

Clinch County Transit Development Plan



Prepared by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission



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Valdosta, Georgia 31601

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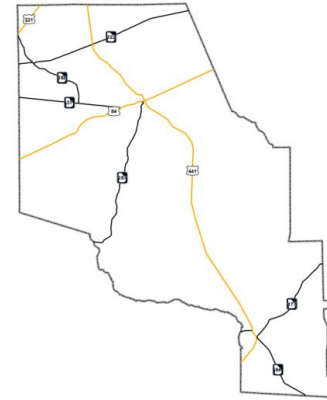
This publication does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation. This document is prepared in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Introduction

The Clinch County Transit Development Plan (TDP) was developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to be used as an informational guidebook for considering public transit services in Clinch County. Currently Clinch County does not have a public transit system, but this TDP can be used as a source for Clinch County's elected officials and staff when discussing and answering basic questions about rural public transit in Clinch County. This TDP is also shared with the Georgia Department of Transportation to keep them current on rural public transit opportunities and the characteristics of the community. Clinch County should use this report to develop and guide a rural public transit system and to enhance service delivery for the residents of the community. This TDP will explain the 5311 program, which is a possible funding source for Clinch County to help with the implementation of a rural transit program. This TDP will also compare and contrast the characteristics of Clinch County and three of its peer counties: Turner, Brantley, and Stewart. Turner and Brantley Counties have a single-county rural transit system and Stewart County is a part of a larger regional transit system, the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transportation Authority. Although Stewart is a part of a mini-regional public transit system, much of its socioeconomic data is comparable to Clinch County, which may be useful in providing a comparable snapshot of what a regional system may look like for Clinch County should Clinch decide to opt-into a regional rural public transit system. A regional public transit system would cover all 18 counties in the Southern Georgia region and put public transit services under one or two providers. Opting into a regional rural transit system may be more beneficial to rural counties than a single-county public transit system.

This 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, specifically for Clinch County. This information will give officials a better understanding of the opportunities that a public transit system may create for Clinch County. When comparing demographic information as well as other Census information in this report the US Census Bureau 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-year estimates will be utilized to show the current statistics for each county involved unless otherwise noted.

Figure 1. Map of Clinch 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 and potential use of public transit in Clinch County.

Population

Clinch County, Georgia is a largely rural county in Southern Georgia. The 2016 ACS estimated population for Clinch County is 6,727 persons. Below is a table representing the population demographics for Clinch County and comparable peer counties.

Table 1. Population Demographics

	<i>Clinch</i>	<i>Turner</i>	<i>Brantley</i>	<i>Stewart</i>
<i>Population</i>	6,727	7,961	18,411	5,791
<i>Median Age</i>	37	39	39	37
<i>Population Over 60</i>	17%	25%	20%	21%
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>				
<i>White</i>	70%	56%	60%	29%
<i>Black</i>	27%	41%	36%	48%
<i>American Native</i>	1%	.4%	0.4%	0%
<i>Asian</i>	0%	1%	0.2%	2%
<i>Hispanic or Latino (any race)</i>	0.3%	4%	6.1%	22%
<i>Other race</i>	6%	1%	3.4%	21%

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. When comparing Clinch County to Turner, Brantley, and Stewart Counties, it is noted that Clinch County has the lowest median income at \$24,848, which is \$10,000-\$13,000 less than two of its' peer counties.

Table 2. Economic Characteristics

	Clinch	Turner	Brantley	Stewart
Median household income	\$24,848	\$34,667	\$36,837	\$37,653
Persons below the poverty level (%)	35.3%	27.6%	21.2%	41.4%

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 Clinch County, an estimated 491 households or 2,355 persons are below the poverty level. This means that about 35% of the county's population is in poverty under the federal definition. Even though there is a distinctive number of citizens below the poverty level, they are still finding ways to pay for and maintain transportation, and although there is no direct connection between transit ridership and access to vehicles in Clinch 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.

