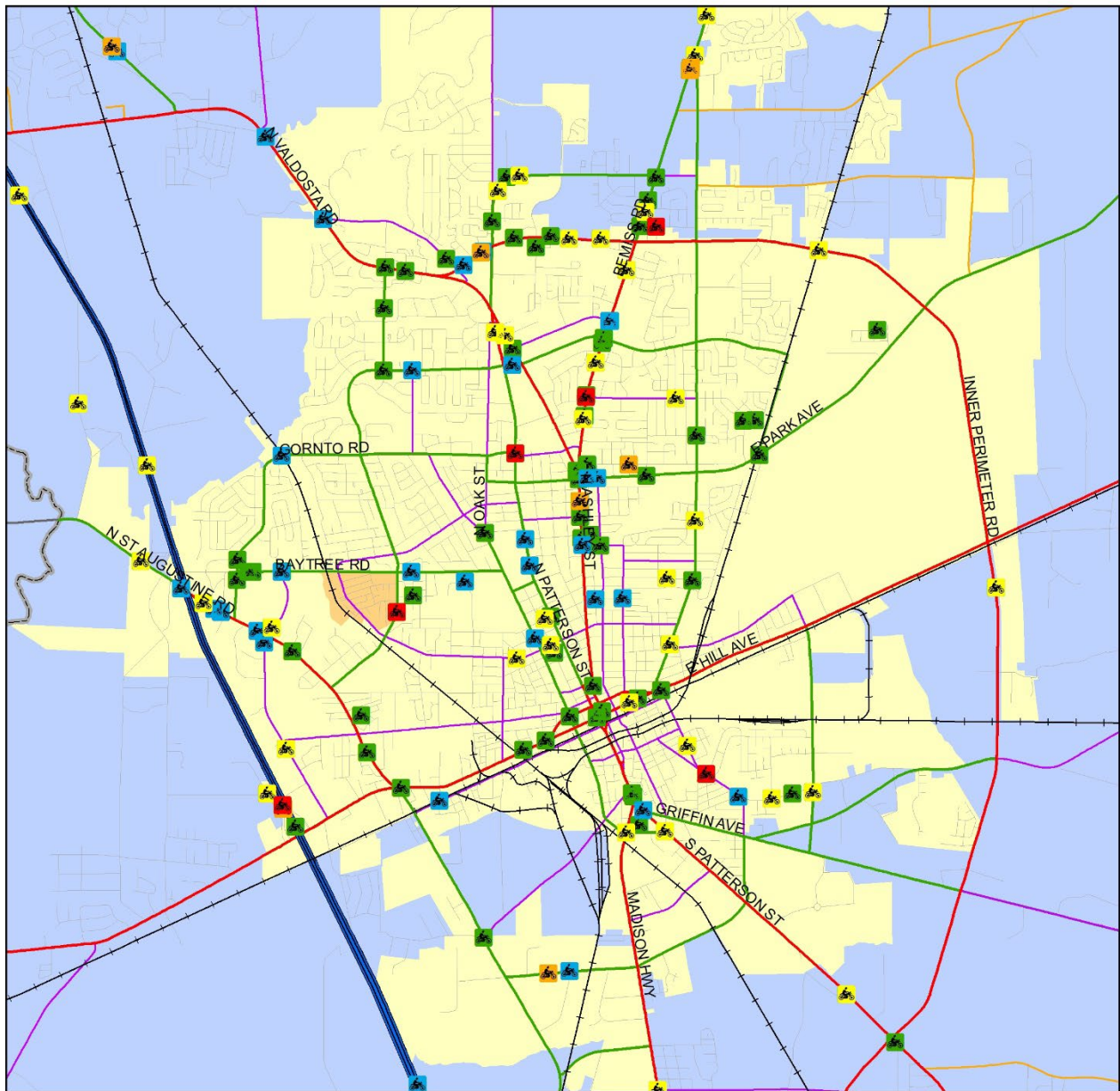


FIGURE 19: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO MOTORCYCLE CRASHES

City of Valdosta - 2017-2021 VLMPO Motorcycle Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- City of Remerton
- City of Valdosta
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- +— Railroads

Motorcycle Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

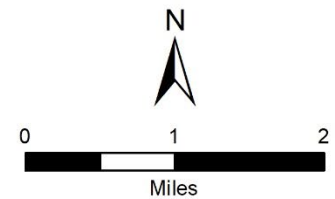


FIGURE 20: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO MOTORCYCLE CRASHES

Young Drivers in Fatal Crashes

From 2017 to 2021, 12 out of 99 fatalities (12.1%) and 45 serious injuries (18.8% of all serious injuries) were in crashes involving drivers under the age of 21.

The locations of crashes involving drivers under 21 are shown in Figure 22 and Figure 23 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Overall, 4,338 of the total 18,203 crashes (23.8%) involved drivers under 21.

Furthermore, 2,267 crashes (12.4% of all crashes) involved drivers 18 or younger. These resulted in nine fatalities (9.1% of the total) and 29 serious injuries. This confirms the need for better educational efforts and other safety measures for young drivers. The ages of young drivers involved in crashes in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021 are shown in Figure 21 below.

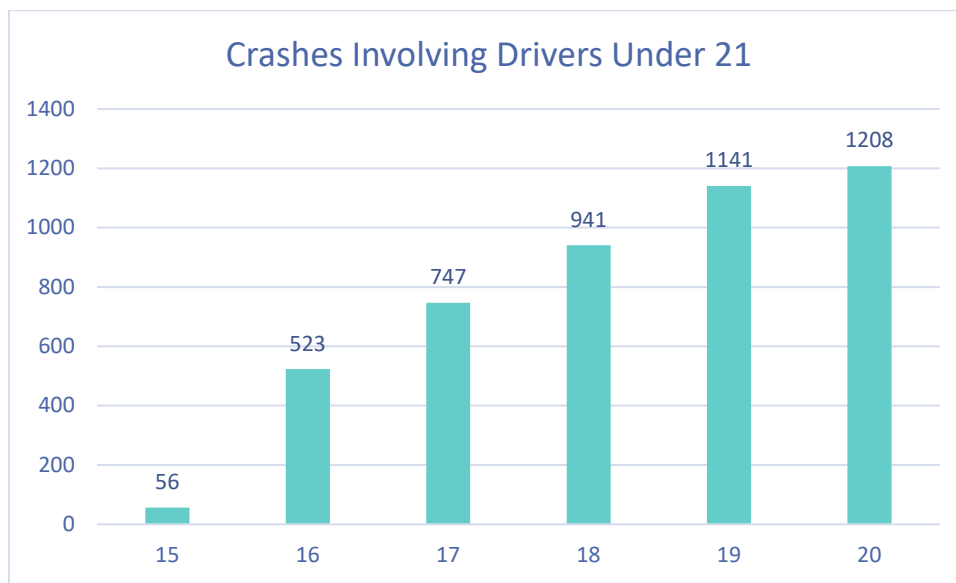


FIGURE 21: CRASHES INVOLVING DRIVERS UNDER 21

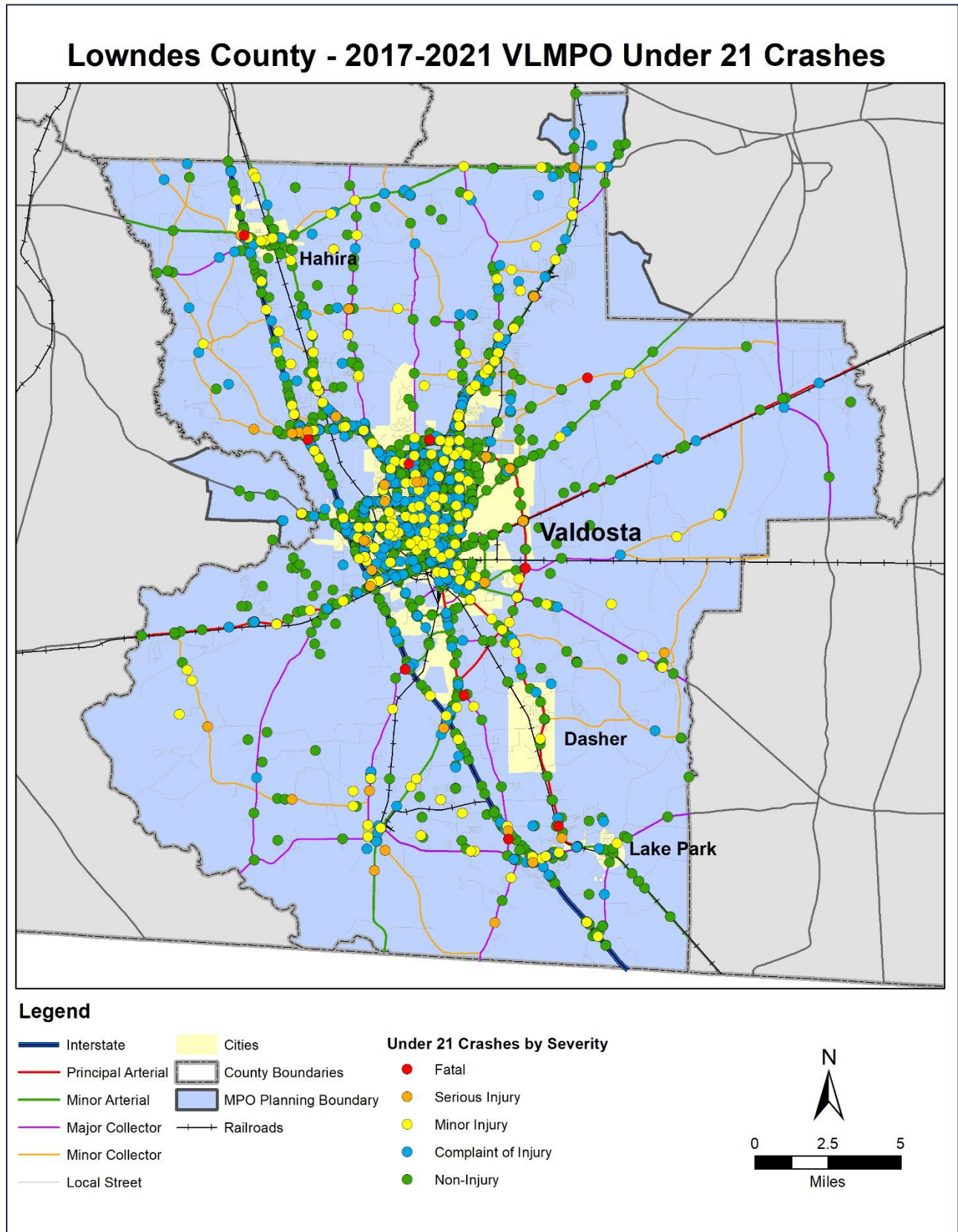


FIGURE 22: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO UNDER 21 CRASHES

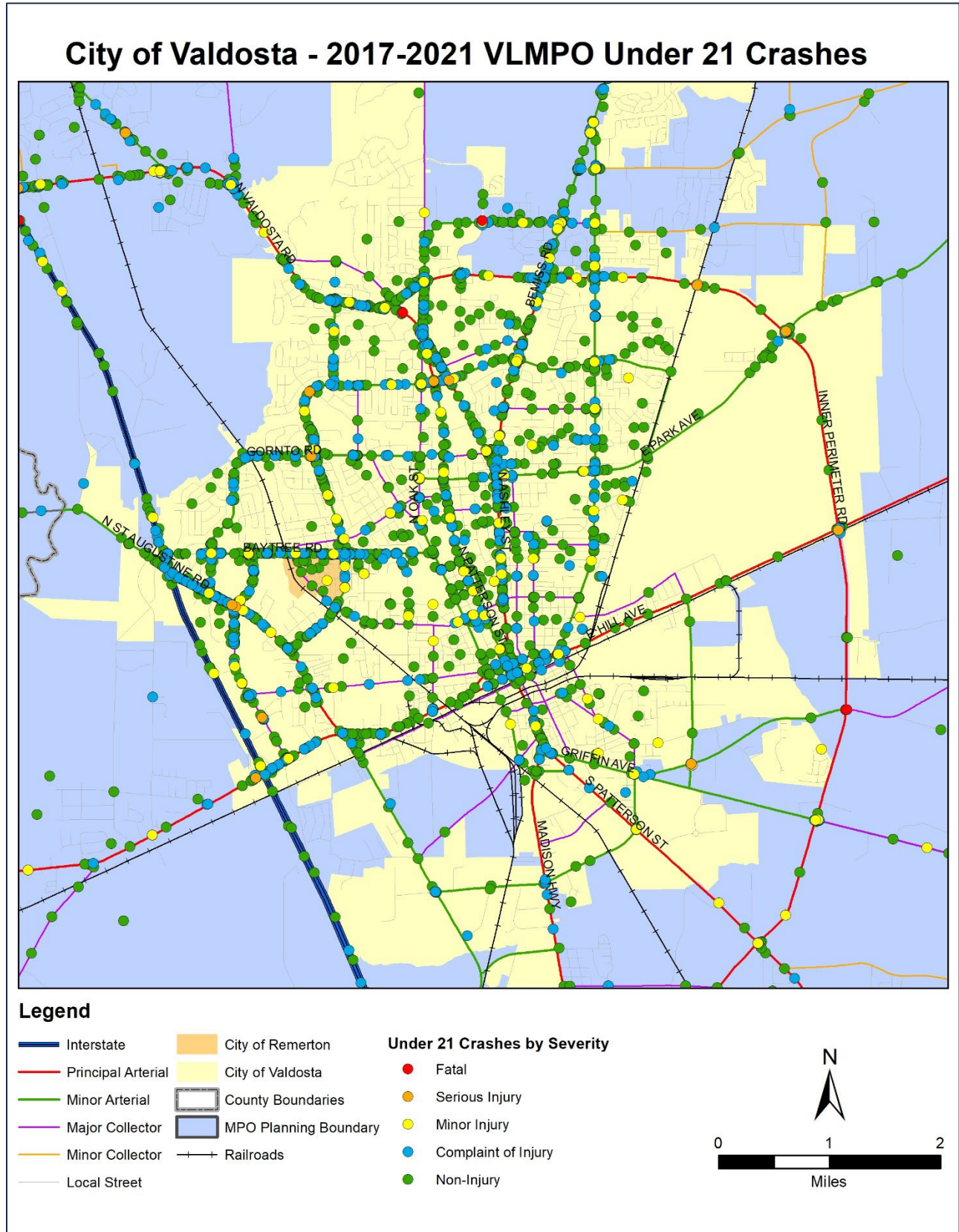


FIGURE 23: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO UNDER 21 CRASHES

Senior Drivers in Fatal Crashes

From 2017 to 2021, 23 out of 99 fatalities (23.2%) and 26 serious injuries (10.8% of all serious injuries) were in crashes involving drivers aged 65 or older. The breakdown by age range of older drivers involved in crashes in the MPO area from 2017 to 2021 are shown in Figure 24 below.

