



***THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
2017 – 2022***



PREPARED BY:

**Three Rivers Regional Commission
www.threeriversrc.com**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Introduction.....	1
Planning Process.....	3
Stakeholder Committee Meetings.....	3
Stakeholder Interviews.....	3
Economic Resiliency.....	3
Public and Stakeholder Involvement.....	3
Three Rivers Regional Commission Regional Overview.....	5
Background and Executive Summary.....	5
Map #1 TRRC Region.....	6
Regional Economy.....	7
Demographics.....	9
Map #2 TRRC Economic Development Cluster.....	13
Transportation.....	22
Regional Vision, Goals, and Strategies	23
Regional Vision.....	23
SWOT Analysis.....	23
Human Factors	24
Local Assets.....	25
Necessary Infrastructure	26
Business Environment	27
Regional Goals and Strategies.....	28
Plan of Action.....	33
TRRC Priority Projects.....	34
Performance Measures	37
Appendix	38
Public Notice.....	39
Resolution of Adoption.....	40
Agendas and Sign-in Sheets.....	41

SWOT Analysis Summary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

The Three Rivers Regional Commission and the Planning Staff would like to thank the members of the Strategic Advisory (Stakeholder) Committee for their valuable service in the development of this plan. We also acknowledge and appreciate the participation and contributions, large or small, of everyone involved in the development of this plan.

Ms. Carrie Barnes, Economic Development Consultant with Georgia EMC, provided the strategic planning and technical assistance with the SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) Analysis. The Planning Staff would like to offer its gratitude to Ms. Barnes.



INTRODUCTION

The Three Rivers Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a purposeful and well-strategized plan developed for the TRRC Economic Development District (TREDD). The Three Rivers Regional Commission Council is designated the CEDS Strategy Committee. This governing body consists of local elected officials and private sector representatives from each member government the Three Rivers Regional Commission's counties and cities, as well as statewide appointees from the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House. The Planning staff solicited and selected the membership of the Stakeholder Committee.

The Three Rivers Regional Commission is a multi-county organization consisting of 10 counties and 43 municipalities. Some of the responsibilities of the regional commission include the following:

- Implementation of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.
- Administration of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA).
- Administration of the Workforce Investment Act.

The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) continues to provide grant assistance outreach to its local governments and the private sector through the various Economic Development Administration (EDA) Programs and other federal and state agencies to encourage communities with creative and viable development projects to apply for available program assistance. These projects will provide jobs and economic stability in the TRRC Economic Development District (TREDD).

This document has been prepared by the Three Rivers Planning Staff, in part, to continue to meet the prerequisite for the Three Rivers Regional Commission's designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) under the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Three Rivers Regional Commission has continued to qualify for EDA assistance under its public works, economic adjustments and planning programs. The CEDS was prepared according to the updated rules and policies.

The success of this CEDS relies on the following:

- An analyzation of local conditions, identification of problems and opportunities, define the vision and goals of the area, design strategies to accomplish goals, coordination of activities to implement strategies, and evaluate the process.

- Plan leads to the formulation and implementation of a program that creates jobs, raises income levels, diversifies the economy, and improves the quality of life, while protecting the environment;
- A planning process designed to guide economic growth of an area. It provides a mechanism for coordinating the efforts of individuals, organizations, local governments and private industry concerned with economic development in the region. The CEDS is the result of a continuous economic development planning process, developed with broad-based and diverse community participation;
- Plan is accessible and used by the general public, government decision-makers and business leaders to understand the regional economy and to make decisions that lead to its improvement. Each CEDS is unique and reflects the challenges and opportunities facing the region.

PLANNING PROCESS

Stakeholder Committee Meetings

On July 26th and August 16th 2017, the CEDS Stakeholder Committee met to discuss economic trends across the region to update the five-year economic development strategy for the TRRC Region. From the trends discussion, the Committee listed strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats relative to the region. The results were arranged in four broad categories that include Human Factors, Local Assets, Necessary Infrastructure, and Business Environment.

The CEDS Stakeholder Committee also created priorities specific to the opportunities and weaknesses, which were used to develop the regional goals and strategies.

