

# Lanier County Transit Development Plan



*Prepared by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission*

1937 Carlton Adams Drive  
Valdosta, Georgia 31601  
<http://www.sgrc.us>

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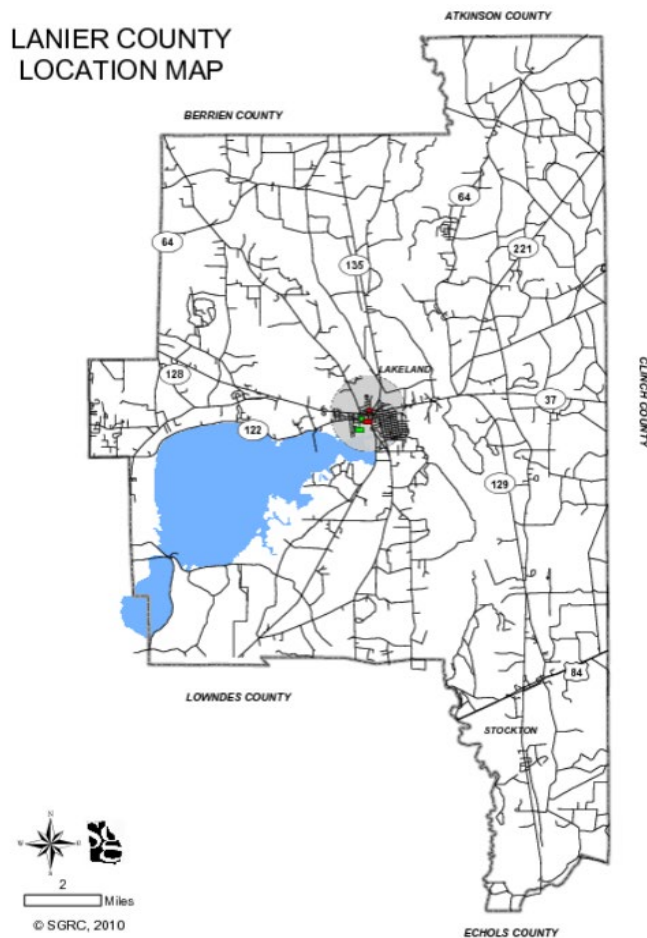
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## Executive Summary

The primary purpose of the Lanier County Transit Development Plan (TDP), developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, is to be used as an informational guidebook. Currently, Lanier County does not have a rural public transit system nor have they opted in the Regional Rural Transit System, but this TDP can be used as a resource for Lanier County's elected officials and staff when discussing and answering basic questions about rural public transit and how it would impact Lanier County. This TDP is also shared with the Georgia Department of Transportation to keep them current on rural public transit characteristics in the community. Lanier County should use this report to guide the participation in the Regional Rural Public Transit System and to enhance service delivery for the residents of the community. This TDP explains the 5311 program, which is a possible funding source for Lanier County to help with participation in the regional transit program.

This Lanier County TDP covers an analysis of demographic characteristics of the area, transit-related goals and objectives, a demand estimation and needs assessment, and a 5-year Capital and Operating Plan. This information will give officials a better understanding of the opportunities that joining the regional transit system may create for Lanier County. Demographic information as well as other Census information in this report, the US Census Bureau 2017-2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates will be utilized to show the current statistics for Lanier County and any other county mentioned, unless otherwise noted.

Figure 1 Map of Lanier County



## Socioeconomic Characteristics

Many community factors contribute to the planning process or incorporation of public transit services into a community. Socioeconomic and demographic data supplies an overall view of the community and is broken down to understand the potential need for public transportation services. Based on the data provided, other pertinent information and professional opinions of those in the transportation field, an informed decision can be made concerning the need for and potential use of public transit in Lanier County.

### Population

Lanier County, Georgia is a largely rural county in Southern Georgia. The ACS 5-Year Estimates lists the population for Lanier County to be about 9,874 persons. Below you will find a table representing the population demographics for Lanier County.