The locations of crashes involving drivers aged 65 or older are shown in Figure 25 and Figure 26 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Overall, 3,074 of the total 18,203 crashes (16.9%) involved drivers aged 65 or older.

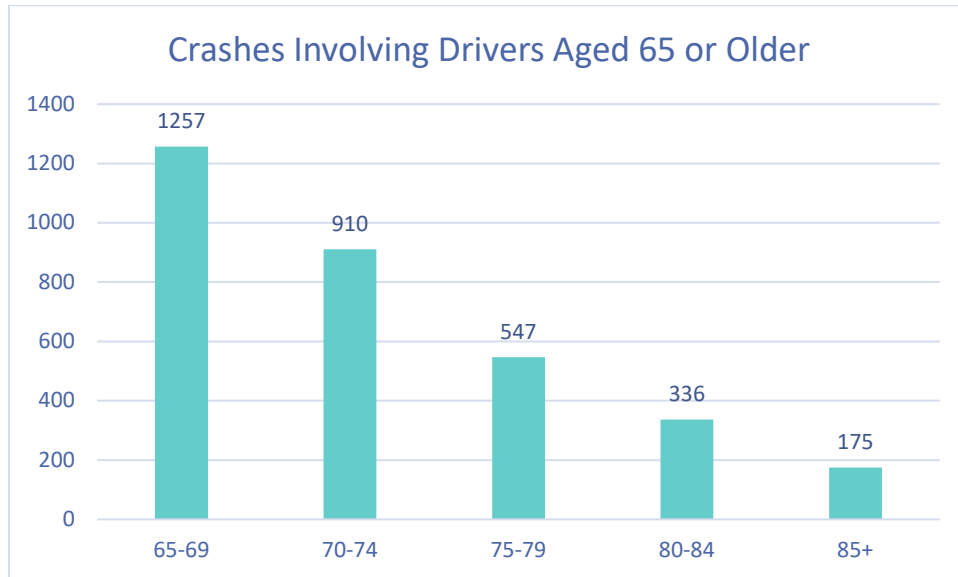
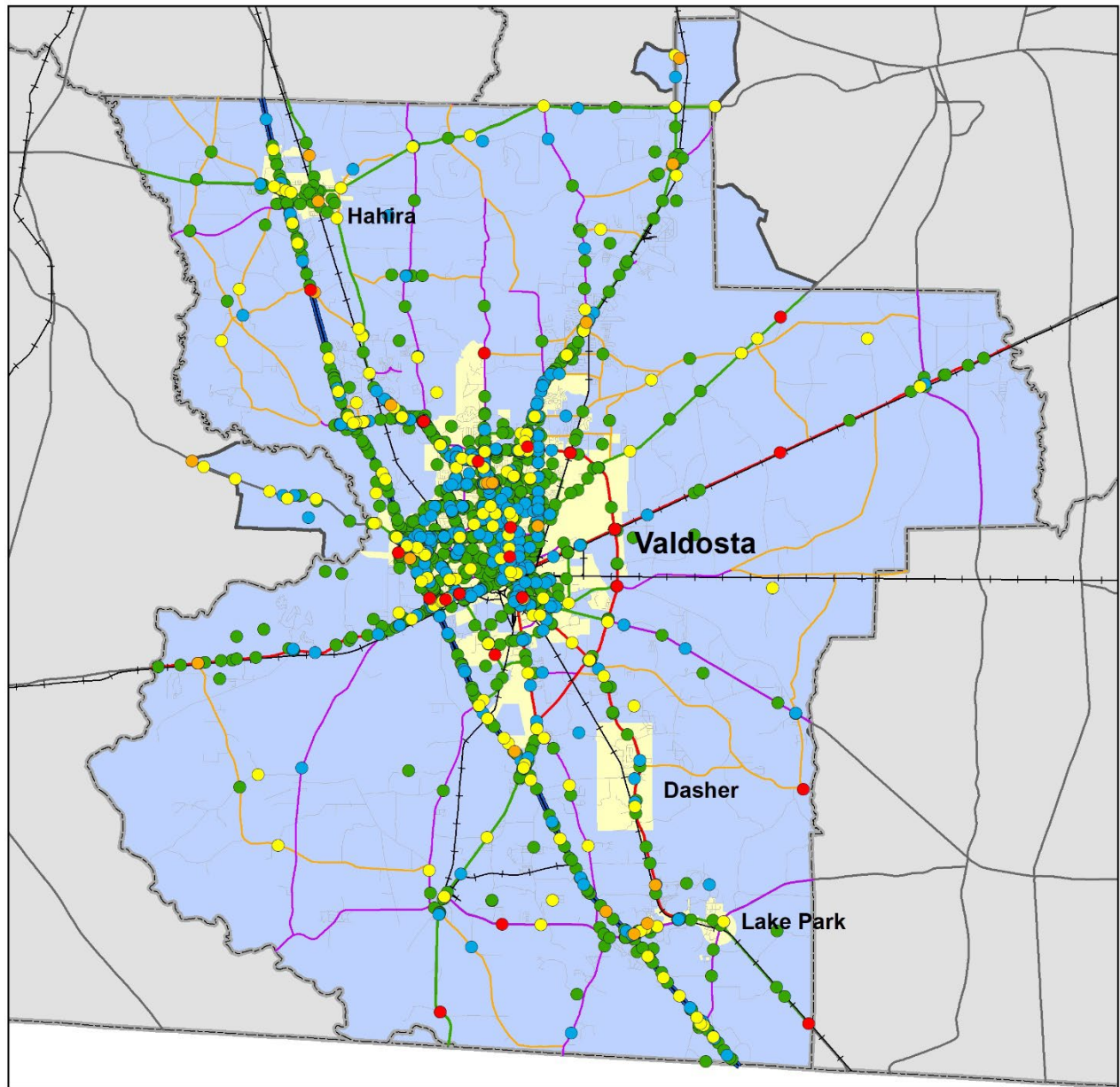


FIGURE 24: CRASHES INVOLVING DRIVERS AGED 65 OR OLDER

Lowndes County - 2017-2021 VLMPO 65 and Over Crashes



Legend

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Interstate | Cities | 65 and Over Crashes by Severity |
| Principal Arterial | County Boundaries | |
| Minor Arterial | MPO Planning Boundary | |
| Major Collector | Railroads | |
| Minor Collector | | |
| Local Street | | |
| | | Fatal |
| | | Serious Injury |
| | | Minor Injury |
| | | Complaint of Injury |
| | | Non-Injury |

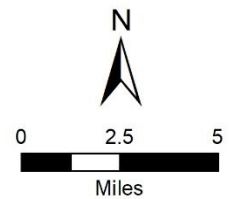
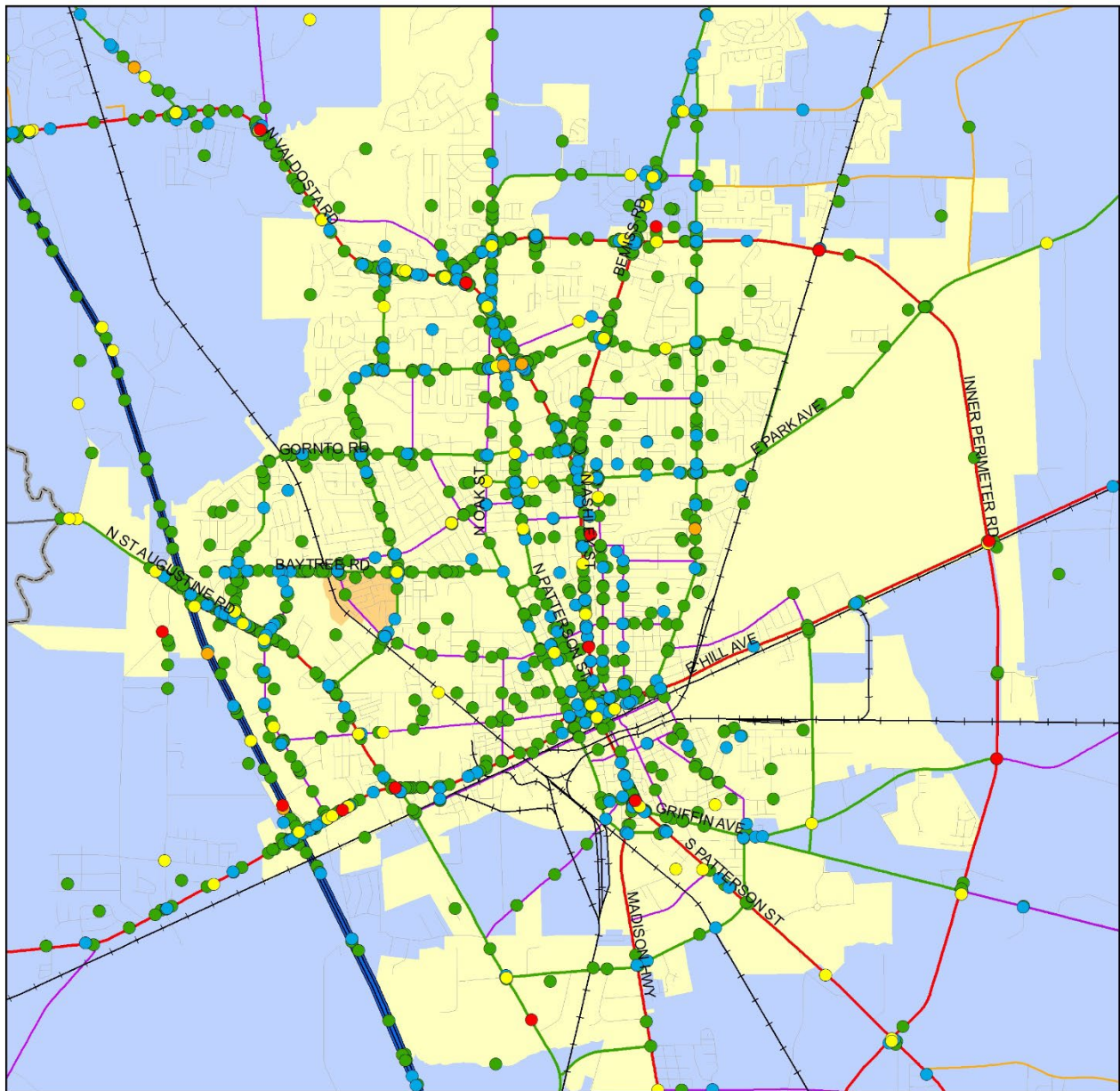


FIGURE 25: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO 65 AND OVER CRASHES

City of Valdosta - 2017-2021 VLMPO 65 and Over Crashes



Legend

- Interstate
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Street
- City of Remerton
- City of Valdosta
- County Boundaries
- MPO Planning Boundary
- +— Railroads

65 and Over Crashes by Severity

- Fatal
- Serious Injury
- Minor Injury
- Complaint of Injury
- Non-Injury

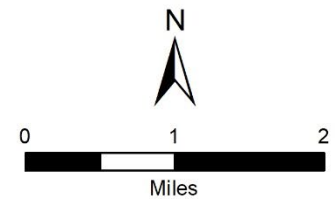


FIGURE 26: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO 65 AND OVER CRASHES

Additional Analysis

TRUCK CRASHES

This section examines crashes involving tractor-trailers and log trucks. Figure 28 and Figure 29 show the locations of these crashes with Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively. Although log trucks anecdotally have a significant traffic impact in the area, the data available show only 16 crashes involving log trucks from 2017 to 2021, resulting in one fatality and no serious injuries.

Between 2017 and 2021, there were 667 crashes involving tractor-trailers in the VLMPO area, resulting in 19 fatalities (19.1% of all fatalities) and 31 serious injuries (12.9% of all serious injuries). In 271 of these crashes (39.5%), ten of the fatalities (52.6%) and 11 of the serious injuries (35.4%) were on Interstate 75.

Seventy-two crashes involving tractor-trailers occurred on US 84/SR 38. Of these tractor-trailer crashes, 62 occurred on the section running from Downtown Valdosta west to the Brooks County line.

Furthermore, 259 crashes involving tractor/trailers occurred within half a mile of an exit on Interstate 75. The number of tractor/trailer crashes within half a mile of each exit is shown in Figure 27.

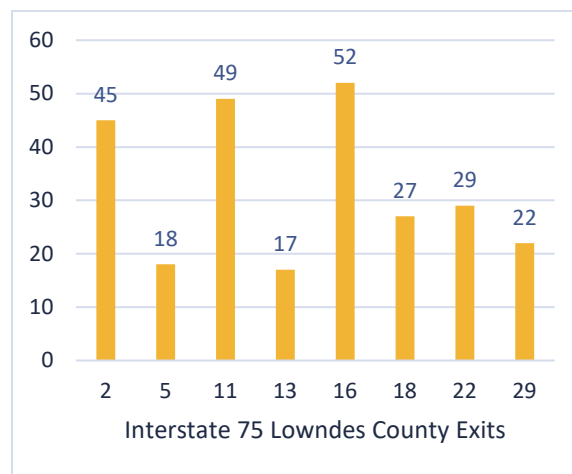


FIGURE 27. TRACTOR/TRAILER CRASHES WITHIN 1/2 MILE OF EACH I-75 EXIT IN THE VLMPO AREA

BUS CRASHES

Between 2017 and 2021, there were 117 crashes involving bus vehicles in the MPO area which resulted in two fatalities and two serious injuries. Bus crashes are depicted in Figure 30 and Figure 31 for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, respectively.