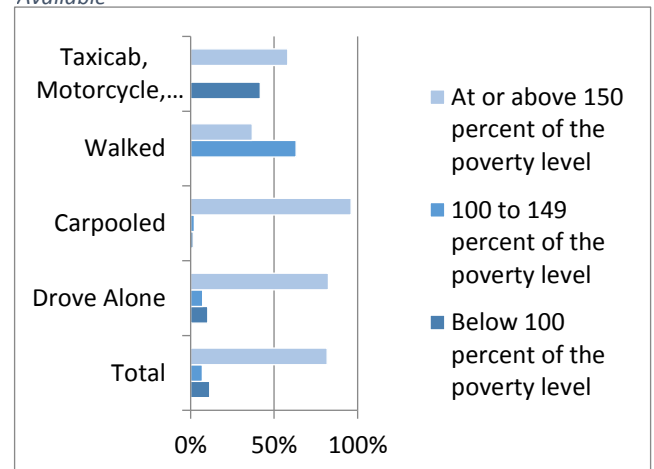
Modes of Transportation

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 2,185 workers 16 years of age and over in Clinch County commuting to work, almost 1,100 persons have 1 or 2 vehicles available for use. Approximately 874 workers 16 years and over have 3 vehicles available for use. To further breakdown this number, of the approximately 1,542 workers below

the poverty line in Clinch County, 62 persons do not have a vehicle available to use. This indicates that while transportation is likely a higher portion of a households 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 Clinch County, 73% of workers commute to work via a single-occupancy car, truck, or van and about 22% commute in a carpool of at least two persons. 5% of workers in Clinch County used other modes of transportation, which include walking, motorcycles, bicycles, and/or taxicabs (6 persons used a bus or public transit, 22 persons walked, and 35 persons traveled by other means).

The number of persons carpooling, walking, busing, 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. Commuting Characteristics by Poverty and Vehicles Available



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.

Commuting Patterns

In Clinch County, over 2,373 citizens commute to work daily. Of the 2,373 workers in the county, more than 1,865 or about 18% commute out of the county for work every day as shown in statistics from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2011-2015¹. This is an indication that Clinch County is contributing workers to jobs in surrounding counties. (74%) have a one to nineteen minute commute, while the remaining percentage of commuters have between a 20 to 60 minute commute. This moderate number of commuters could also suggest that this particular segment of the population is less likely to need public transit services as a primary means of transportation.

transportation to and from medical appointments, shopping and other daily activities. Approximately, 17% of the population of Clinch County is over the age of 60. This is almost equal with the state average. Due to the percentage of residents that are over the age of 60, there should be discussion concerning mobility options for senior residents. Seniors oftentimes forgo driving or their vehicle altogether, this can also increase the need of older residents to have tuned for local public transportation services.

Table 3. Householders 65 Years and Over & Vehicle Availability

	Clinch	Turner	Brantley	Stewart
Householders	712	1057	1681	672
No Vehicle Available	69	77	52	155
1 + Vehicle Available	643	980	1629	517

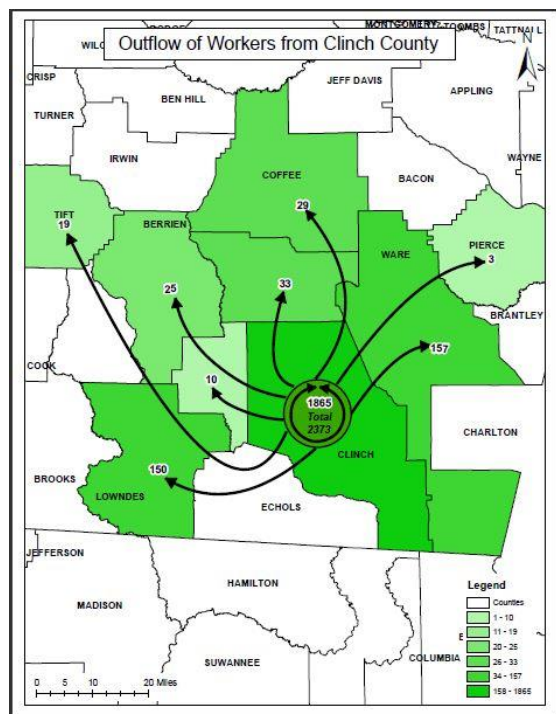
Evaluation for Potential Transit Service

To better understand the possibility of a transit system in Clinch County, not only is it necessary to know what funding options are available for rural areas, but it is also important to have knowledge of the potential ridership base. The next few sections will discuss 5311 programs, characteristics of potential riders, overview of existing services, transit need and demand analysis, and 5-year budget estimates.