<i>Lanier County Demographics</i>	
<b>Total Population</b>	9,874
<b>Male</b>	48.4%
<b>Female</b>	51.6%
<b>Median Age</b>	36.8
<b>Population Over 60</b>	18.8%
<b>White</b>	71.4%
<b>Black</b>	22.6%
<b>American Indian/ Alaska Native</b>	0.1%
<b>Asian</b>	1.1%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	6.7%

Table 1. Lanier County Demographics, Census Table DP05

### Income

Income is one aspect of demographic information that plays a major role in the need and/or use of public transit services. Whether the community is urban or rural, income is often used as an indication of the need for public transit in a community. Lanier County has a median household income of \$33,956 with 34.1% of households below the poverty level.

**Table 2 Economic Characteristics**

<i>Lanier County Income Data</i>	
<b>Median household income</b>	\$33,956
<b>Persons below the poverty level (%)</b>	34.1%

Poverty status is often an indication that a number of residents are in need of public transportation services and are more likely to have a greater reliance on public transit services. In Lanier County, an estimated 3,269

persons are below the poverty level. This means that about 34.1% of the county’s population is in poverty under the federal definition. Even though there are a significant number of citizens below the poverty level, they are still finding ways to pay for and maintain transportation. Although there is no direct connection between transit ridership and access to vehicles in Lanier County, it may be inferred that if a public transit system is affordable and accessible to all residents, it may offset some of the costs of transportation for individuals at or below the federal poverty level.

### Modes of Transportation

Transportation typically tends to be a large part of any families’ budget due to monthly payments on a vehicle, insurance, maintenance, fuel, and other factors. While many families do not feel a burden with the expense this mode of transportation can have, it has a significant impact on those families that are living in poverty. Of the approximately 3,698 workers in Lanier County 16 years of age and over commuting to work, 45.3% have 1 or 2 vehicles available for use. Approximately 49.7% of workers 16 years and over have 3 vehicles available for use. To further break down this number, of the approximately 455 workers below the poverty line in Lanier County, 29% persons do not have a vehicle available to use. This data indicates that while transportation is likely a higher portion of a household’s outlays, many are continuing to find a way to pay for a car, gasoline, and maintenance costs, or asking friends for transportation to work, appointments, and other trips which require a vehicle.

From asking friends and family for transportation to just walking to one’s destination, citizens are using various modes of transportation to get where they need to go. In Lanier County, 78% of workers commute to work via a single-occupancy car, truck, or van and about 8% commute in a carpool of at least two persons. 4.1% walked, and 3.3% used other modes of transportation, which include motorcycles, bicycles, taxicabs, and/or worked from home.

The number of persons carpooling, walking, and using other modes to commute to work is an indication that this percentage of the population is more likely to use or need public transit services.