A separate report, published by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission in April 2020, contained an analysis of crashes in the areas surrounding each of the schools in Lowndes County.²²

²² This report is available on the SGRC website at: <https://www.sgrc.us/documents/bicycle/corevfile-Lowndes%20School%20Crash%20Report%20Final.pdf>

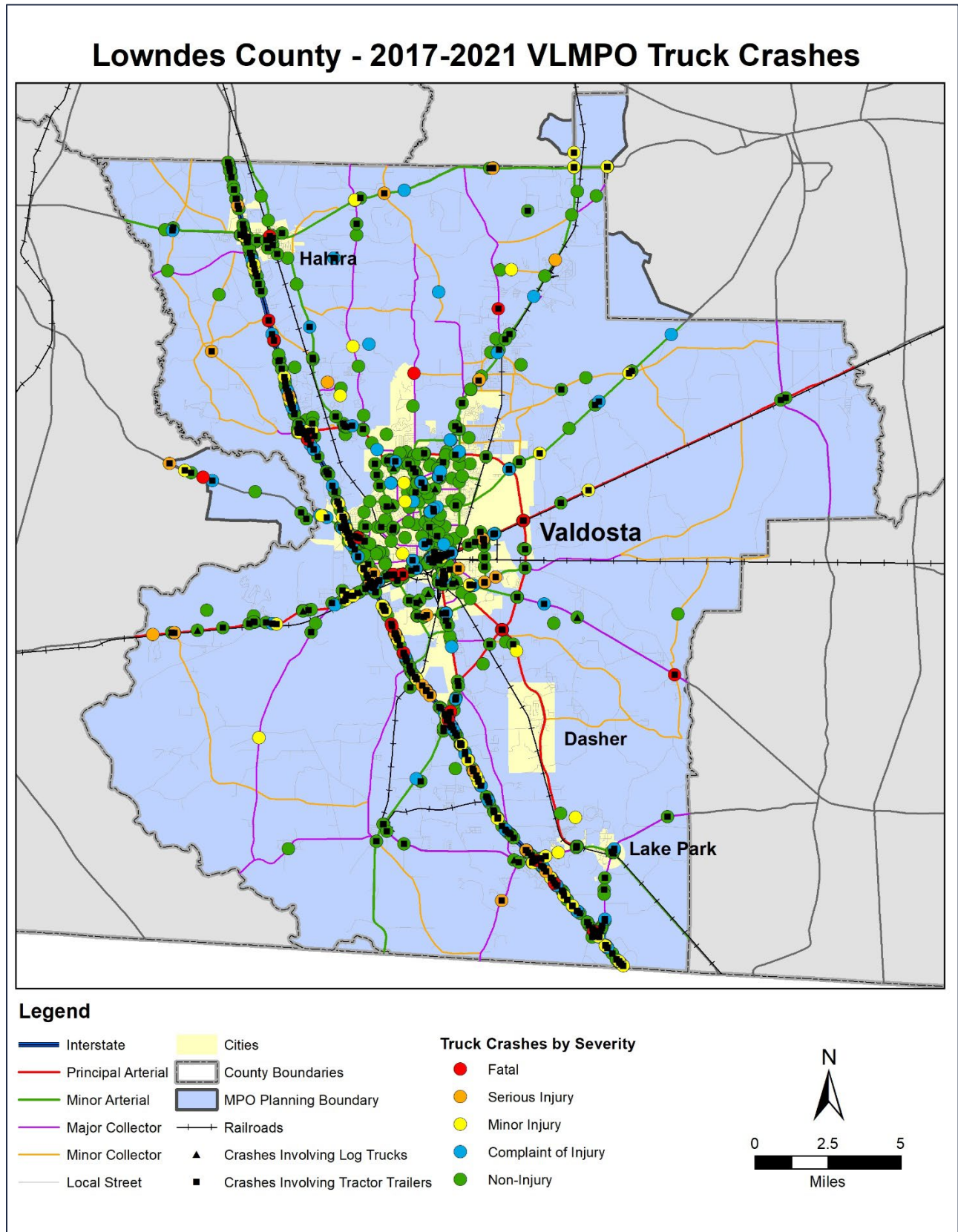


FIGURE 28: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO TRUCK CRASHES

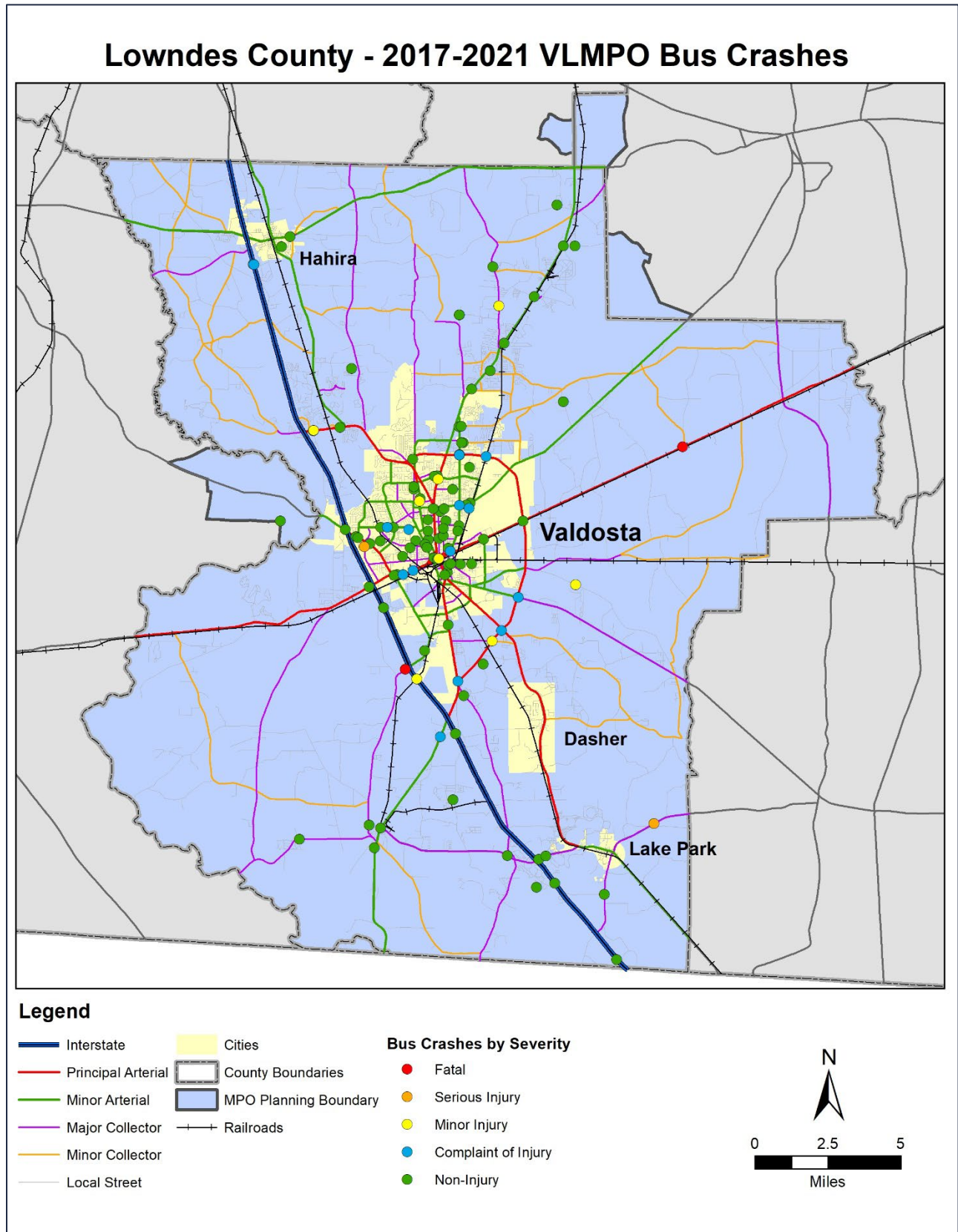


FIGURE 30: LOWNDES COUNTY - 2017-2021 VLMPO BUS CRASHES

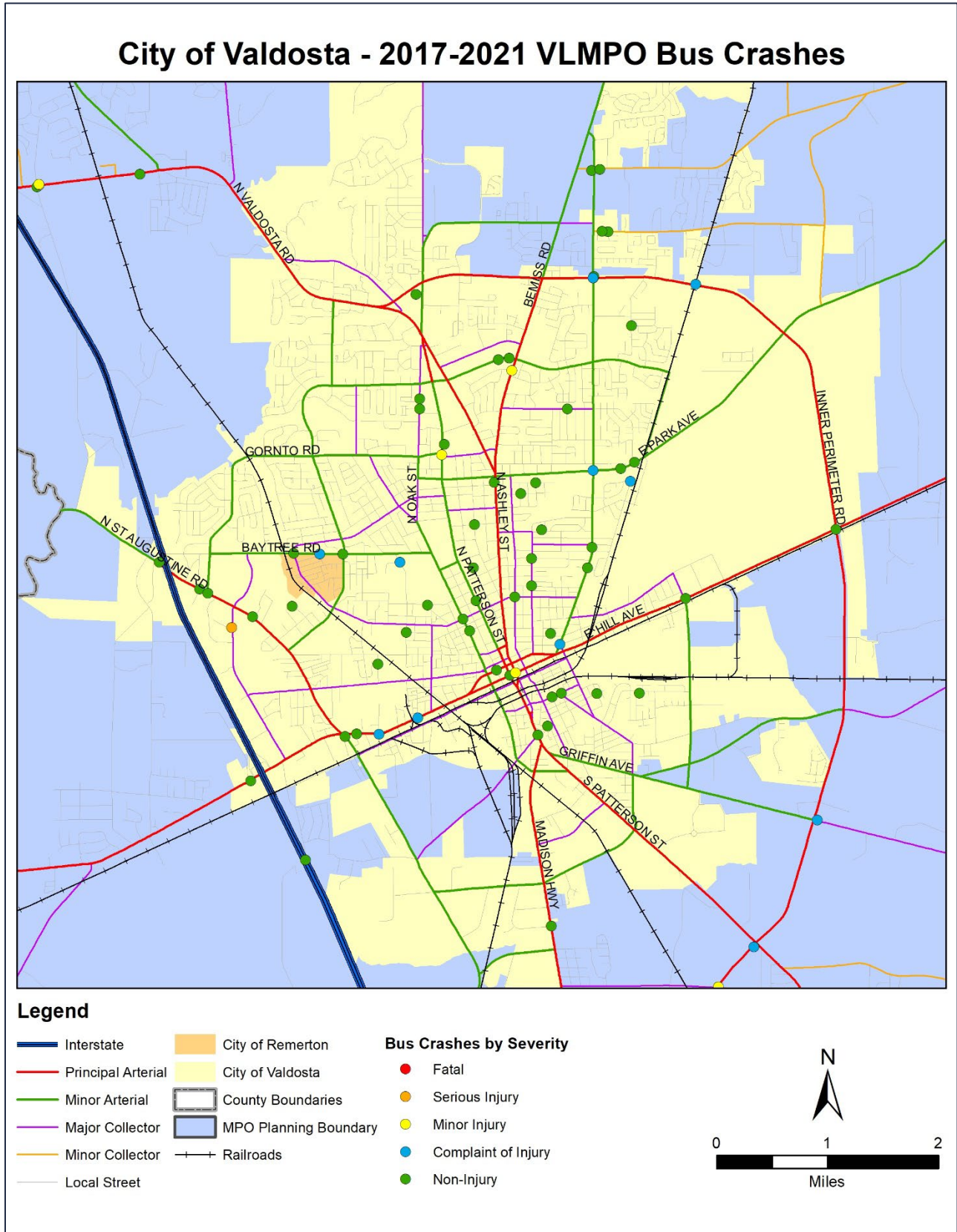


FIGURE 31: CITY OF VALDOSTA - 2017-2021 VLMPO BUS CRASHES

High-Crash Locations

To identify high-crash locations, a geographic analysis was conducted, for which a 250-foot radius was delineated around each roadway intersection in the VLMPO area. The number of crashes within each 250-foot radius was then enumerated. A total of 189 intersections were identified as having 20 or more crashes from 2017 to 2021. The rate of crashes relative to entering traffic volumes was then calculated for each intersection.²³ The 20 intersections with the highest number of crashes and their corresponding crash rates were then identified for two areas: (1) the Cities of Valdosta and Remerton (which are contiguous and almost entirely urbanized) and (2) the unincorporated areas of the VLMPO area and the Cities of Dasher, Hahira, and Lake Park. These two areas were analyzed separately in order to identify high-crash locations in the predominantly urban and predominantly rural areas of the VLMPO area.

The top 20 high-crash locations in the Cities of Valdosta and Remerton are shown in Table 4 and in Figure 32. The top 20 high-crash locations in the unincorporated areas of the VLMPO area and the Cities of Hahira, and Lake Park are shown in Table 5 and in Figure 33. (None of the top 20 high-crash locations are in Berrien, Brooks, or Lanier Counties or in the Cities of Dasher or Ray City.)

²³ Traffic volume data were acquired from the Georgia Department of Transportation's Statewide Travel Demand Model, 2015 base model run.