Stakeholder Interviews

Regional commission staff followed-up these meetings with one-on-one interviews with stakeholders on the CEDS Stakeholder Committee.

Input gathered during the public meetings and interviews is reflected in the SWOT Analysis and regional goals and strategies listed in the next section.

Economic Resiliency

The U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires that each region's CEDS address economic resiliency. As noted by EDA, "establishing economic resilience in a local or regional economy requires the ability to anticipate risk, evaluate how that risk can impact key economic assets, and build a responsive capacity." Members of the CEDS committees were encouraged to consider economic resiliency throughout the SWOT analysis and during the process of developing the region's goals and strategies. Each community in Three Rivers has prepared a *Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan*, which is updated every five years, discussing the threats posed by natural and man-made disasters. These plans focus on preparation for, mitigation of, and response to disasters, including events that could cause severe economic disruptions.

Public and Stakeholder Involvement

The Three Rivers Regional Commission actively sought input from community leaders and economic development professionals during the development of the 2017 CEDS Update. Input was received during meetings of the CEDS Stakeholder Committee, CEDS Strategy Committee, and stakeholder interviews.

Members of the CEDS Stakeholder Committee were selected to represent broad community participation throughout Three Rivers. Although not everyone was able to attend each meeting,

sectors represented include agriculture, education, labor, workforce boards, utilities, nonprofits, local government, tourism, economic development, and the private sector.

Community participation was encouraged throughout the process with meeting notices sent to local and regional media and placed at the Turin Town Hall, where the meetings were held.

A draft of this plan was distributed and posted on the TRRC website for public comment and review on October 20, 2017 before final plan adoption by the CEDS Strategy Committee. Any comments received will be noted in the final plan.



THREE RIVERS REGIONAL OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

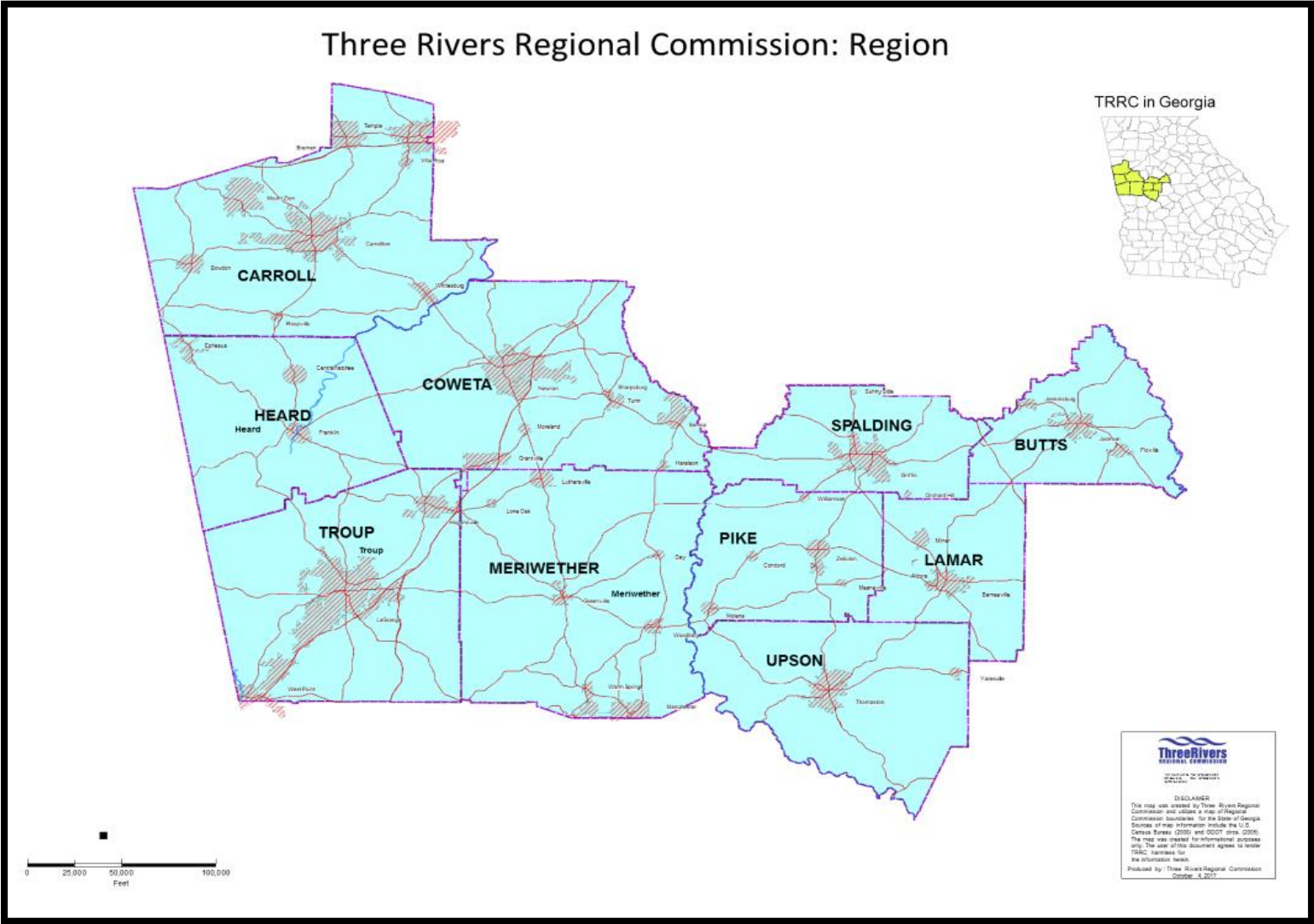
The purpose of a CEDS is to initiate and continue to sustain our local planning and implementation processes which create jobs, foster stability, diversify economies and improve living conditions in the region. The CEDS is an active mechanism for coordinating economic development activities as a valuable tool for bringing focus to planning and development efforts of unique and diverse communities throughout the Region.