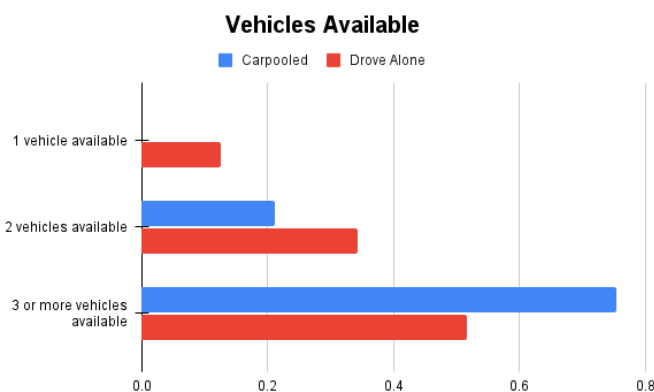


Figure 2 Vehicles Available by Carpoled or Drove Alone

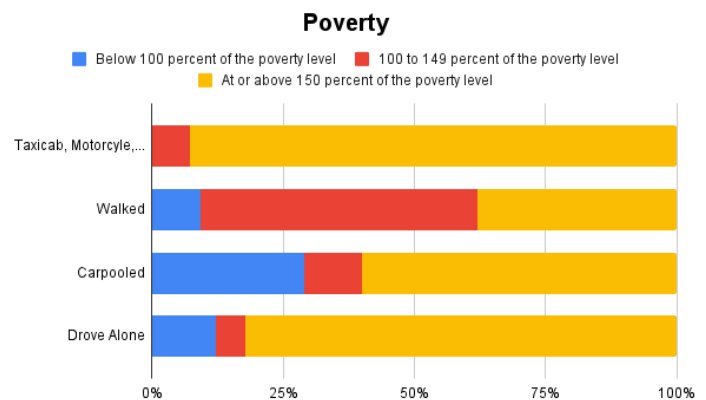


Figure 3 Commuting Characteristics by Poverty and Vehicles Available

## Age

Age can be a significant determining factor in rural public transit systems. Older residents are more likely to need transportation to and from medical appointments, shopping, and other daily activities. 13.3% of the population (1,315) of Lanier County is over the age of 65. This percentage is very close to the state average of 13.5%. Older residents often forego driving their vehicle altogether, if they have one available. This further increases older residents' need for public transportation services.

## ADA Analysis

In Lanier County, 1,114 persons have an ambulatory difficulty, meaning they have difficulty moving about under their own power. The population 65 years and older accounts for 73.2% of those individuals with an ambulatory difficulty, however, this is just one type of disability, and different disabilities should be considered so that the public transit system is accessible for everyone. Residents that have disabilities are more likely to need public transportation to get to doctor's appointments, or just go shopping, but this can prove difficult without ADA accessible vehicles.

<b>AGE</b>	<b>Total Population</b>	<b>Ambulatory Difficulty</b>	<b>Ambulatory Residents (%)</b>
<b>Under 18 years</b>	1,717	0	0%
<b>18 to 34 years</b>	1,904	44	2.3%
<b>35 to 64 years</b>	3,687	272	7.4%
<b>65 to 74 years</b>	754	86	11.4%
<b>75 years and over</b>	522	188	36%

*Table 3 Ambulatory Difficulty by Age Group*

## Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Although there is no current public transit system in Lanier County, there is a need to know the laws of an entity receiving federal funds, should a public transit service be implemented. All federal laws and regulations regarding the delivery of public transit services must be adhered to; this means that any public transit service may not discriminate against a rider on the basis of race, color, sex or limited ability to speak the English language, among other traits. This was established by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Executive Orders covering Environmental Justice and Limited English-proficiency, among others. This information along with other factors can be helpful when estimating the demand for a public transit system.

## Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis

<b>Estimate</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Margin of Error</b>	<b>+/- 41</b>
<b>Lanier County %</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>United States %</b>	<b>13.1%</b>

*Table 5 Percentage of LEP Households (ACS Table S1602)*



Four factors are used to determine the county's need to provide services for persons with Limited English Proficiency. The four factors are outlined here:

**1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the public transit service.** The second most common language spoken at home in Lanier County is Spanish. It is estimated that there are at least 69 households or 1.9% of the total households that have limited English proficiency. The US Census Bureau estimates that of the persons 5 years and older in Lanier County, 193 people or 29% of persons who speak Spanish are linguistically isolated, meaning that they do not speak English very well.

**2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the transit service.**

It is recommended that if needed, Lanier County utilize the website of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission where a Google Translator is available for potential riders to learn more about the system. Due to the low concentration of LEP persons in Lanier County, it is unlikely that such resources will be needed.

**3. The nature and importance of the transit service provided by Lanier County to the LEP community.**

Lanier County Transit would be provided as a service to riders in the county to access basic, non-emergency public transit services.

**4. The resources available to Lanier County and overall costs.**

Lanier County could provide materials in other languages for the potential riders, should a Lanier County Transit system be implemented. As noted previously, it is recommended that potential riders utilize the SGRC website at accessible vehicles to transport them. Often, residents with disabilities have a greater reliance on someone else providing transportation for them. At <http://www.sgrc.us>, Google Translator can be used to provide basic information on service to LEP individuals

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission has also put together a Regional Transit Brochure that can be accessed on the SGRC website as well as in print form, at various locations throughout the region.



Figure 4. SGRC Regional Transit Brochure

## Commuting Patterns

In Lanier County, over 3,698 citizens commute to work daily. Of these workers, 56.8% of them, or nearly 2,101 commute to work outside Lanier County every day, with the majority commuting to Lowndes County. This data is an indication that Lanier County is contributing workers to jobs in surrounding counties. The majority of citizens, 57%, have a 20-minute to 60-minute commute; 40% of citizens have between a 1 to 19-minute commute; 3% of citizens have a commute longer than 60 minutes. The mean commute time is 22.9 minutes

from home to work. This large number of commuters could suggest that this particular segment of the population is very likely to need public transit services as a primary means of transportation.