TABLE 4: HIGH CRASH LOCATIONS IN THE CITIES OF VALDOSTA AND REMERTON, 2017-2021

Rank	Intersection	Traffic Volume*	Total Crashes	Fatal Crashes	Serious Injury Crashes	Crashes per 1,000,000 MEV*	Change in Rank since FY2021	Planned/Completed Improvements
1	N Valdosta Rd (US 41/SR 7) @ Country Club Dr	68,732	186	0	0	2.97	No Change	PI 0016282 – Added Travel Lanes on Country Club Dr (TIA)
2	Inner Perimeter Rd (US 41/SR 7) @ Bemiss Rd	77,346	181	0	0	2.56	↑ 2	Intersection improvement (long-range)
3	N St Augustine Rd (SR 133) @ Norman Dr	53,639	176	0	2	3.60	↓ 1	PI 0016286 – Intersection & Drainage Improvements (TIA)
4	Bemiss Rd @ Northside Dr	60,306	170	0	0	3.09	↑ 2	
5	N St Augustine Rd (SR 133) @ Gornto Rd	57,645	158	1	2	3.00	↓ 2	PI 0016288 – Intersection & Drainage Improvements (TIA)
6	N Ashley St (US 41/SR 7 Bus) @ Northside Dr	58,337	149	0	2	2.80	↓ 1	Signal upgrades
7	Inner Perimeter Rd (US 41/SR 7) @ N Oak St Ext	50,697	148	0	0	3.20	No Change	
8	N Valdosta Rd (US 41/SR 7) @ N Oak St Ext	51,685	125	0	1	2.63	↑ 1	PI 0015445 - Intersection Reconstruction
9	Baytree Rd @ Jerry Jones Dr/Melody Ln	53,614	117	0	0	2.39	↓ 1	PI 0014134 – Roadway Widening Jerry Jones Dr
10	W Hill Ave (US 84/US 221/SR 38) @ Norman Dr	60,430	115	0	0	2.09	↑ 2	
11	Inner Perimeter Rd (US 41/SR 7) @ Lake Laurie Dr/Brookfield Rd	37,440	113	0	0	3.31	↑ 4	
12	W Hill Ave (US 84/US 221/SR 38) @ St Augustine Rd (SR 133)	64,246	105	1	0	1.79	↑ 1	
13	N St Augustine Rd (SR 133) @ Clubhouse Dr/Ellis Dr	48,534	104	0	0	2.35	↑ 4	PI 0016288 – Intersection & Drainage Improvements (TIA)
14	N Ashley St (US 41/SR 7 Bus) @ E Park Ave	57,634	100	0	0	1.90	Not in Top 20	Signal upgrades
15	Baytree Rd @ Norman Dr	37,618	93	0	0	2.71	↓ 3	
16	Baytree Rd @ Gornto Rd	40,748	90	0	0	2.42	↓ 5	PI 0016290 – Intersection & Signal Improvements (TIA)
T17	N Ashley St (US 41/SR 7 Bus)/N Patterson St @ Smithbriar Dr	43,671	91	0	0	2.28	↓ 3	PI 0015445 - Intersection Reconstruction
T17	Gornto Rd @ Jerry Jones Dr	47,249	92	0	2	2.11	↓ 1	PI 0014134 – Roadway Widening Jerry Jones Dr
19	Ashley St (US 41/SR 7 Bus) @ E Hill Ave (US 84/US 221/SR 38)	39,323	79	0	0	2.20	Not in Top 20	
20	N Patterson St @ Northside Dr	47,449	77	0	1	1.78	Not in Top 20	

MEV = Million Entering Vehicles
 *Crash rates based on traffic volumes obtained from 2015 base year run of Vision2045 VLMPPO Travel Demand Model

TABLE 5: HIGH CRASH LOCATIONS IN UNINCORPORATED LOWNDES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF DASHER, HAHIRA, AND LAKE PARK, 2017-2021

Rank	Intersection	Traffic Volume*	Total Crashes	Fatal Crashes	Serious Injury Crashes	Crashes per 1,000,000 MEV**	Change in Rank since FY2021	Planned/Completed Improvements
1	N Valdosta Rd @ Val Del Rd	60,339	99	2	0	1.8	No Change	Added Travel Lanes on Val Del Rd; upcoming corridor study
2	Bemiss Rd @ N Oak St Ext/Mt Zion Church Rd	51,354	86	0	0	1.8	↑ 1	PI 0008604 - N Oak St Ext Roadway Reconstruction/added travel lanes (long-range)
3	Shiloh Rd @ I-75 SB Ramp/Amber Dr	35,015	64	0	1	2.0	↑ 1	Interchange improvement (complete in 2020)
4	N Valdosta Rd @ Old US 41 N/Foxborough Ave	54,421	56	0	1	1.1	↑ 1	PI 0016271 – Roadway widening on Old US 41 N
5	N Valdosta Rd @ Coleman Rd N	51,112	49	0	0	1.0	↑ 1	Interchange improvement (complete in 2020)
6	N Valdosta Rd @ Flythe Rd	50,191	48	0	1	1.0	↑ 2	Interchange improvement (complete in 2020)
7	Bemiss Rd @ N Forrest St Ext	56,700	45	0	2	0.9	Not in Top 20	Traffic signal installation; potential TIA project – added travel lanes on Forrest St Ext.
8	N Valdosta Rd @ I-75 NB Ramp	51,306	43	0	0	0.9	↓ 2	Interchange improvement (complete in 2020)
9	SR 125 @ SR 122	13,417	41	0	1	3.3	Not in Top 20	
10	SR 122 @ I-75 NB Ramp	24,870	36	0	0	1.6	No Change	Interchange improvement (complete in 2020); added travel lanes (long-range)
11	Lakes Blvd @ Mill Store Rd	17,040	34	0	0	2.2	↓ 4	
12	Madison Hwy @ I-75 SB Ramp	24,476	33	0	0	1.5	↑ 2	Interchange improvements (GDOT PI 0010297)
13	Main St @ Church St	24,464	32	0	0	1.4	↓ 4	
14	N Forrest St Ext @ Knights Academy Rd	17,638	31	0	1	1.9	Not in Top 20	Traffic signal installation
15	Bemiss Rd @ Davidson Rd	31,928	30	0	2	1.0	↓ 3	
16	N Valdosta Rd @ Old US 41	52,967	29	0	2	0.6	Not in Top 20	
T17	US 41 S @ Inner Perimeter Rd	31,963	27	1	2	0.9	↓ 15	
T17	Inner Perimeter Rd @ SR 94	23,692	27	0	0	1.2	Not in Top 20	
19	Madison Hwy @ Clyattville Lake Park Rd	11,818	24	0	0	2.2	No Change	
20	Bemiss Rd @ Studstill Rd	43,150	23	0	0	0.6	Not in Top 20	

MEV = Million Entering Vehicles

*Crash rates based on traffic volumes obtained from 2015 base year run of Vision2045 VLMPO Travel Demand Model

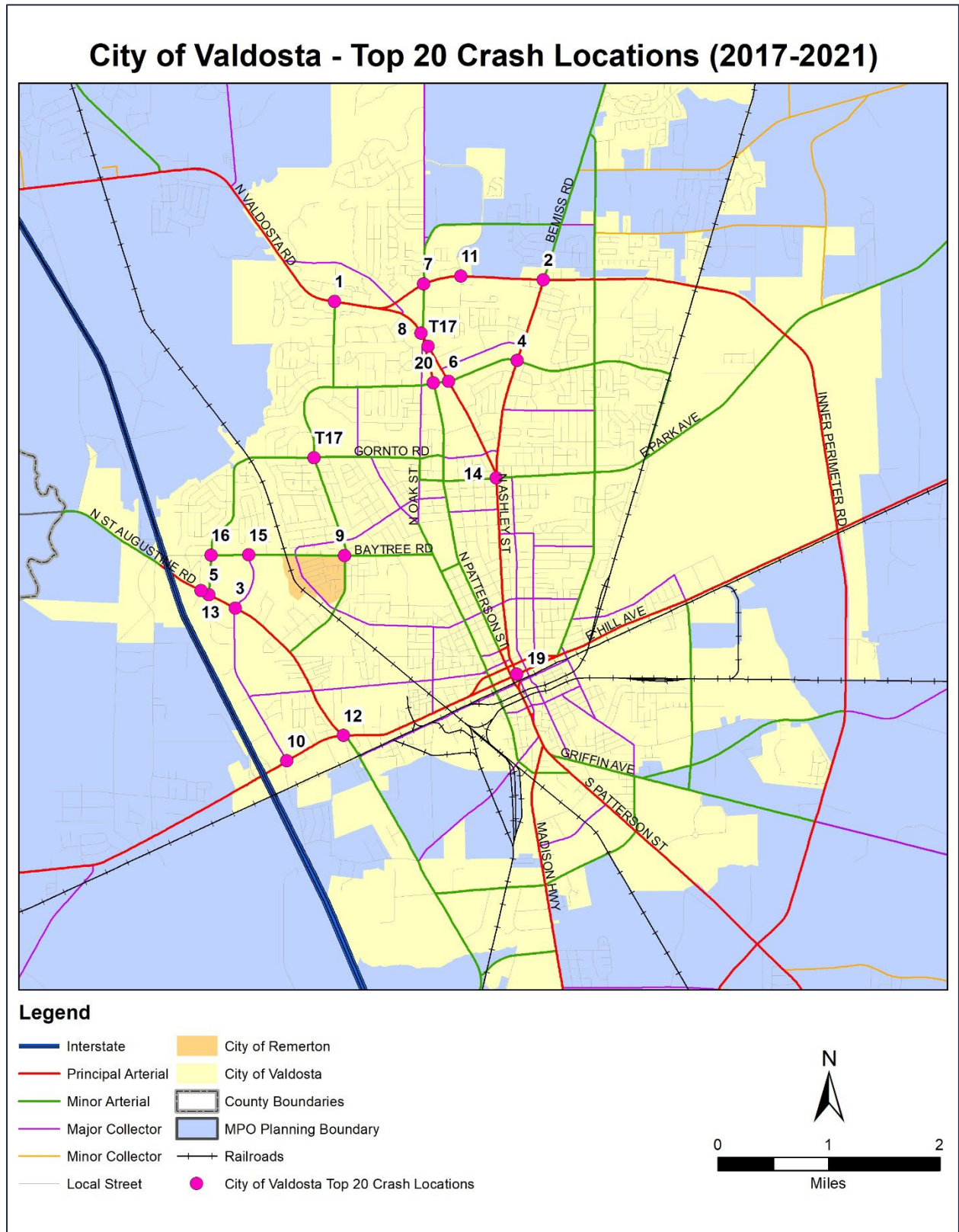


FIGURE 32: CITY OF VALDOSTA – TOP 20 CRASH LOCATIONS (2017-2021)

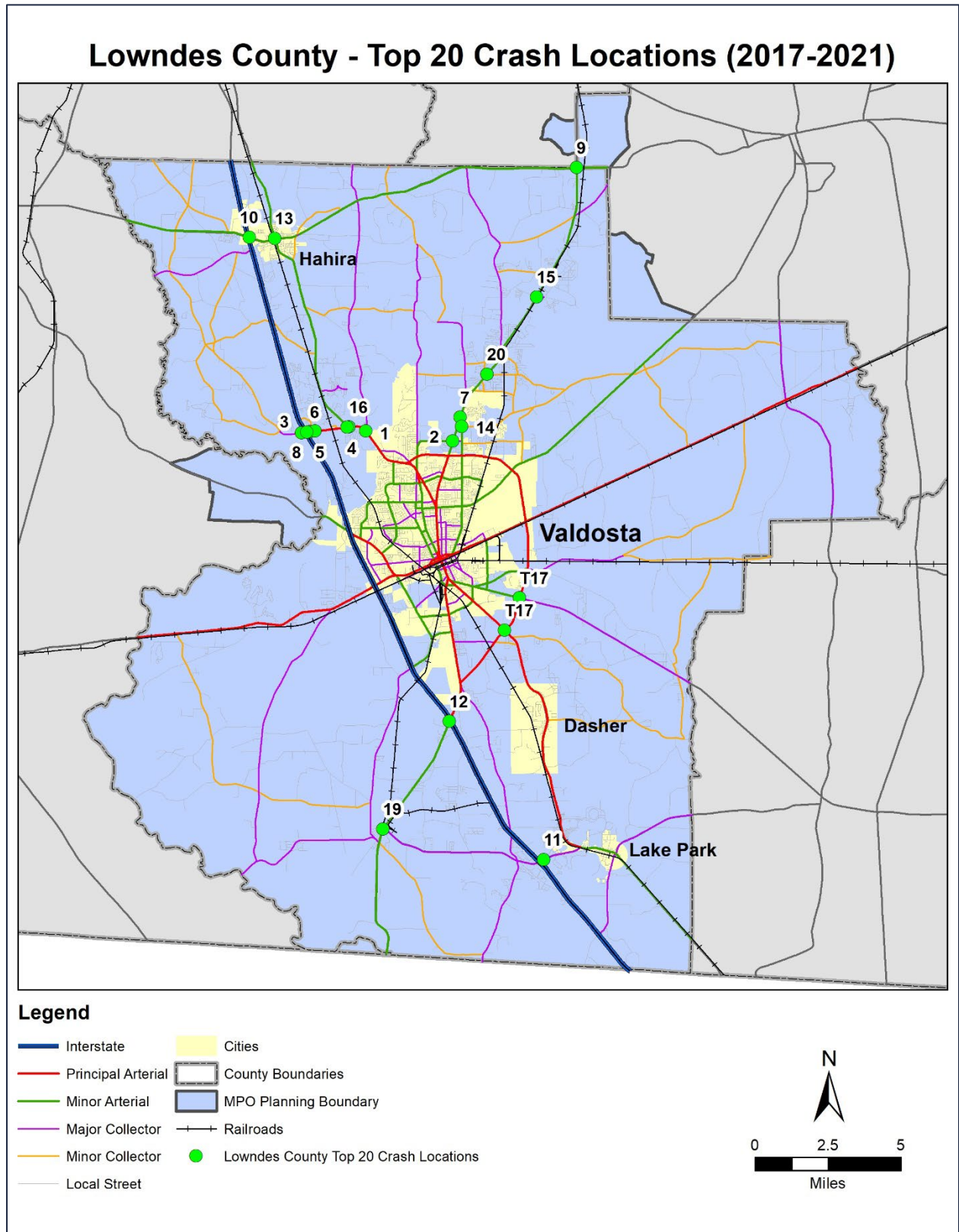
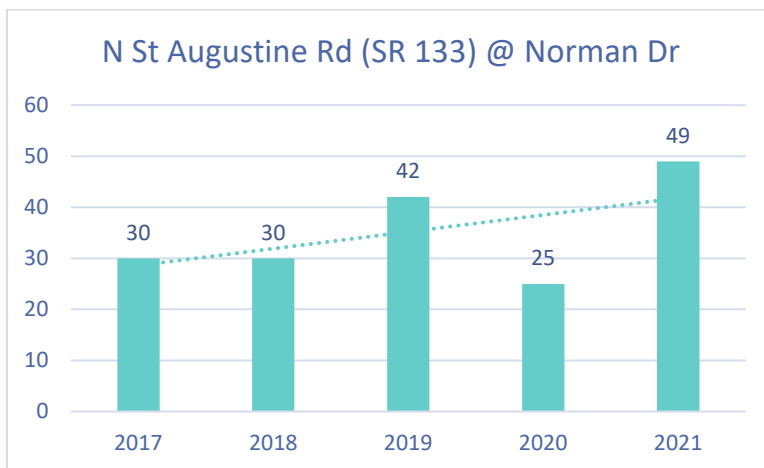
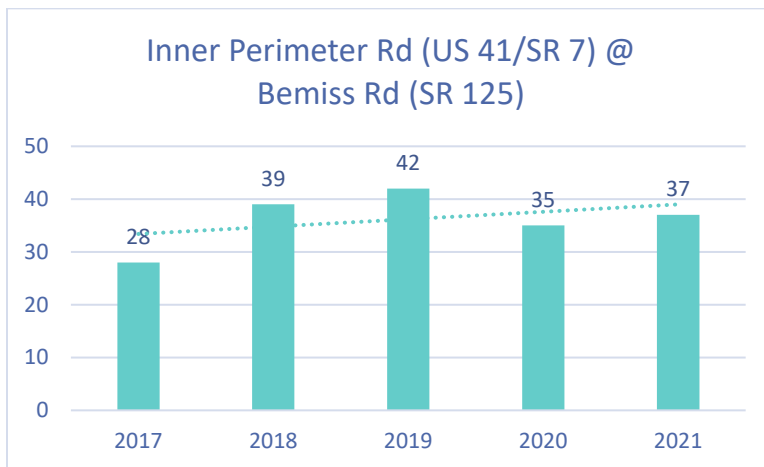
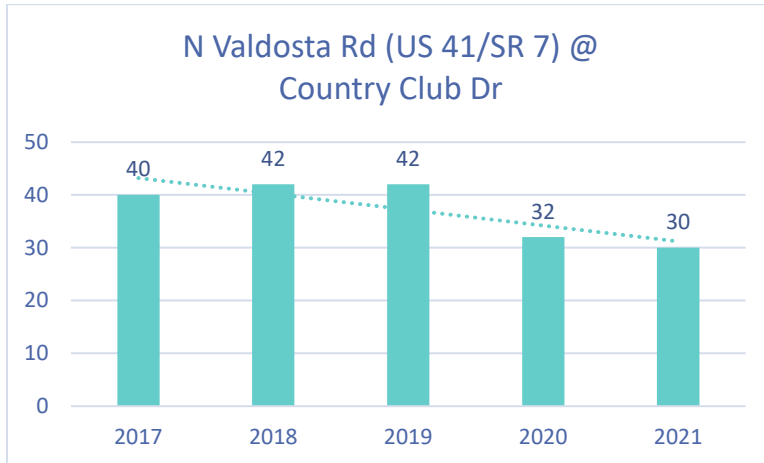