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 Clinch 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,

Figure 3. Commuting Outflow Patterns to surrounding Counties



Age

Age can be a significant determining factor in rural public transit systems. Older residents are more likely to need

¹ The ACS is a 5-year sampled survey of American households, the data may include large margins of error that may or may not be presented in this

report. For detailed information a detailed review of the ACS data is encouraged.

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, stowage, 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 ride, 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 Clinch County should promote these established goals by the State of Georgia. Should Clinch County implement a public transit system, meeting the above goals would not be difficult. Clinch 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 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 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:

1. Vehicles,
2. Communication equipment,
3. Wheelchair lifts,
4. Equipment installation costs,
5. Computer equipment and purchase of software (laptops are not an eligible expense and monthly software maintenance or lease fees are an operating expense), or
6. Office equipment,
7. Smart Card Reader,
8. Fare boxes

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 South Georgia region, many counties that have a rural transit system contract with a third party operator. Third party operators are experienced transit providers that are able to 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 South Georgia region, local governments generally only pay for vehicle insurance and operational expenses. It should be noted that operational expenses do not include capital costs. All other operational expenses are handled by the third party operator.

Currently, two of the three 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.

When considering rural transit for Clinch 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 Clinch County:

Demand-response or 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, but which may deviate from the route occasionally in response to take a passenger to a destination or pick one up from an origin, after which it returns to the regular route, however, due to the large size of Clinch County and its' rural nature this service would not be the best choice.

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.

Evaluation of Existing Services

Currently there are no public transportation systems in place in Clinch County. However, there are some other

services within the county that provide public transit for clients, they include the Division of Family and Child Services (DFCS), and the SGRC Area Agency on Aging which currently provide approximately 9,700 trips per year, according to the FY18 DHS TRIP\$ year end summary report. 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 Clinch County could benefit from a demand-response style public transit system, because current services are not wide-ranging and are specific for the clients of the Human Service Providers. This form of transportation system excludes much needed transportation services for the citizens of Clinch County for general needs.

Title VI and LEP Analysis

Although there is no current public transit system in Clinch 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. According to 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.

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 Clinch County is Spanish. It is estimated that there are a total of 145 persons, or 2.3% of the total population that speaks Spanish. This percentage is substantially lower than the national percentage of people that speak Spanish at home. The US Census Bureau estimates that of the persons 5 years and older in Clinch County, 65 or 45% of persons who speak Spanish are linguistically

isolated, meaning that they do not speak English very well.

Table 4. Percentage of Persons that Speak Spanish

Estimate	145
Margin of Error	+/- 1.1%
Clinch County	2.3%
United States %	13%

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

Clinch County Transit does not have a history of LEP individuals who could not use the system. It is recommended that if needed Clinch 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.

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.

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

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

Figure 4. SGRC Transit Brochure

Residents of the 15 counties served by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission, as well as their local elected officials, usually recognize and appreciate the benefits of rural life. On the other hand, rural residents also understand the challenges of accessing safe, reliable and affordable transportation—and local government officials understand the struggle to provide it. While there are obvious gaps in Southern Georgia's transportation resources, a review of available options should prove helpful.

No person shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, disability/handicap or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P.L. 100-259) be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Los residentes de los 15 condados atendidos por la Comisión Regional del Sur de Georgia, así como sus funcionarios electos locales, suelen reconocer y apreciar los beneficios de la vida rural. Por otro lado, los residentes rurales también entienden el reto de tener acceso a un transporte seguro, confiable y asequible, y los funcionarios del gobierno local entienden la lucha por proveerlo. Si bien hay vacíos evidentes en los recursos de transporte del sur de Georgia, una revisión de las opciones disponibles debería resultar útil.