Householder 65+	1060
No Vehicle Available	59
1+ Vehicles Available	320

*Table 4 Householders 65 Years and Over & Vehicle Access*

### Livability Impact

There are many factors that make a community more livable, such as the overall cost of living, accessibility, and quality of healthcare, grocery stores, and other amenities. Many of these amenities, especially in rural areas, require a vehicle because they are not within a reasonable distance or lack the infrastructure for residents to walk or bike. For this reason, public transit services can be very important in increasing the livability of a community. Public transit along with bike and pedestrian infrastructure offers optimum results for a livable community. As the livability increases so will the quality of life, and this will also create an atmosphere for growth and economic development because residents will have available transportation options. Public transportation services will also give those who do not own vehicles or have been asking friends and family for transportation more freedom and flexibility to reach their destination.

### Understanding 5311 Programs

Sometimes, the decision to implement a rural transit system in a county is stalled due to financial questions, such as: How can we pay for a rural transit system? This is where the 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program comes in. Any rural public transportation system in Lanier County would likely require funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program. The Section 5311 Program offers local areas an opportunity to provide transit services, which in turn improves access to jobs, healthcare, recreational activities and other services that residents often use. The program is administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation in partnership with local communities to provide assistance for rural public transportation. Federal funds are allocated to the states on a formula basis and can be used for capital assistance, operating assistance planning, and program administration. GDOT is the recipient of these funds, and it, in turn, provides Federal funding (and a limited amount of state capital funding) to local sub-recipients (counties) in Georgia.

Due to the administering of these funds by GDOT, the State of Georgia has established the following statewide goals for the Section 5311 program:

#### **Goal: Basic Mobility to Serve All Georgians:**

- Serving those persons with the most critical needs for access and mobility, especially those without alternatives.
- Providing service without any trip purpose restrictions or eligibility requirements including medical, social services, personal shopping, business, and employment trips.
- Serving all areas with appropriate levels of service, subject to the required local or regional participation.



- Addressing economic development—through employment trips, services to support local employment sites, new ones, etc.

**Goal: Program Implementation:**

- Partnering with the FTA in the administration of the Section 5311 program, meeting all FTA program requirements.
- Managing a program of excellence that provides timely management direction, guidance, and reimbursement to allow local entities to provide quality service.
- Partnering with local or regional entities to plan services to meet locally identified needs.
- Partnering with local or regional entities to operate the services.
- Providing technical assistance to help local providers improve effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and quality of service.
- Providing technical information, policy analyses, and program management data to support transit program development.

**Goal: Efficiency and Effectiveness:**

- While maximizing ridership, recognizing that there are significant differences in population density, trip characteristics, and client needs (accessibility, assistance, etc.) which will affect usage.
- Subject to performance requirements appropriate to the area and type of service with the appropriate type of service—demand-responsive, subscription route, route deviation, or fixed-route.
- Using the appropriate vehicle type—accessible if needed, sedan, van, small bus, large bus.

**Goal: Safe, Secure Quality Service:**

- Operating equipment that is within its design life, inspected for safety and overall condition
- Operated by staff meeting the highest qualifications—appropriate license (Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) if required), safe driving and criminal records checked, drug and alcohol tested, etc.
- Operated by a staff that is trained to proficiency in all necessary skills: Defensive Driving, Passenger Assistance, First Aid and CPR.
- Providing a safe and secure service to the riders.

**Goal: Accessible Service—Usable by Persons with Disabilities:**

- Providing service that is accessible (adequate number of accessible lift- or ramp-equipped vehicles.
- Using operators trained to proficiency in passenger assistance, lift use, restraints, mobility devices (folding, stowing, etc.).
- User information and outreach to ensure that persons needing the service are aware of it and can obtain information.

**Goal: Coordinated Provision of Transportation in Rural Areas:**

- Coordinated policies at the state level through interagency coordination.
- Coordinated at regional/local level—shared vehicles, shared rides, coordinated management—where it will result in more cost-effective, quality service that meets client and general public transit rider needs.