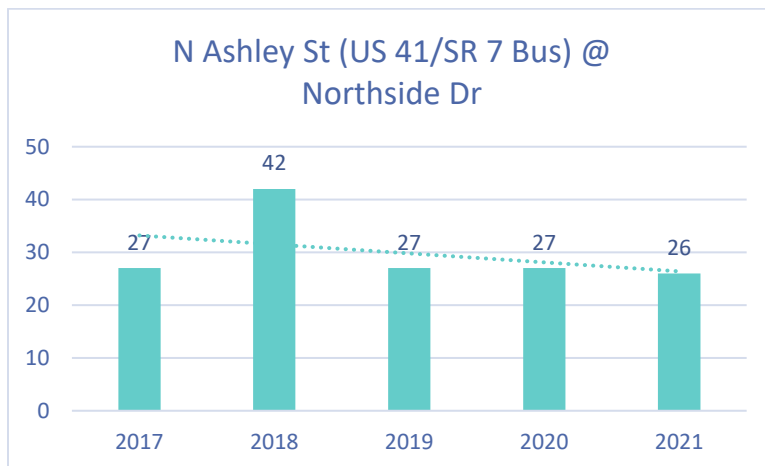
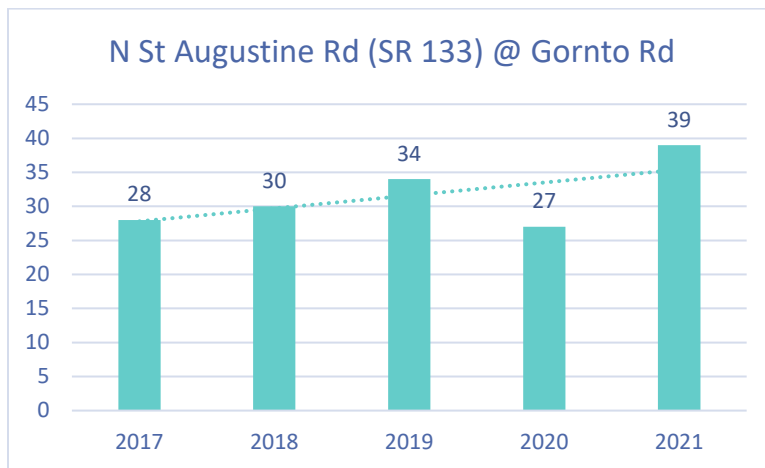
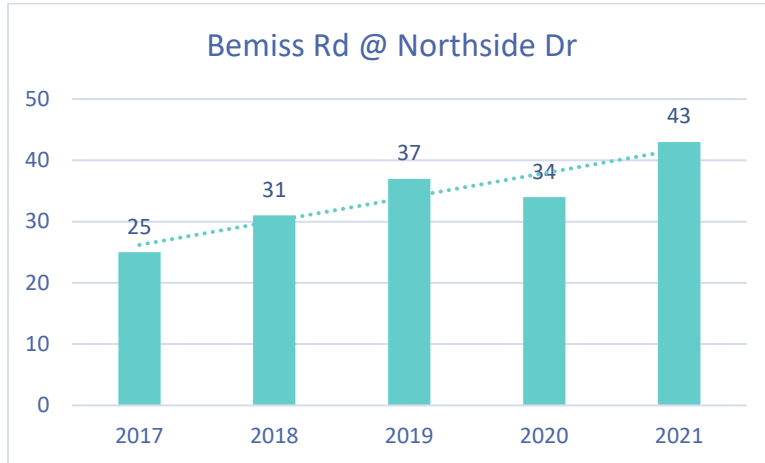
FIGURE 33: LOWNDES COUNTY – TOP 20 CRASH LOCATIONS (2017-2021)

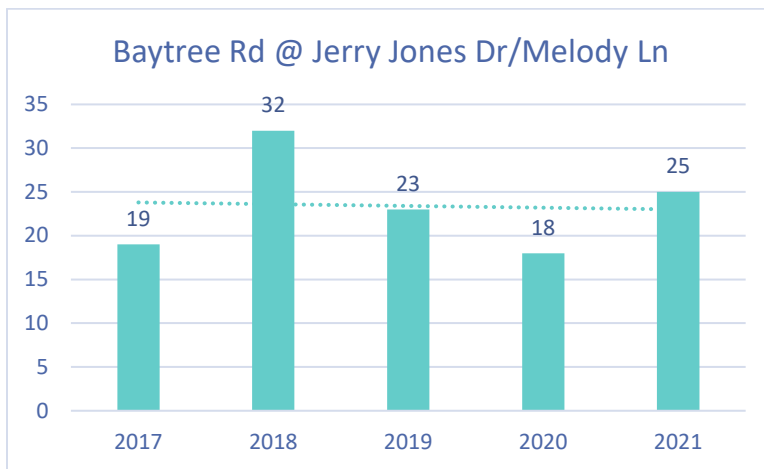
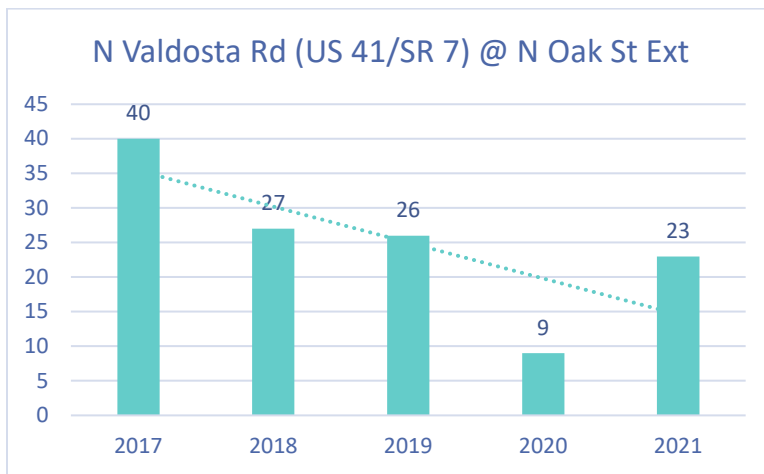
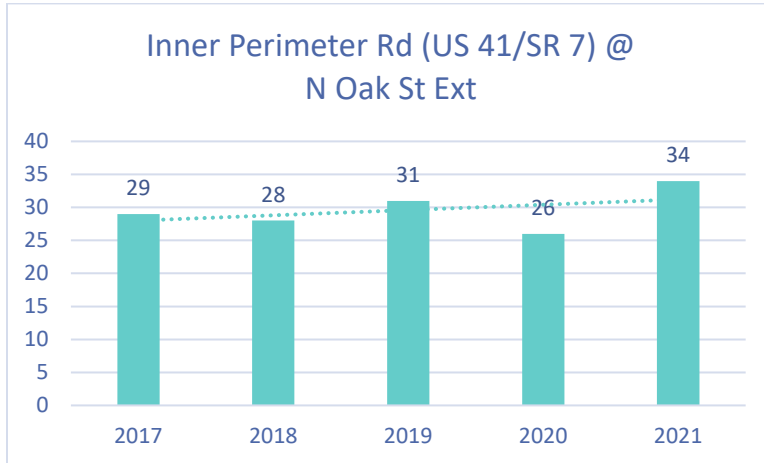
Annual Trends for High-Crash Locations

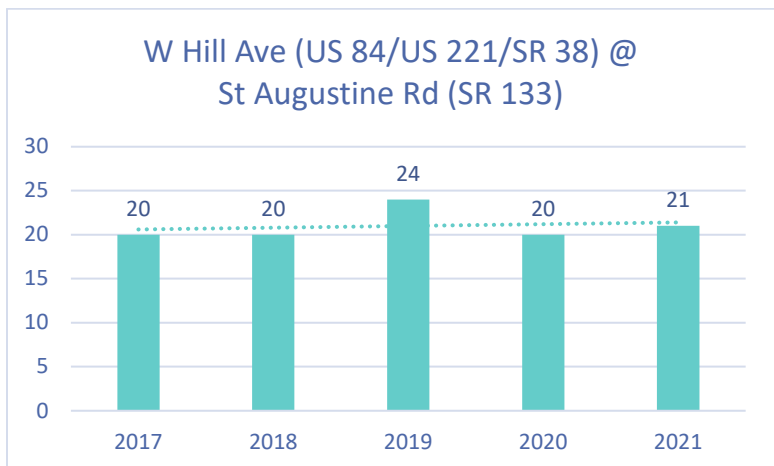
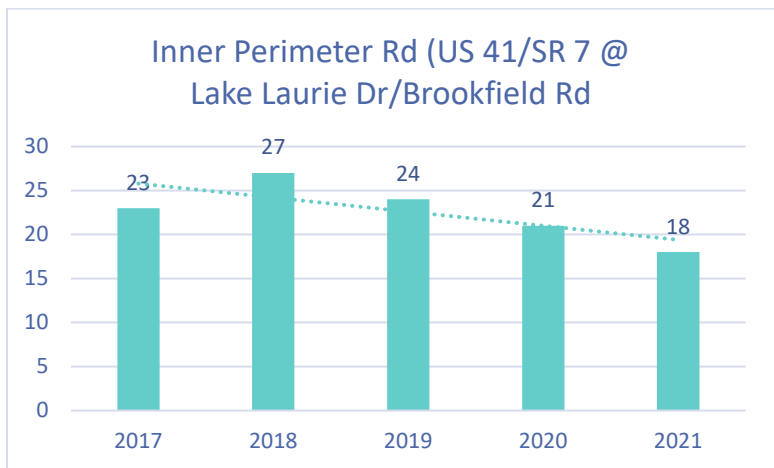
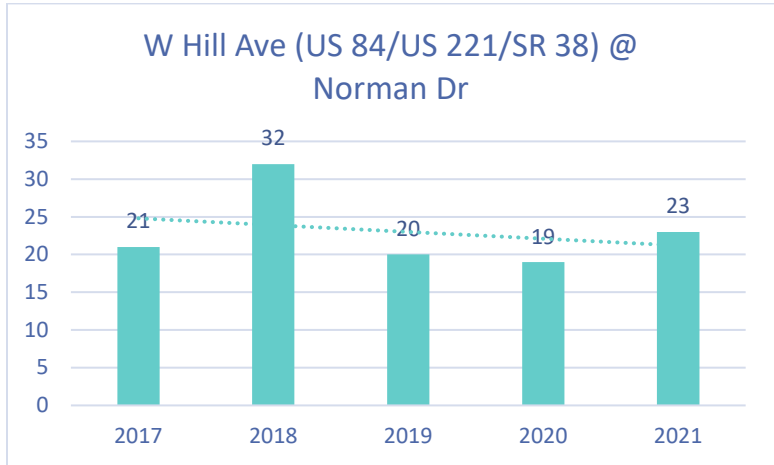
The charts in this section show the year-by-year crash trends for the high-crash intersections that have been identified. The charts are in ranked order according to Table 4 and Table 5.