Ninguna persona deberá ser excluida de la participación por motivos de raza, color, nacionalidad, edad, discapacidad o sexo, según lo dispuesto en el Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 y la Ley de Restauración de Derechos Civiles de 1987 (P.L. 100-259). O ser negado los beneficios de, o estar sujeto a discriminación bajo cualquier programa o actividad que reciba asistencia financiera federal.

RULES/TIPS FOR RIDING TRANSIT

- Be sure to provide at least 24 hours notice to schedule a ride.
- Children under 16 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Child car seats must be provided by an adult for children under the age of five.
- Wear seat belts at all times.
- Have exact cash payment ready when boarding.
- Be courteous and respectful to other riders by limiting personal items.
- No offensive language, gestures, threats, or violence will be tolerated.

REGLAS/AVISOS PARA MONTAR EN TRANSITO

- Asegúrese de proveer por lo menos 24 horas de aviso para coordinar un viaje.
- Los niños menores de 16 años deben estar acompañados por un padre o tutor. Los asientos para niños deben ser proporcionados por un adulto para niños menores de 5 años.
- Use los cinturones de seguridad en todo momento.
- Tenga listo el pago exacto en efectivo al abordar.
- Sea cortés y respetuoso con los otros pasajeros limitando artículos personales.
- No se tolerará ningún lenguaje ofensivo, gestos, amenazas o violencia.

Transportation Options in Southern Georgia




Southern Georgia Regional Commission
229-333-5277 — www.sgrc.us
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia Department of Human Services

TRANSIT IN SOUTHERN GEORGIA

- Human Services Coordinated Transportation**
 - Department of Family and Children Services clients should contact their local county office listed at www.dhcs.dhsa.georgia.gov/region-11.
 - Department of Behavioral Health
 - 229-671-6174 (Lowndes); 229-896-4559 (Cook); 229-391-2301 (Tift); 912-449-7100 (Union clients).
 - If you believe you qualify for Area Agency on Aging transportation services, please call 1-888-732-4464.
- Medicaid Beneficiaries**
 - To schedule transportation, call LogistCare at 1-888-224-7985.
- County-Operated Public Transportation Systems Providers and Rates**

County	Provider	Phone	Cash Rate	Hours
Bacon	MIDS	912-632-6300	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Ben Hill	RMS	229-426-7433	\$3 each way	M-F 8:00a-6:00p
Berrien	MIDS	229-686-7433	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Brantley	MIDS	912-462-8726	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Brooks	MIDS	229-316-2153	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Cook	MIDS	229-896-8726	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Lowndes	MIDS	229-316-2153	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Pierce	MIDS	912-449-1825	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Tift	Tift Co.	229-382-8438	\$2<3 mi; \$3 3-5 mi; \$4-5 mi	M-F 8:00a-5:00p
Turner	MIDS	229-567-3400	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Ware	MIDS	912-283-7800	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p

For further questions or comments about transportation options in Southern Georgia, please contact the Regional Commission's Valdosta office at 229-333-5277.

TRÁNSITO EN EL SUR DE GEORGIA

- Servicios Humanos de Transporte Coordinado**
 - Los clientes del Departamento de Servicios para Familias y Niños deben comunicarse con la oficina local del condado en www.dhcs.dhsa.georgia.gov/region-11.
 - Departamento de Salud del Comportamiento
 - 229-671-6174 (Lowndes); 229-896-4559 (Cook); 229-391-2301 (Tift); 912-449-7100 (Clientes Unión).
 - Si usted cree que califica para los servicios de transporte de Agencia de Área para el Envejecimiento, llame al 1-888-732-4464.
- Beneficiarios de Medicaid**
 - Para programar el transporte, llame a LogistCare al 1-888-224-7985.
- Sistemas de transporte público operados por el condado**
 - Lo siguiente muestra el transporte público rural disponible en el sur de Georgia:

RECURSOS DE PLANIFICACIÓN

La Comisión Regional del Sur de Georgia, según lo solicitado por el Departamento de Transporte de Georgia y los gobiernos locales, prepara Planes de Desarrollo de Tránsito que exploran nuevos servicios de tránsito y/o expansión de los servicios actuales. Estos planes se utilizan como una guía para que los gobiernos locales y los planificadores del transporte público proporcionen transporte en toda la región, lo que da a miles de jinetes acceso a empleos, citas médicas, lugares de compras y otras oportunidades. Visite www.sgrc.us para los planes de tránsito patrocinados por SGRC.