All 10 counties and 43 incorporated municipalities within the Three Rivers Economic Development District are included in CEDS and are eligible to seek funding under the TREDD designation for projects that have been outlined.

This document will serve as a roadmap to diversify and strengthen the regional economy of Butts, Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Lamar, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Troup, and Upson Counties. The CEDS will guide federal and state investment priorities and funding sources and delineate lead organizations' responsibilities for execution of the CEDS while bringing together public and private sector leaders and decision-makers.

The document presents a unique opportunity to align and bring together several important state, regional and local economic development initiatives through an integrated, synergistic and results-oriented approach to economic development planning and implementation. The TRRC Planning Staff undertook an aggressive pro-active approach during the preparation of this document by soliciting and engaging external assistance to facilitate the SWOT analysis that is the foundation of the document.

Map #1 - TRRC Region



REGIONAL ECONOMY

Economic Development Portfolio

The Three Rivers Regional Commission region has grown into a vibrant multi-cultural region, with an emerging role in the international economy. One of the most pressing issues facing the region is consistent high poverty and unemployment rates. The region has experienced quite a few DRI's (Development of Regional Impact). The CEDS is consistently reviewed, referenced in DRI analysis and reports, and submitted to the highest elected official in the local municipality where the project is being developed.

What is Economic Development?

Economic Development means a vitalized local economy with better job opportunities, a healthier commercial tax base, fewer commercial vacancies and the retention of a wide variety of places for entertainment, to eat, shop, and bank. Continued economic growth in the Three Rivers Economic Development District means all of these things. Three River's economic development objectives encompass growth and commercial development for local businesses creating jobs, and compatibility among existing and new uses leading to a higher quality of life for the residents in the region.

DRI (Development of Regional Impact)

DRIs are likely to have regional effects beyond the local government jurisdiction in which they are located. The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorized the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish procedures for review of these large-scale projects. These procedures are designed to improve communication between affected governments and to provide a means of revealing and assessing potential impacts of large-scale developments before conflicts relating to them arise. At the same time, local government autonomy is preserved since the host government maintains the authority to make the final decision on whether a proposed development will or will not go forward.

The Three Rivers Regional Commission determines and reviews all DRIs in its region. We consider DRIs as an integral part and contributor to the economy in the region, and the CEDS is heavily used, along with all TRRC planning documents, to evaluate the DRIs. Three Rivers Regional Commission has a page dedicated for DRI on its website, and it is easily accessible by this link <http://www.threeriversrc.com/planning-dri.php>.