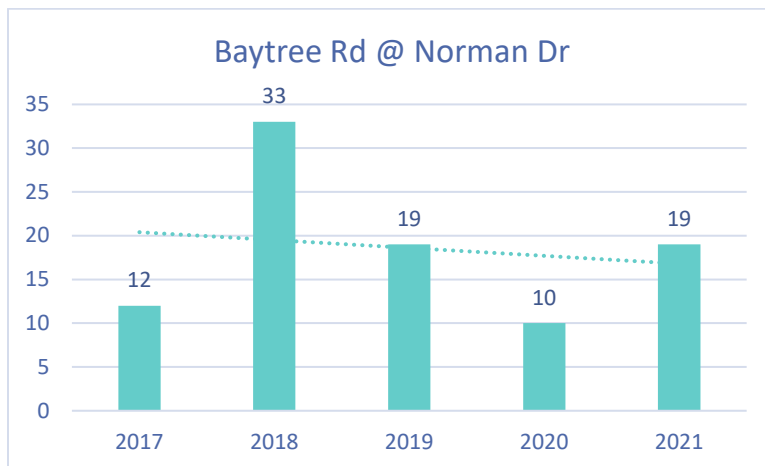
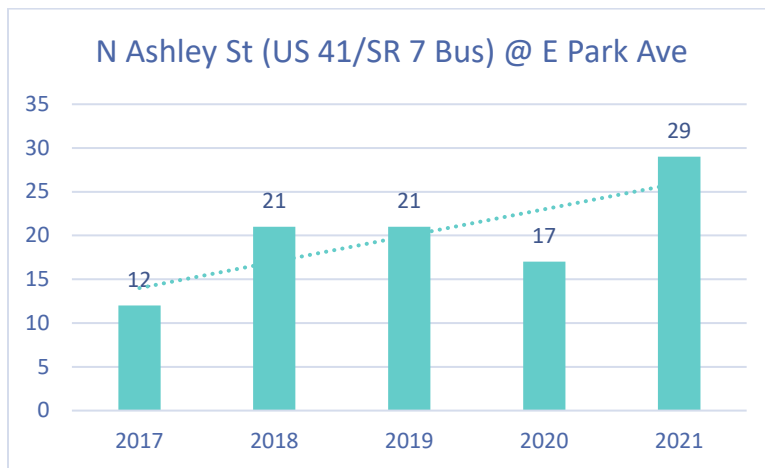
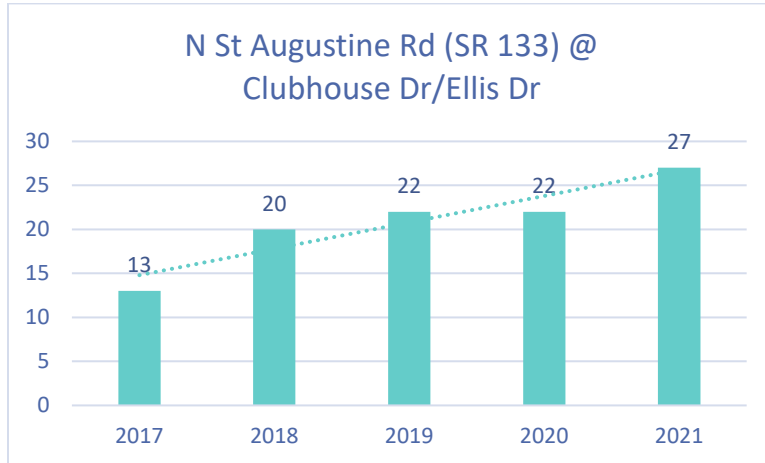
Valdosta/Remerton

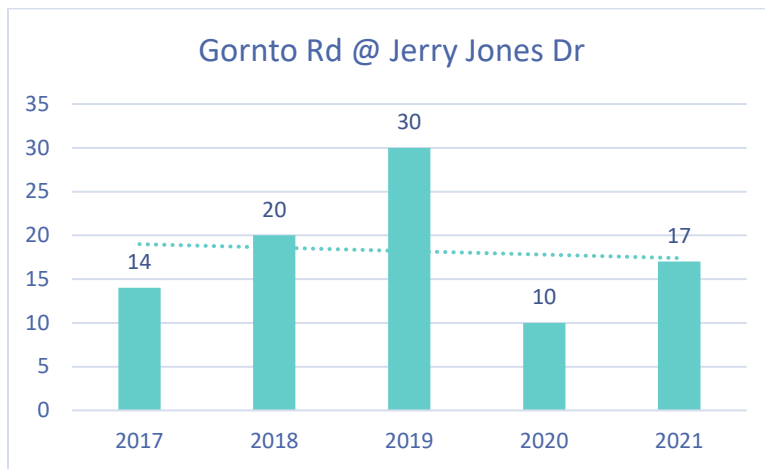
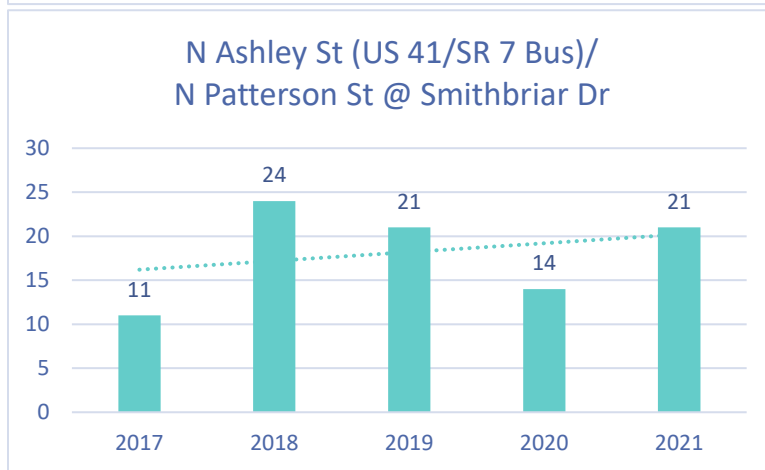
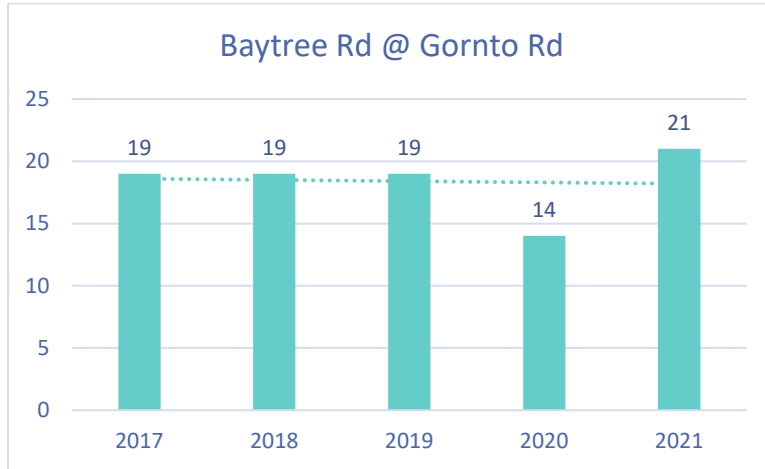


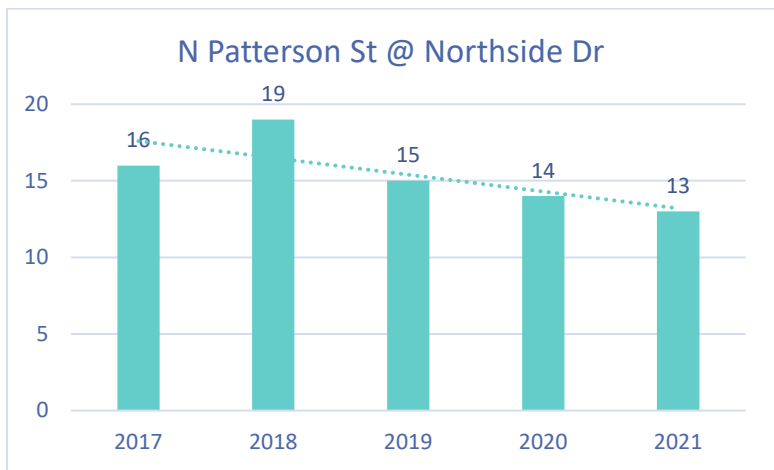
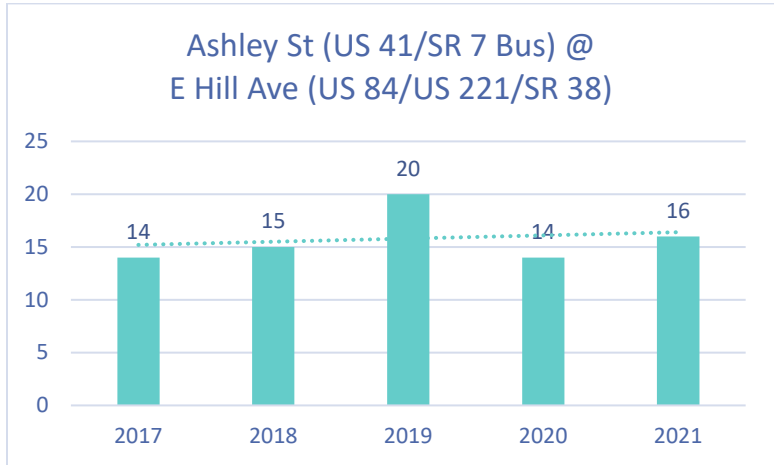




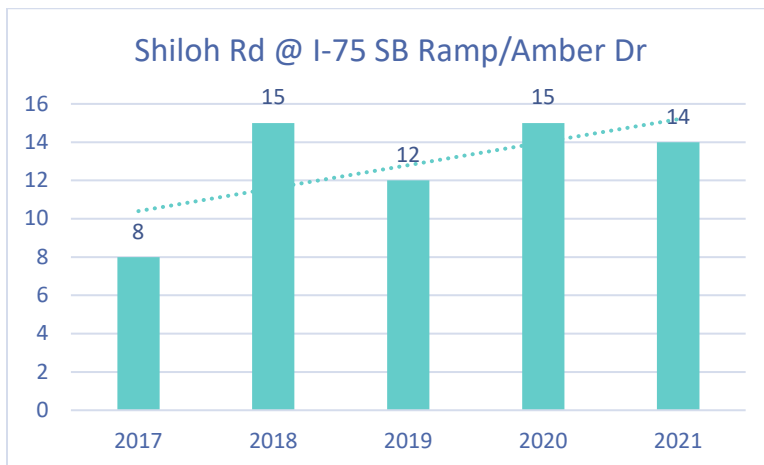
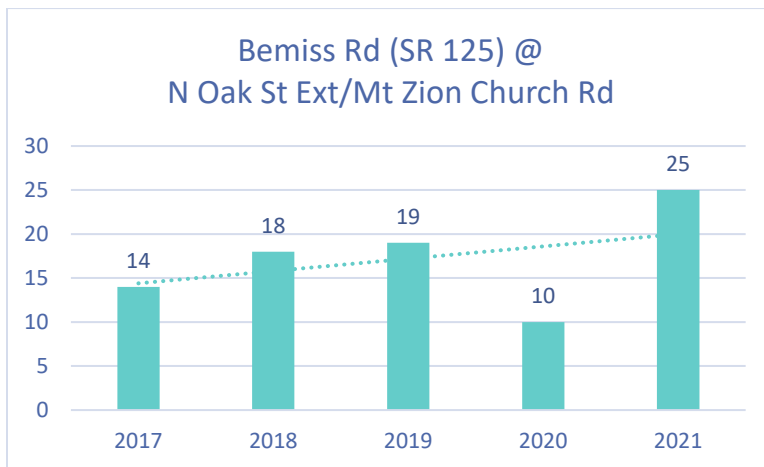
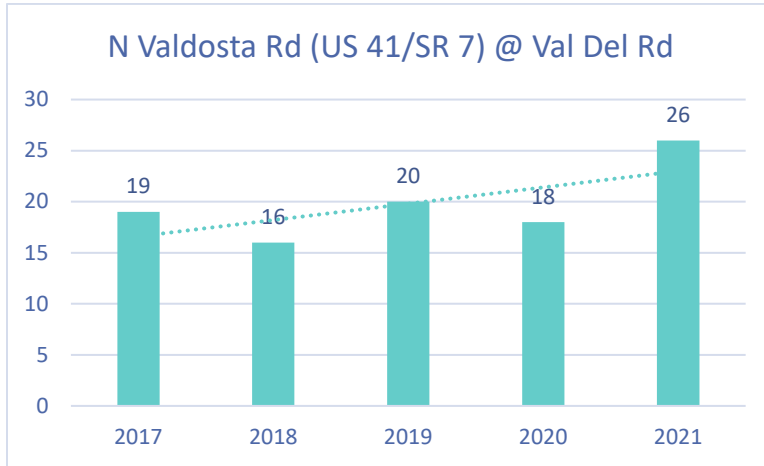


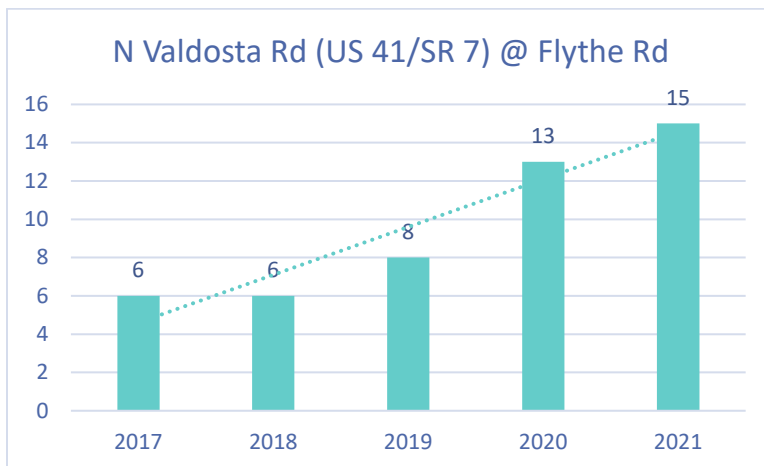
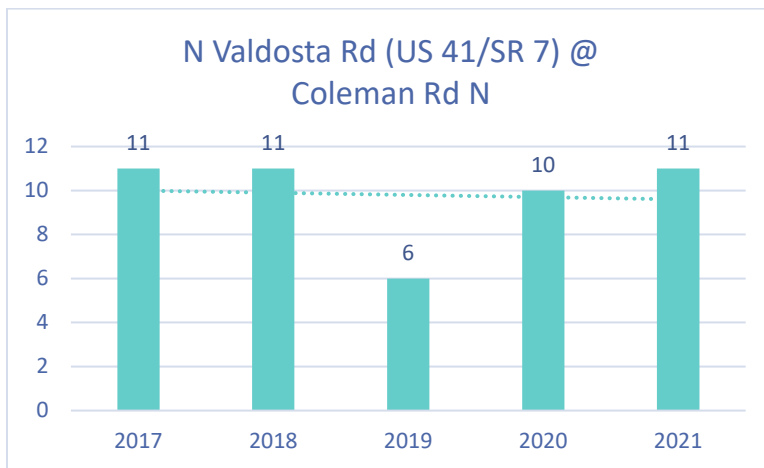
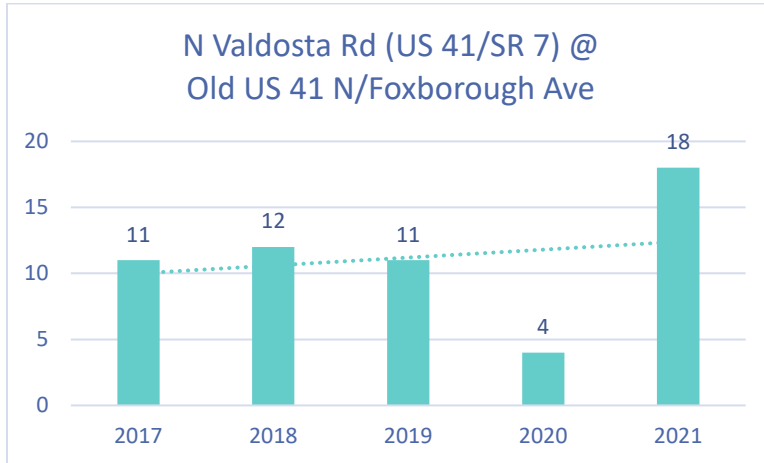