ADA Analysis

In Clinch County, 321 persons have an ambulatory difficulty, meaning they have difficulty moving about under their own power. The population 65 years and older accounts for 45% of those individuals with an ambulatory difficulty, however, this is just one type of the 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 to transport them. Oftentimes residents with disabilities have a greater reliance on someone else providing transportation for them.

Table 5. Clinch County Ambulatory Characteristics by Age

AGE	Total Population	Ambulatory Residents	Ambulatory Residents (%)
Under 18 Years	1217	0	0.0%
18 to 34 Years	1396	68	4.9%
35 to 64 Years	2484	96	3.9%
65 to 74 Years	628	46	7.3%
75 years and over	341	111	32.60%

4. The resources available to Clinch County and overall costs.

Clinch County would provide materials in other languages for the potential riders should a Clinch County Transit system be implemented; however, based on the information provided here, there does not appear to be a great need at this time that would justify the overall costs of providing these services to residents. As noted previously, it is recommended that potential riders utilize the

SGRC website at www.sgrc.us, where a Google Translator can provide for basic information on the service to LEP individuals.

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 for the whole family. This analysis consists of these factors and others to estimate the possible demand for rural public transit trips within Clinch County. The information is based on the use of transit systems information from peer counties that are similar in size and population.

This section provides data and analysis of certain characteristics of Clinch County. Clinch County is a county with a growing population (see figure 4), a high number of commuters (many who find/use other modes of transportation), a low median income and relatively low household income in comparison to other peer counties. Clinch County also has a significant poverty percentage. All of these factors suggest that the demand and the need for public transit may increase as these characteristics increase. These traits also suggest that Clinch County could potentially benefit from a rural transit system and should give full consideration to one.

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 Clinch County.

The analysis shows there is demand for rural public transit in Clinch County (not POS - Purchase of Service trips). Overall, there is an estimated need for 89,200 trips annually in Clinch County based on the communities' mobility gap. This number is 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 10,200 trips annually for the general rural public transit (not including POS or human service agency trips). Once POS trips are inserted into the equation, there is a total demand of 19,700 trips annually for the general public plus POS trips. It is also worth noting that there is a potential 4,700 POS that could be acquired from Medicaid trips. Currently; Clinch County is providing private trips to individuals via AGING and DFCS services.

[illegible]

Figure 6. Output Screen from Rural Transit Demand Tool

[illegible]

Figure 7. Peer Transit Systems Comparison Worksheet

Peer Data Worksheet									
Input Data from Peer Transit Systems or Existing Transit Service									
Name of Peer System	Clinch	Turner	Brantley						
Population of Area	6,727	7,961	18,731						
Size of Area Served (Square Miles)	800	285	442						
Annual Vehicle-Miles of Service Provided	0	64,384	50,129						
Annual Vehicle-Hours of Service Provided	0	6,608	2,100						
Service Type (Fixed Route, Route-Deviation, Demand-Response)		Demand-Response	Demand-Response						
Number of One-Way Trips Served per Year	0	11,971	1,944						
Degree of Coordination with Other Carriers (Low, Medium, High)		Low	Low						

Results of Peer Data Comparison		Annual Vehicle-miles		Annual vehicles-hours
Input Data for My System:		Population	57,257	4,354
Observed Trip Rates		Demand Estimate Based On:		
Peer Values		Population	Annual Vehicle-miles	Annual vehicles-hours
Trips per Capita				
Maximum	1.5	6,038		
Average	0.5	2,013		
Median	0.1	403		
Minimum				
Trips per Vehicle-Mile				
Maximum	0.2		11,451	
Average	0.1		5,726	
Median	0.1		5,726	
Minimum				
Trips per Vehicle-Hour				
Maximum	1.8			7,837
Average	1.4			6,096
Median	1.4			6,096
Minimum	0.9			3,919
Values expected for my system				
Maximum		6,038	11,451	7,837.0
Average		2,013	5,726	6,096.0
Median		403	5,726	6,096.0
Minimum				3,919.0