Kia Motors Manufacturing is one of the most successful growth stories the auto industry has experienced. The brand's success is due, in large part, to its U.S. assembly plant – Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia (KMMG) – that has produced over 1.5 million vehicles in West Point,

Georgia since 2009. That state-of-the-art plant – which represents an investment of more than \$1.1 billion – is responsible for the creation of more than 14,000 jobs in West Point and the Three Rivers Region.

The Three Rivers Economic Development District (TREDD) has a strong network of historic downtowns and main streets, which provide amenities, jobs, and luxuries that residents desire for a high quality of life. Employment centers are located in all ten counties.

The development and industrial authorities within the region play an integral role in the local and regional economic development. It helps city leaders support workforce development by connecting economic development efforts with workforce development and working with the business community to identify talent needs, and convening stakeholders to align disparate activities toward a common goal.

Another major addition to the TREDD is the Sentury Tire Plant. Sentury is a Chinese manufacturer of tires for cars and aviation. The company was ranked in 2015 as the 50th largest tire maker in the world by sales according to the trade publication, Tire Business. The company's original and primary manufacturing site is located in its hometown of Qingdao, near the Qingdao Liuting International Airport. Its other manufacturing facility is in Thailand where it opened a factory in 2015 with a capacity to produce 12 million units per year. The Chinese tire manufacturer entered a multi-million dollar deal with the State of Georgia to move to the City of LaGrange, Georgia initially adding 1,000 jobs to the region.

In addition, to Troup County, both Coweta and Butts Counties have seen some major proposed industrial developments in the region. In Coweta County, the Orchard Hill Business Park will be the location of several new large scale business prospects. In Butts County, a Dollar General Distribution Center will be located near Interstate 75.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population

The overall population in the Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) area of Georgia has been on an upward trend. Since the 2000 Census, the region's population has grown by 20%. The estimated population for the region for the year 2016 was 510,721. When broken down by county, Carroll and Coweta Counties are growing at the highest rate. Three TRRC counties are currently experiencing a decrease in population which include Heard, Meriwether, and Upson. Much of the population is geographically dispersed and region remains mostly rural outside the population centers of Carrollton, Newnan, LaGrange, and Griffin. The region is projected to reach over 570,000 in population by the year 2025.

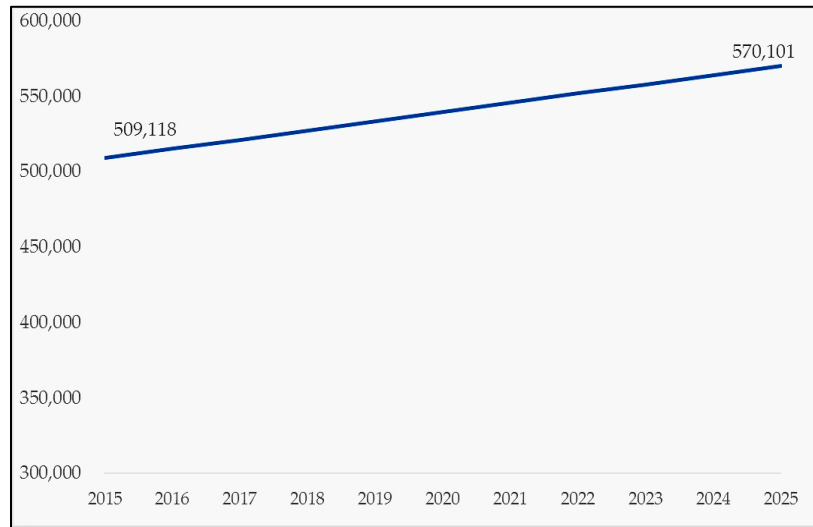
TABLE 1

Population Change				
County	2000	2010	2016	2010-2016
Butts	19,522	23,655	23,817	1.95%
Carroll	87,268	110,527	116,261	3.36%
Coweta	89,215	127,317	140,526	5.23%
Heard	11,012	11,834	11,487	-0.61%
Lamar	15,912	18,317	18,469	2.76%
Meriwether	22,534	21,992	21,074	-0.75%
Pike	13,688	17,869	17,941	0.81%
Spalding	58,417	64,073	64,806	1.51%
Troup	58,779	67,044	70,005	1.36%
Upson	27,597	27,153	26,335	-0.88%
TRRC	403,944	489,781	510,721	2.70%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

FIGURE 1

Three Rivers Region Short-Term Population Projections, 2015-2025



Source: Governor’s Office of Planning and Budget (2015).