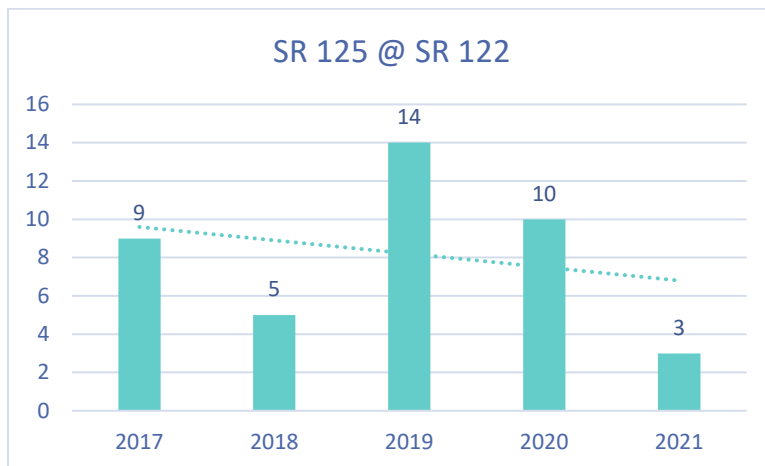
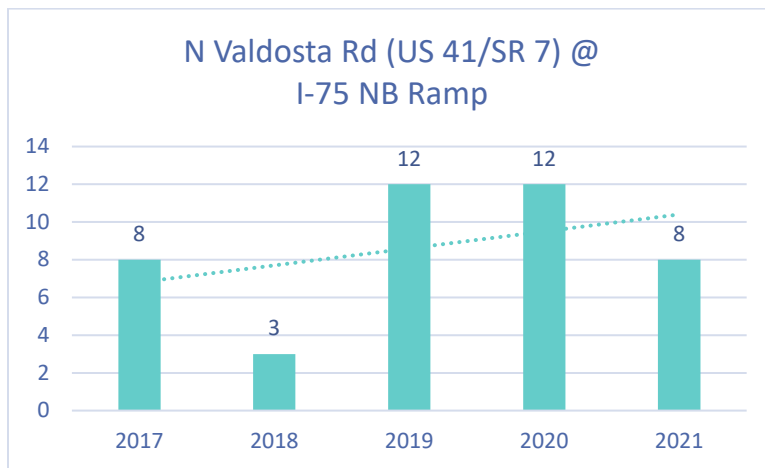
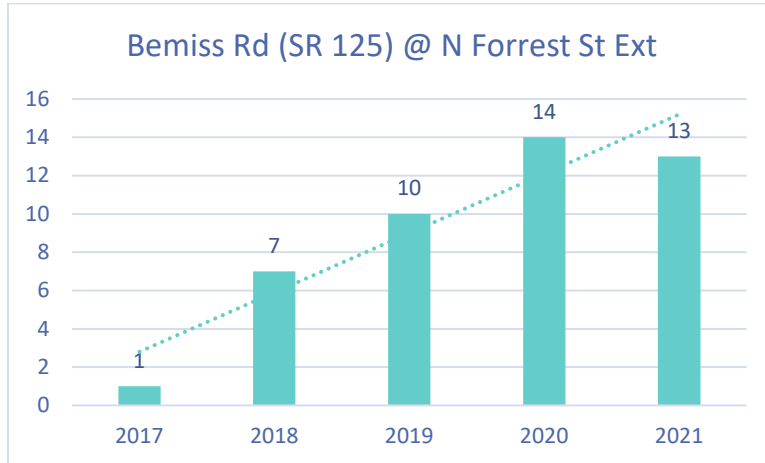


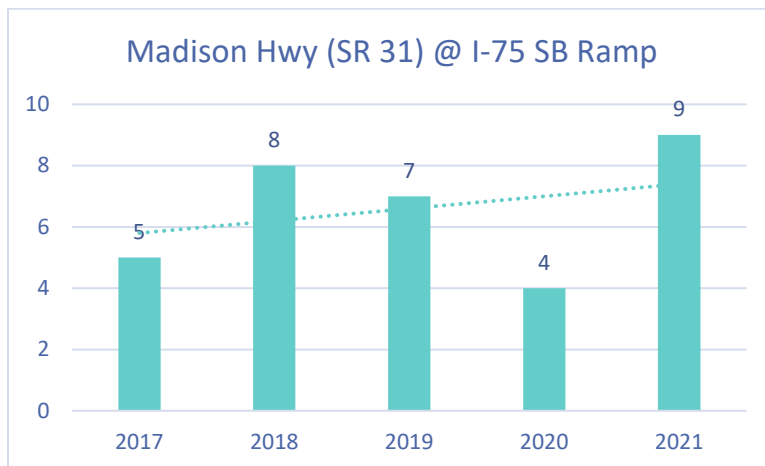
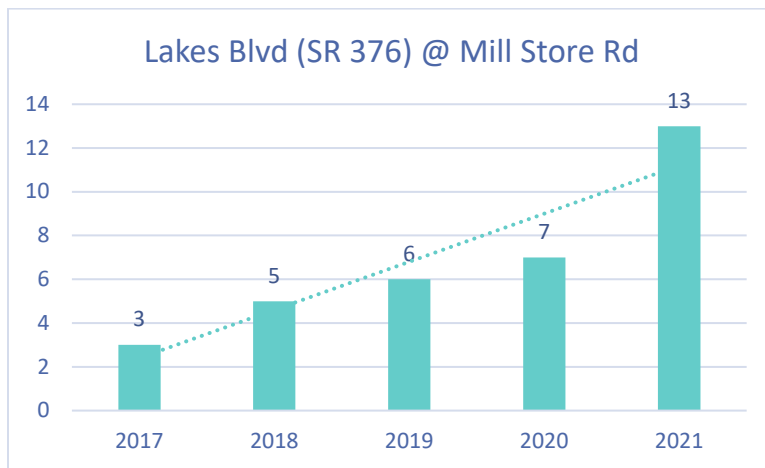
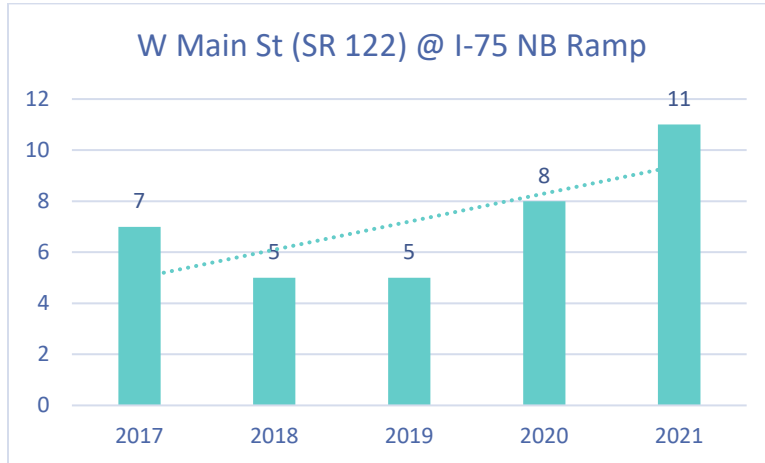


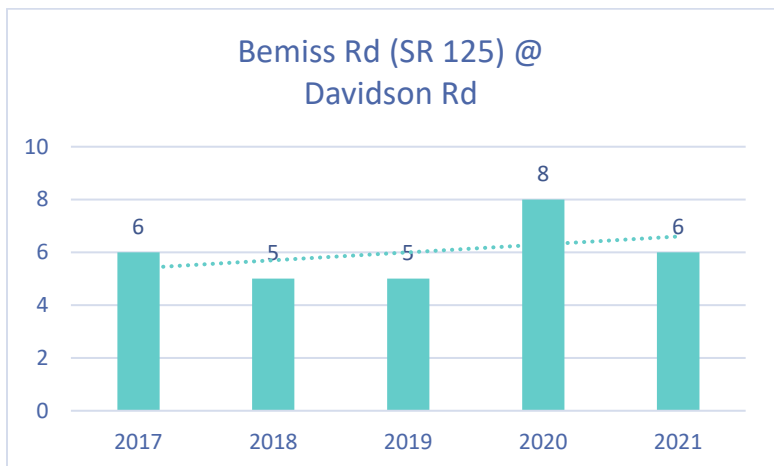
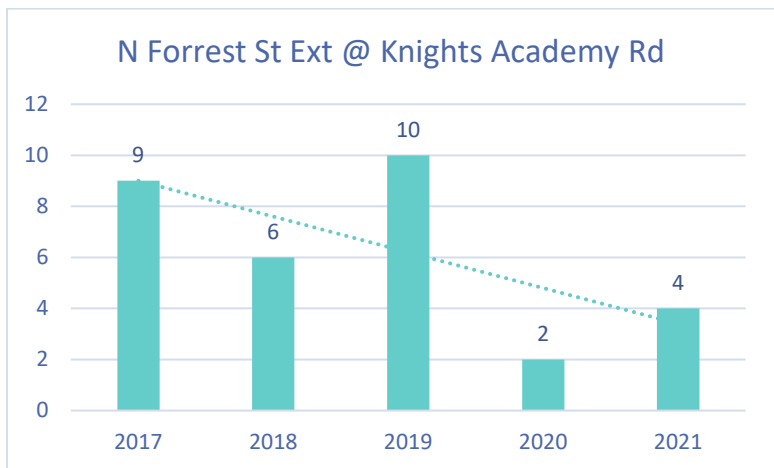
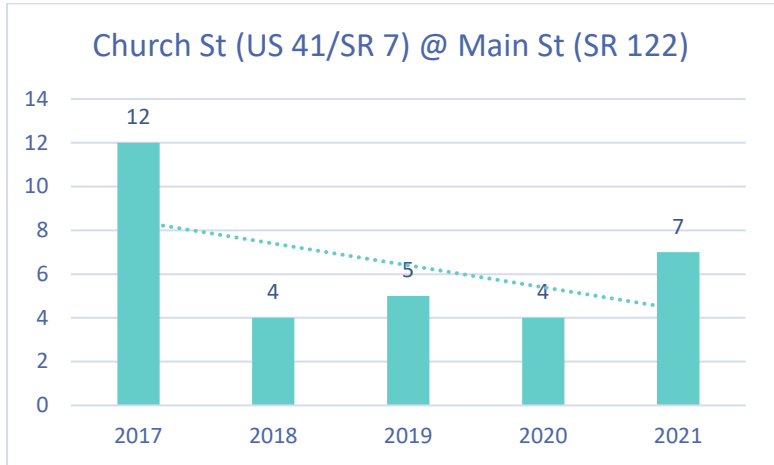
Unincorporated Lowndes County / Hahira/Lake City

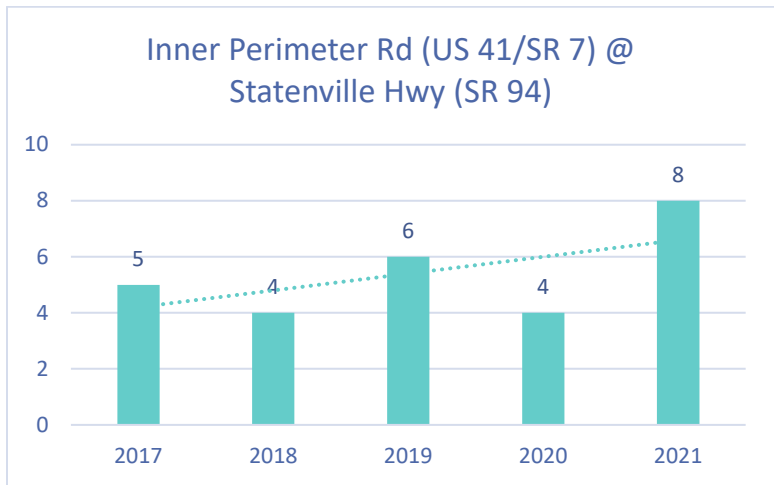
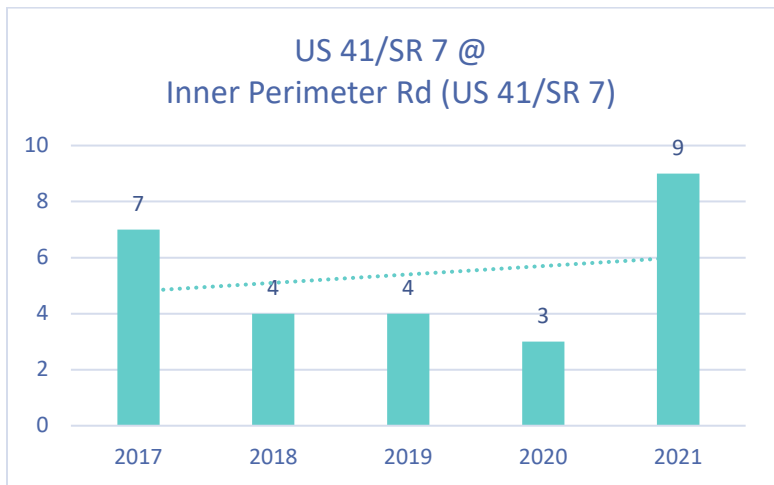
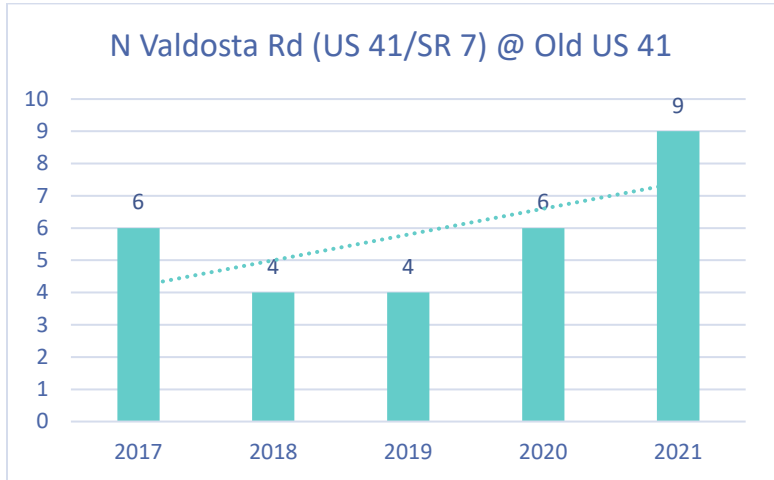