Peer Data Worksheet									
Input Data from Peer Transit Systems or Existing Transit Service									
Name of Peer System	Clinch	Stewart							
Population of Area	6,727	5,791							
Size of Area Served (Square Miles)	800	459							
Annual Vehicle-Miles of Service Provided	0	50,083							
Annual Vehicle-Hours of Service Provided	0	2,069							
Service Type (Fixed Route, Route-Deviation, Demand-Response)		Demand-Response							
Number of One-Way Trips Served per Year	0	3,835							
Degree of Coordination with Other Carriers (Low, Medium, High)		Low							

Results of Peer Data Comparison		Annual Vehicle-miles		Annual vehicles-hours
Input Data for My System:		Population	50,083	2,069
Observed Trip Rates		Demand Estimate Based On:		
Peer Values		Population	Annual Vehicle-miles	Annual vehicles-hours
Trips per Capita				
Maximum	0.7	2,818		
Average	0.3	1,208		
Median	0.3	1,208		
Minimum				
Trips per Vehicle-Mile				
Maximum	0.1		5,008	
Average	0.1		5,008	
Median	0.1		5,008	
Minimum	0.1		5,008	
Trips per Vehicle-Hour				
Maximum	1.9			3,931
Average	1.9			3,931
Median	1.9			3,931
Minimum	1.9			3,931
Values expected for my system				
Maximum		2,818	5,008	3,931.0
Average		1,208	5,008	3,931.0
Median		1,208	5,008	3,931.0
Minimum			5,008	3,931.0

Capital Equipment Cost and 5-Year Budget Estimates

A rural transit system includes capital expenses and operating expenses. Table 10 shows the estimated expenses for several vehicles that would be included in capital expenses. Given the growth of Clinch County's population and the above Transit Need/Demand Analysis, vehicles may be enough to operate a public transit system. However, if demand significantly increased in a short time period, six vehicles may need to be considered for purchase to improve efficiency. Clinch County would also need to consider purchasing a mobile radio, a computer, a printer, and essential software as well.

Necessary capital equipment is eligible for funding under the Section 5311 grant program. There is a 10% local funding minimum required for qualified capital equipment. However, this amount may be higher depending on the availability of state and federal funds. The chart below provides the average cost of Demand Response Vehicles based on the GDOT FY17 Rural Transit Budget Worksheet.

Table 6. Capital Equipment Cost Estimates

Capital Equipment	2017
Shuttle Van	\$41,066.92
Shuttle Van w/ Lift	\$44,712.92
Shuttle Bus	\$46,528.92
Shuttle Bus w/ Lift	\$48,947.92
Mobile Radio	\$2,000.00
Computer, Printer and Software	\$3,200.00

The following 5-Year Capital and Operating Budget estimates are based on current costs of services with an inflation rate of 2.32% per year in order to give an approximate value of what public transit services may cost in the next few years. Clinch County does not currently have public transit so the estimates provided are based on the Transit Need/Demand Analysis for Clinch County, as well as, Ware and Tift County data, which is comparable to Clinch County in population and other demographic areas.

There are two different budget options presented in the figures below, the first represents public transit service operated without Purchase of Service (POS) funds and the second, represents public transit service with POS funds. Both options begin with 5 vehicles during the first three years, and adds one more vehicle in the 4th year of service. The budget summary shows that the local contribution can range from \$4,000 per year (with POS contracts) in the 2018 fiscal year to \$151,000 per year without POS contracts in the 2021 fiscal year.

Figure 8. 5-Year Capital and Operating Cost with POS Estimates

Operator: Clinch County/TPO
Date: 10/24/2018

With POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2020-2021

Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 31,263.55	23%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 135,286.60	77%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
Net Operating Total	\$ 166,550.14	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	9,950
Total Trips Projected	19,900
Percentage of Public Trips	51.26%
POS Trips	9,700
POS Amount	\$ 80,822.30
Rate Per Trip	\$ 8.33
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 17.17
Total Public Trips	10,200
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 15.27
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ -

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 166,550.14	\$ 83,275.07	\$ -	\$ 83,275.07
POS Local Funds	\$ 80,822.30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 80,822.30
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ 90,600.00	\$ 72,480.00	\$ 13,590.00	\$ 4,530.00
Budget Grand Total	\$ 176,327.84	\$ 155,755.07	\$ 13,590.00	\$ 6,982.77

Operator: Clinch County/TPO
Date: 10/24/2018

With POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2025-2026

Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 34,267.34	23%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 148,284.89	77%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
Net Operating Total	\$ 182,552.23	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	11,148.11
Total Trips Projected	22,296
Percentage of Public Trips	51.26%
POS Trips	10,868
POS Amount	\$ 90,642.91
Rate Per Trip	\$ 8.34
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 16.80
Total Public Trips	11,428
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 14.33
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ -

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 182,552.23	\$ 91,276.11	\$ -	\$ 91,276.11
POS Local Funds	\$ 90,642.91	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 90,642.91
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ 90,600.00	\$ 72,480.00	\$ 13,590.00	\$ 4,530.00
Budget Grand Total	\$ 182,509.31	\$ 163,756.11	\$ 13,590.00	\$ 5,163.20

Figure 9. 5-Year Capital and Operating Cost without POS Estimates

Operator: Clinch County/TPO
Date: 10/24/2018

Without POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2025-2026

Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 34,267.34	23%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 148,284.89	77%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
Net Operating Total	\$ 182,552.23	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	3,641.50
Total Trips Projected	7,283
Percentage of Public Trips	100.00%
POS Trips	
POS Amount	
Rate Per Trip	#DIV/0!
POS Fully Allocated Costs	#DIV/0!
Total Public Trips	11,428
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 7.99
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ -

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 182,552.23	\$ 91,276.11	\$ -	\$ 91,276.11
POS Local Funds		\$ -	\$ -	
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Grand Total	\$ 182,552.23	\$ 91,276.11	\$ -	\$ 91,276.11

Operator: Clinch County/TPO
Date: 10/24/2018

Without POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2020-2021

Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 31,263.55	23%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 135,286.60	77%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
Net Operating Total	\$ 166,550.14	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	3,250.00
Total Trips Projected	6,500
Percentage of Public Trips	100.00%
POS Trips	-
POS Amount	
Rate Per Trip	#DIV/0!
POS Fully Allocated Costs	#DIV/0!
Total Public Trips	10,200
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 8.05
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ -

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 166,550.14	\$ 82,148.50	\$ -	\$ 82,148.50
POS Local Funds		\$ -	\$ -	
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Grand Total	\$ 166,550.14	\$ 82,148.50	\$ -	\$ 82,148.50

Conclusions

Clinch 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 Clinch County search for opportunities to provide transit to residents. Although the current data does not warrant the need for a fully implemented demand response rural public transportation system, officials should consider collaboration with local groups or border counties that have a public transportation system in place to help provide transportation for Clinch County residents through collaboration with neighboring counties that have a public transportation system in place. This option may be more beneficial and financially feasible than a single county public transportation system.

Single County Public Transit System

There are two service delivery options for a demand response rural transit system, and choosing what works best for Clinch County (by evaluating the options) will ensure the success of the system. The first option is having the system managed by the county. This service delivery option would allow Clinch County to manage the public transit service and everything related to the transit system, including rate and hours of service. The second service delivery option would allow Clinch County to contract with a third party transit operator, a private company that administers the operation of the transit system. Many of the counties with public transit systems have chosen this option and contracted with the company MIDS Transportation Inc. In counties where the transit system is operated by MIDS, one must call 24 hours in advance to schedule a ride, the rate is \$3.00 for the local area (0-10 miles) per stop. If the trip is local but 11 miles and over, it will cost the base rate of (\$3.00) + \$0.50 per mile. They also offer a 50% discount to Seniors 65 and over and to children 5 and younger.

Regional Public Transit System

A third option for Clinch County to consider is to join an 18 county regional system or a mini-regional system. The SGRC has been approached by GDOT to consider administering and operating this type of system. Should a regional system be implemented, each county would have to decide to opt in or out of the system, opting in would then obligate that 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 Clinch 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 Clinch County residents by creating access to employment, healthcare services, shopping, and other general needs. 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 Clinch 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.