A rural transit system in Lanier County should promote these established goals by the State of Georgia. Should Lanier County implement a public transit system, meeting the above goals would not be difficult. Lanier

County should carry out varying forms of public outreach to garner support and notify residents of the service. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission is also available to help with achieving certain goals, such as the coordinated provision of transportation in rural areas and the effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

Likewise, GDOT has established minimum criteria for transit programs in GDOT's Rural Public Transportation Service Policy. These include:

- Services should not be duplicative of other transportation services;
- Vehicles should be utilized to reach a goal of 500 one-way passenger trips per vehicle month **or** be operated 120 hours per month **or** 1,000 vehicle miles per month;
- Vehicles should be available for public transportation service on a daily basis;
- Vehicle trips for contract, charter or subscription service should recover fully allocated costs;
- The system should aim to recover a minimum of 20 percent of its public transportation costs as a goal from fare box revenues generated through regular public transportation operations, with a minimum of ten percent fare box recovery required. **The total of all purchase of service agreements should recover the fully allocated operating costs.**

Additionally, GDOT recommends that service should be funded to the maximum extent possible by the generation of fare box revenue.

Section 5311 funds can be used for capital and operational costs. These are two different types of costs incurred for developing and continuing a rural transit system. Local funding for capital acquisition will at a minimum be ten percent of the costs. Capital expenses under Section 5311 can include:

- Vehicles,
- Communication equipment,
- Wheelchair lifts,
- Equipment installation costs,
- Computer equipment and purchase of software (laptops are not an eligible expense, and monthly software maintenance or lease fees are an operating expense), or
- Office equipment,
- Smart Card Reader,
- Fare boxes

Ten percent of the public transportation operating costs must be provided from fare or other local dollars. The remaining 90 percent of the operating cost is considered the net operating deficit. Federal funding may be provided for up to 50 percent of the net operating deficit; the remaining 50 percent (or more) must be provided from local funds. Operating costs include, but are not limited to, driver, mechanic, and dispatcher salaries, licenses, vehicle insurance, drug and alcohol testing, uniforms, maintenance and repairs (includes oil, tire, and parts) and fuel. Monthly service fees for cell phones and/or two-way radio services are eligible operating expenses.

In the Southern Georgia region, many counties that have a rural transit system contract with a third-party operator. Third-party operators are experienced transit providers that can provide transit service effectively and efficiently. These counties use the Section 5311 funds to purchase capital equipment and contract with the third-party operator for operation of the system. According to MIDS Transportation, Inc., the most utilized third-party operator in the Southern Georgia region, local governments, generally, only pay for vehicle

insurance and operating expenses. It should be noted that operating expenses do not include capital costs. All other operating expenses are handled by the third-party operator.

Currently, peer counties usually charge \$3 for trips that are less than ten miles, \$5 for trips that are over 10 miles with the destination still being in the county, if the destination is outside of the county, an extra \$0.50 per mile is charged.

### **Evaluation of Existing Services**

Currently, there are no public transportation systems in place in Lanier County. However, there are some other services within the county that provide public transit for clients. They include the Department of Human Services and Medicaid which currently provide approximately 4,862 trips per year. Although this is a form of public transit, the services are limited to pre-qualified clients receiving specific public assistance. Based on the data previously mentioned, Lanier County could benefit from a demand-response style public transit system, because current services are not wide-ranging and are specific to the clients of the Human Service Providers. This form of transportation system excludes much-needed transportation services for the citizens of Lanier County for general needs.

When considering rural transit for Lanier County, the following types of service are appropriate for rural public transportation programs and the funding provided for them, 5311 funds, will potentially offset or completely cover the local match required by Lanier County:

### **Demand-response/route deviation service.**

Demand-response is a type of service where individual passengers can request door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation from a specific location to another specific location at a certain time. A technology-based ordering service similar to the one that Uber uses would help incorporate technology into ordering service possibly making it more efficient.

Route deviation service operates along a public way on a fixed-route. However, they may deviate from the route occasionally in response to take a passenger to a destination or pick one up from an origin. After which, the vehicle returns to the regular route. Unfortunately, due to the large size of Lanier County, and its' rural nature, this service is not recommended.