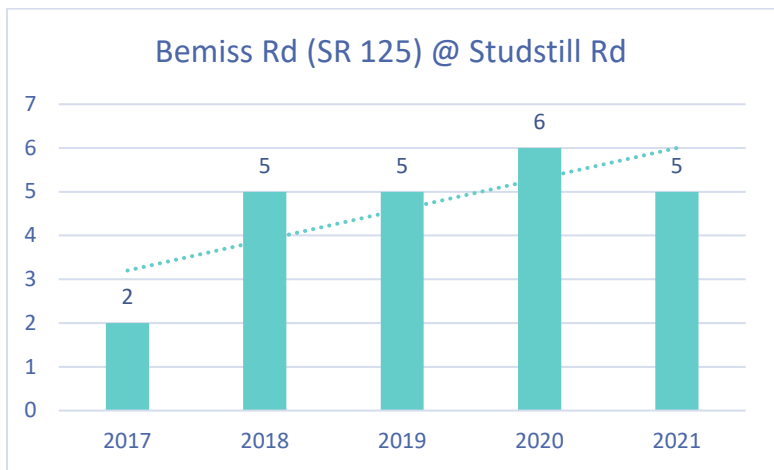
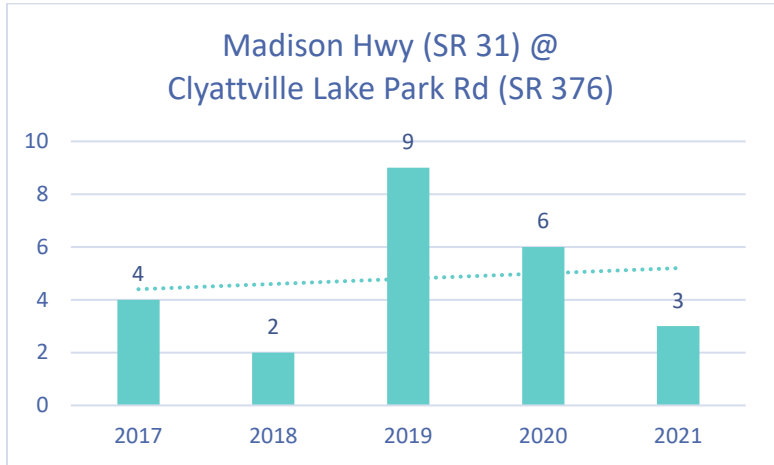












Conclusions

This report is intended to provide information to local elected officials, law enforcement, local planners and engineers as well as the public about crashes in Valdosta and Lowndes County. This report was modeled after the 2022-24 Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan Annual Report to address the same issues and points as that report. It also addresses the VLMPO's newly adopted safety performance measures that support targets established by GDOT.

This report is intended to be used by partner agencies and officials to better address the 4 E's of highway safety: education, engineering, enforcement, and emergency medical response. Agencies can use this report and the data contained herein to better address crash locations, driver behavior and crash response throughout the community.

This report will be shared with local elected officials, law enforcement officials, emergency response officials, local engineers and other groups to better inform the public about crashes in Lowndes County.

In the future, the locations identified as part of the Top 20 crash locations for both Valdosta and Lowndes County outside of the City of Valdosta should be reviewed by local agencies through an analysis that addresses the primary manners of collision and contributing factors at these intersections. The use of Road Safety Audits (technical review of intersections and road segments to help identify possible crash mitigation techniques) should be championed by the VLMPO and local governments to encourage and improve the usefulness of this report and the data collected by the partner agencies. The VLMPO will examine how future editions of this crash report can effectively analyze high crash intersections and identify top causes of crashes at those locations that could be attributed to intersection design, safety equipment, or other contributing factors.

Local agencies should be encouraged to use this report, as well as seek out other data available from the VLMPO or other agencies to help do their part in reducing vehicle crashes in Lowndes County.

Appendix A: Proposed Actions for Local Communities

This Appendix contains a list of actions and resources local communities can take to improve traffic safety.

Engineering Countermeasures

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sponsors the Proven Safety Countermeasures initiative (PSCI), which is a collection of countermeasures and strategies which are proven, effective methods in reducing roadway fatalities and serious injuries on highways across the nation. The VLMPO and local partners should consider thoughtful and strategic implementation of PSCs to accelerate the achievement of MPO, State, and federal safety performance measures and to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The PSCI list contains 28 different countermeasures which were last updated in 2021 and include nine new countermeasures (appropriate speed limits for all road users, bicycle lanes, crosswalk visibility management, lighting, pavement friction management, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, speed safety cameras, variable speed limits, and wider edge lines).

Appropriate Speed Limits for All Users: Local jurisdictions and departments of transportation should set appropriate speed limits to mitigate crash risk, particularly for crashes involving vulnerable roadway users such as bicyclists and pedestrians. Among factors that agencies should consider when setting speed limits including multimodal activity, crash history, surrounding land uses, intersection and driveway spacing, roadway geometry, traffic volume, and functional classification.

Backplates with Retroreflective Borders: Backplates added to a traffic signal indication improve the visibility of the illuminated face of the signal by introducing a controlled-contrast background. These are already present on most state highways in the MPO area.

Bicycle Lanes: Providing dedicated space for bicycles along roadways can reduce the potential for fatal or serious injury crashes involving bicyclists.

Corridor Access Management: Thoughtful access management along a corridor can simultaneously enhance safety for all modes, facilitate walking and biking, and reduce trip delay and congestion.

Crosswalk Visibility Management: Enhancements to crosswalks, such as visible pavement markings and signage, reducing obstructions like parked cars and improving lighting, can improve both pedestrian visibility and safety at pedestrian crosswalks at both intersection and mid-block locations.

Enhanced Delineation and Friction for Horizontal Curves: This proven safety countermeasure for reducing crashes at curves includes a variety of potential strategies that can be implemented in combination or individually.

Leading Pedestrian Intervals: Gives pedestrians the opportunity to enter an intersection three to seven seconds before vehicles are given a green indication. With this head start, pedestrians can better establish their presence in the crosswalk before vehicles have priority to turn left.

Left and Right Turn Lanes at Two-Way Stop-Controlled Intersections: Auxiliary turn lanes—either for left turns or right turns—provide physical separation between turning traffic that is slowing or stopped and adjacent through traffic at approaches to intersections. Turn lanes can be designed to provide for deceleration prior to a turn, as well as for storage of vehicles that are stopped and waiting for the opportunity to complete a turn.

Lighting: Installing lighting along streets and roadways can reduce the chances of nighttime pedestrian fatal or injury crashes and promote a sense of safety beyond transportation.

Local Road Safety Plan: Provides a framework for identifying, analyzing, and prioritizing roadway safety improvements on local roads. The LRSP development process and content are tailored to local issues and needs. The process results in a prioritized list of issues, risks, actions, and improvements that can be used to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on the local road network.

Longitudinal Rumble Strips and Stripes: Milled or raised elements on the pavement intended to alert drivers through vibration and sound that their vehicles have left the travel lane. They can be installed on the shoulder, edge line of the travel lane, or at or near center line of an undivided roadway. Several roads in the MPO area already have these strips installed.

Median Barriers: Longitudinal barriers that separate opposing traffic on a divided highway and are designed to redirect vehicles striking either side of the barrier.

Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas: Nationally, pedestrian crashes account for approximately 15% of all traffic fatalities annually, and over 75% of these occur at non-intersection locations. For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, adjust their walking speed, determine gaps in traffic, and predict vehicle paths. Installing raised medians or pedestrian crossing islands can help improve safety by simplifying these tasks and allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Pavement Friction Management: Pavement friction treatments can result in effective and efficient pavement performance as well as reduce crashes along horizontal curves and approaches to intersections and crosswalks.

Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons: A traffic control device designed to help pedestrians safely cross busy or higher-speed roadways at midblock crossings and uncontrolled intersections. The beacon head consists of two red lenses above a single yellow lens. The lenses remain "dark" until a pedestrian desiring to cross the street pushes the call button to activate the beacon. The signal then initiates a yellow to red lighting sequence consisting of steady and flashing lights that directs motorists to slow and come to a stop. The pedestrian signal then flashes a WALK display to the pedestrian. Once the pedestrian has safely crossed, the hybrid beacon again goes dark.

Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons: Similar to pedestrian hybrid beacons, rectangular rapid flashing beacons promote a sense of visibility for pedestrians at mid-block crossings and increase driver awareness of pedestrians. They are typically applicable to roadways with speed limits under 40 miles per hour.

Reduced Left-Turn Conflict Intersections: Geometric designs that alter how left-turn movements occur in order to simplify decisions and minimize the potential for related crashes.

Road Safety Audits: A road safety audit is a type of transportation review that are performed by a multidisciplinary team of planners, engineers, and stakeholders. These reviews consider all users of the road and account for human and environmental factors in improving design and safety along a given corridor. These can be performed in any phase of project development between planning and construction but are encouraged to be conducted at the earliest stage possible.

Road Diets/Roadway Reconfiguration: Roadway reconfigurations, or road diets, reallocate space along a roadway to provide mobility and access for roadway users beyond motor vehicles. An example is converting a four-lane roadway with two lanes in each direction into a road with one travel lane in each direction, a center left-turn lane, and two bicycle lanes. These can reduce rear-end and angle crashes as well as provide pedestrian refuge and traffic calming.

Roadside Design Improvements at Curves: A strategy encompassing several treatments that target the high-risk roadside environment along the outside of horizontal curves. These treatments prevent roadway departure fatalities by giving vehicles the opportunity to recover safely and by reducing crash severity.

Roundabouts: A modern roundabout results in lower speeds and fewer conflict points than a signalized intersection, and also leads to improved operational performance. Roundabouts provide substantial safety and operational benefits compared to other intersection types, most notably a reduction in severe crashes.

SafetyEdgeSM: The SafetyEdgeSM technology shapes the edge of the pavement at approximately 30 degrees from the pavement cross slope during the paving process to reduce the potential for vertical drop-offs at the edge of pavement surfaces. This technology can also increase the durability of asphalt pavement.

Speed Safety Cameras: Installing speed safety cameras is a form of speed enforcement that incorporates technology to supplement traditional enforcement measures.

Systemic Application of Multiple Low Cost Countermeasures at Stop-Controlled Intersections:

Variable Speed Limits: Variable speed limits are appropriate on roadways where traffic volumes change throughout the course of a typical day. These speed limit adjustments should be based on crash history, traffic volumes, and operating speeds, among other characteristics.

Walkways: A walkway is any type of defined space or pathway for use by a person traveling by foot or using a wheelchair. These may be pedestrian walkways, shared use paths, sidewalks, or roadway shoulders.

Wider Edge Lines: In rural areas, wider edge lines are a low cost countermeasure which increase visibility on roadways and can help prevent roadway departure crashes on narrow or winding roads.

Yellow Change Intervals: Since red-light running is a leading cause of severe crashes at signalized intersections, it is imperative that the yellow change interval be appropriately timed. Too brief an interval may result in drivers being unable to stop safely and cause unintentional red-light running, while too long an interval may result in drivers treating the yellow as an extension of the green phase and invite intentional red light running. Factors such as the speed of approaching vehicles, driver perception-reaction time, vehicle deceleration rates, intersection width, and roadway approach grades should all inform the timing calculation.

Educational Countermeasures and Campaigns

Child restraint awareness campaigns and child seat safety check programs can increase the rate of proper use of restraint systems for children in vehicles.

Drive Alert Arrive Alive: a statewide safety campaign to educate drivers about simple changes they can make in their driving behavior to prevent crashes, improve safety and save lives.

Driver education programs may focus on driving techniques, risks, mastery of traffic situations, decision-making skills, and other aspects of driving. Programs may be aimed at new drivers, young drivers, or also older and more experienced drivers.

Operation Lifesaver (<https://oli.org/>) helps to spread information about safety around trains and to encourage safer behavior at railroad crossings and on train tracks.

Railroad Safety Program: Georgia DOT's Office of Utilities handles railroad coordination and safety activities for the more than 5,300 public highway rail grade crossings across the state.

Safe Routes To School: This program works to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children in grades K-8 to walk or bike to school every day.

Scholastic Youth Safety Partnership: In partnership with the company Scholastic, Georgia DOT has launched the Recognizing the Risk campaign in an effort to help better educate the next generation of Georgia drivers.

Seat belt awareness campaigns may include billboards, flyers, social media outreach, and other materials.

See & Be Seen: Georgia DOT's See & Be Seen campaign aims to make it safer to walk in Georgia. See & Be Seen is the pedestrian component of Georgia DOT's Drive Alert Arrive Alive campaign to reduce crashes and fatalities on Georgia's roadways.

Teens in the Driver Seat: Teens in the Driver Seat is a peer program for teens that focuses solely on traffic safety and addresses all major risks for teen drivers.

Work Zone Safety: This GDOT program raises awareness for motorists to pay attention, watch out for workers, and drive safely when traveling through work zones.

Enforcement Countermeasures

Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Device (ATESD): School systems can apply for a permit to place an Automated Traffic Enforcement Safety Device within a school zone.

Drunk-driving checkpoints have been shown to reduce DUI crashes in some studies.

Hands-Free Law: Georgia's Hands-Free law requires hands-free technology when drivers use a cell phone or other electronic device.

Increased law enforcement presence on high-crash corridors has been shown to improve safety.

Law enforcement presence at crosswalks has been shown to improve drivers' yielding to pedestrians in some studies.

Law enforcement presence in school zones has been shown to reduce crashes.

Red Light Running Photo System: This system is designed to improve safety and promote compliance at signalized intersections.

Further resources:

Federal Highway Administration, "Proven Safety Countermeasures."
<https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/>

Staton, Catherine, et al. "Road Traffic Injury Prevention Initiatives: A Systematic Review and Metasummary of Effectiveness in Low and Middle Income Countries." *PLoS One*, 2016: 11(1).
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4703343/>

Berg, H-Y. "Reducing crashes and injuries among young drivers: what kind of prevention should we be focusing on?" *Injury Prevention*, June 2006. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2563439/>

Georgia Department of Transportation. "Safety & Operation."
<http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/SafetyOperation>