### **Contract and subscription service.**

Subscription service is a type of demand response service in which routes and schedules are pre-arranged to meet the travel needs of riders who sign up for the service in advance. Often these riders are clients of human service agencies, who contract with the transportation operator to provide the service on behalf of the agency. This type of service may be provided by a Section 5311 program only to the extent that it does not violate FTA Charter Bus restrictions.

## Transit Need and Demand Analysis

For many families, it can be a tough challenge for them to meet their transportation needs even if they have one or even two vehicles. These families face the challenge of long trips to work and to businesses that put many miles on vehicles that may or may not be pre-owned and already worn down. Likewise, a family that only has one mode of transportation faces just the challenge of meeting the transportation needs of the whole family. This analysis consists of these factors and others to estimate the possible demand for rural public transit trips within Lanier County. The information is based on the use of transit systems information from peer counties that are similar in size and population.

Using the Transportation Research Board's *TCRP Report 161: Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation: Final Workbook and Final Spreadsheet Tool*, the SGRC was able to produce the following estimates of rural public transit need and demand for Lanier County.

Overall, there is an estimated need for 119,800 trips annually in Lanier County based on the communities' mobility gap. This number is noticeably high because it factors in the many potential riders that find alternative means of transportation, like getting a ride with friends or family, walking, riding a bicycle, etc. Further analysis shows that there is an estimated demand for 8,900 trips annually for the general rural public transit, not including POS (Purchase of Service) trips. Once POS trips are inserted into the equation, there is a total demand of nearly 9,200 trips annually for the general public. Currently, Lanier County provides about 75 DFCS (children) trips annually; and roughly 5,000 Medicaid trips are being provided by an un-verified third party.





## Capital Equipment Cost and 5-Year Budget Estimates

A rural transit system includes capital expenses and operating expenses. Given the growth of Lanier County's population and the above Transit Need/Demand Analysis, one vehicle may be enough to operate a public transit system. However, if demand significantly increased in a short period, two vehicles may need to be considered to improve efficiency. Echols County would also need to consider purchasing a mobile radio, a computer, a printer, and essential software as well.

The following Capital and Operating Budget estimates were created using the GDOT TDP Guidebook Financial Toolkit and are based on current costs of services for Cook County with an inflation rate of 3% per year for operating costs and 4% per year for capital costs to give an approximate value of what public transit services may cost in the next few years. Lanier County does not currently have public transit, so the estimates provided are based on the Transit Need/Demand Analysis for Lanier County as well as operating information from Cook County. Further the Southern Georgia Regional Commission has implemented Regional Transit which may also have an impact on the overall cost to Lanier County should they implement transit service through joining the current regional transit system that is in place.

The first table represents public transit service assumptions of costs in. The second table represents the capital cost summary to implement transit services in Lanier County. The final table shows the final revenue, operating and capital summary. The table shows that local contribution, depending on implementation year, could range from \$68,000 to \$70,000. Once again, these assumptions are based on data from a peer county and does not include potential local cost savings through the SGRC regional transit system.

Figure 5. GDOT TDP Guidebook Financial Toolkit Assumptions for Lanier County Transit Services

Transit Service	
Key Variables	
Attributes	Costs in 2023
Fixed Route Cost per Revenue Hour	\$0.00
Fixed Route Cost per Revenue Mile	\$0.00
ADA Paratransit Cost per Revenue Hour	\$108.59
ADA Paratransit Cost per Revenue Mile	\$6.08
Vanpool Cost per Revenue Hour	\$0
Inflation Rate for Operating Costs	3%
Inflation Rate for Capital Costs	4%
Total Fixed Route Fleet Size	0
Total Demand Response Fleet Size	7

TDP Years	
Enter Current Year	2023
Enter First Year of TDP Financial Plan	2022



Figure 6, GDOT TDP Guidebook Financial Toolkit Capital Cost Summary for Transit Services

**CAPITAL COST SUMMARY**

Example Capital Costs - Update to Reflect Local Context

Capital Description	Units	Estimated Unit Cost (FY 2020)
<b>Vehicles</b>		
New Heavy Duty Buses Required for Expanded Service Plan - Fixed Route	0	\$0
Demand Response and Paratransit Vehicles	2	\$80,000
<b>Passenger Amenities</b>		
Shelters	0	\$0
Benches	0	\$0
Bus Stop Signs	0	\$0
Placeholder	0	\$0
<b>Technology Upgrades</b>		
GFI Fareboxes	2	\$48,800
Automated Passenger Counters	2	\$14,500
Automated Vehicle Locators	2	\$13,700

**CAPITAL VEHICLE ESTIMATION**

Fixed Route Vehicles	2023	2022	2023	2024	2025
Service Plan Vehicle Requirements	0	0	0	0	0
Spare Requirements	0	0	0	0	0
Total Vehicle Requirements	0	0	0	0	0
Additional Vehicles Needed (Includes Replacements)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>FR TOTAL CAPITAL COST (with inflation)</b>		\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<hr/>					
Demand Response Vehicles	2023	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Vehicle Requirements	0	2	2	2	2
Additional Vehicles Needed (Includes Replacements)	0	2	2	2	2
<b>DR TOTAL CAPITAL COST (with inflation)</b>		\$ 166,400	\$ 173,056	\$ 179,978	\$ 187,177
<b>TOTAL CAPITAL COSTS</b>		\$ 166,400	\$ 173,056	\$ 179,978	\$ 187,177

Figure 7, GDOT TDP Guidebook Financial Toolkit Final Revenue, Operating and Capital Summary for Lanier County Transit Services

**FINAL REVENUE, OPERATING AND CAPITAL SUMMARY**

Service Plan Year	Program Element	Total Costs	Federal Sources						State Sources	Local Sources
			FTA Section 5307	FTA Section 5311	FTA Section 5339	FHWA Flex	CARES Funding	Add Federal Source	Add State Source	Add Local Source
2022	Operating Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
	Capital Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
	<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
2023	Operating Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
	Capital Costs	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
	<b>Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -						
2024	Operating Costs	\$ 363,092	\$ -	\$ 181,546.21						\$ 181,546.21
	Capital Costs	\$ 179,978	\$ -	\$ 143,982.59				\$ 17,997.82		\$ 17,997.82
	<b>Total</b>	\$ 543,071	\$ -	\$ 325,528.80				\$ 17,997.82		\$ 199,544.03
2025	Operating Costs	\$ 373,985	\$ -	\$ 186,992.60						\$ 186,992.60
	Capital Costs	\$ 187,177	\$ -	\$ 149,741.90				\$ 18,717.74		\$ 18,717.74
	<b>Total</b>	\$ 561,163	\$ -	\$ 336,734.49				\$ 18,717.74		\$ 205,710.33

## Conclusions

Lanier County has many residents that would benefit from a public transportation system especially disabled and senior residents who are more likely to need assistance with mobility. Based on the research and data collected and analyzed within this Transportation Development Plan, the staff of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission recommends that Lanier County participate in the regional transit system. Although the current data does not warrant the need for a fully implemented demand-response rural public transportation system, officials should consider collaboration with the regional transit system in place to help provide transportation for Lanier County residents. This option may be more beneficial and financially feasible than a single county public transportation system. Opting in would oblige the county to potentially pay a portion of a cash match for capital and operating costs. This cash match would likely be based on a formula that all parties would agree to before service began.

Given the daily outflow of workers to nearby counties, a regional system may provide an affordable commuting option for residents with no vehicle access or limited mobility. Moreover, if Lanier County were to opt into a regional transit system, some of its POS trips could be used to benefit the surrounding counties. A demand-response rural public transit system or collaboration to create/support a regional public transportation system with local entities and/or neighboring communities would greatly impact the quality of life for Lanier County residents by creating access to employment, healthcare services, shopping, and other general needs, beyond county boundaries. Implementing a public transit system may also help with economic outcomes by increasing the number of trips made daily to healthcare services, grocery stores, retail outlets, etc. It would also provide these benefits at a lower investment compared to a single county system, in addition to reducing the time and expense incurred by staff for annual training, daily monitoring, and monthly invoicing.

If Lanier County would like more information about implementing a demand-response rural public transit system please contact the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.