Employment

According to the Three Rivers Regional Commission Workforce Development Board Local Plan 2016-2019, the ten-county region is economically and geographically diverse. The region encompasses three interstates, several population centers, and is adjacent to a large metropolitan area. The area’s economy is relatively diverse and includes several major industries including manufacturing, healthcare, and logistics. On the next page, Table 2 shows a high-level overview of the region’s industries. The largest percentage increase in jobs over the past ten years have been in educational services, administrative and support, waste management and remediation services, management of companies and enterprises, health care and social assistance, professional and scientific services, accommodation, and food service. The largest percentage decrease in jobs over the past ten years have been in crop and animal production, mining, quarrying, oil and gas extraction, construction, finance and insurance, real estate, rental and leasing. The most specialized industries, when compared to the United States as a whole, are manufacturing, utilities, administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services.

TABLE 2

Industry Snapshot				
Description	2006 Jobs	2015 Jobs	2006 - 2015	2006 - 2015% Change
Crop and Animal Production	1,547	749	798	52%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas	178	116	62	35%
Utilities	1,208	1,176	32	3%
Construction	13,310	9,191	4,119	31%
Manufacturing	29,905	29,094	811	3%
Wholesale Trade	5,225	5,417	192	4%
Retail Trade	20,662	22,006	1,344	7%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,607	4,015	408	11%
Information	3,144	2,600	544	17%
Finance and Insurance	4,481	3,456	1,025	23%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	1,967	1,600	367	19%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical	3,458	4,182	724	21%
Management of Companies and	886	1,371	485	55%
Administrative and Support and	10,550	16,003	5,453	52%
Educational Services	1,032	1,675	643	62%
Health Care and Social Assistance	16,097	21,253	5,156	32%
Arts, Entertainment, and	1,535	1,498	37	2%
Accommodation and Food Services	13,048	14,782	1,734	13%
Other Services (except Public	4,839	5,411	572	12%
Government	30,460	27,303	3,157	10%
TOTAL	167,249	173,379	6,130	4%

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

The table below shows the fastest growing industries in the region. The manufacturing sector has grown exponentially since the opening of KIA Motors Manufacturing in West Point, Troup County, Georgia. Historically, manufacturing has had a strong presence due to the region's textile industry. Since the 1990's, textiles have been replaced by the automotive sector of manufacturing. KIA and its related industrial suppliers create a distinctive economic development cluster in the southwestern part of the TRRC region. The economic cluster is shown on Map 2 on the following page.

As the population continues to age and proportion of the elderly increases, services geared towards that sector will increase as shown in Table 3, below.

TABLE 3

Top 10 Fastest Growing Industries, 2006-2015					
Description	2006 Jobs	2015 Jobs	2006 - 2015 Change	2006 - 2015 % Change	2015 Earnings Per Worker
Temporary Help Services	3,965	7,618	3,654	92%	\$24,527
Automobile Manufacturing	2	3,359	3,357	176,976%	\$81,344
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals	3,981	7,147	3,166	80%	\$66,695
Services for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities	671	1,885	1,214	181%	\$15,905
Full-Service Restaurants	5,127	6,142	1,014	20%	\$17,683
Warehouse Clubs and Supercenters	1,409	2,389	981	70%	\$30,339
Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores	2,988	3,881	892	30%	\$23,357
Other Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing	174	1,050	876	503%	\$56,848
Motor Vehicle Seating and Interior Trim Manufacturing	0	637	637	N/A	\$51,764
Corporate, Subsidiary, and Regional Managing Offices	852	1,360	509	60%	\$105,550

Source: Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.

Map #2 – TRRC Economic Development Cluster

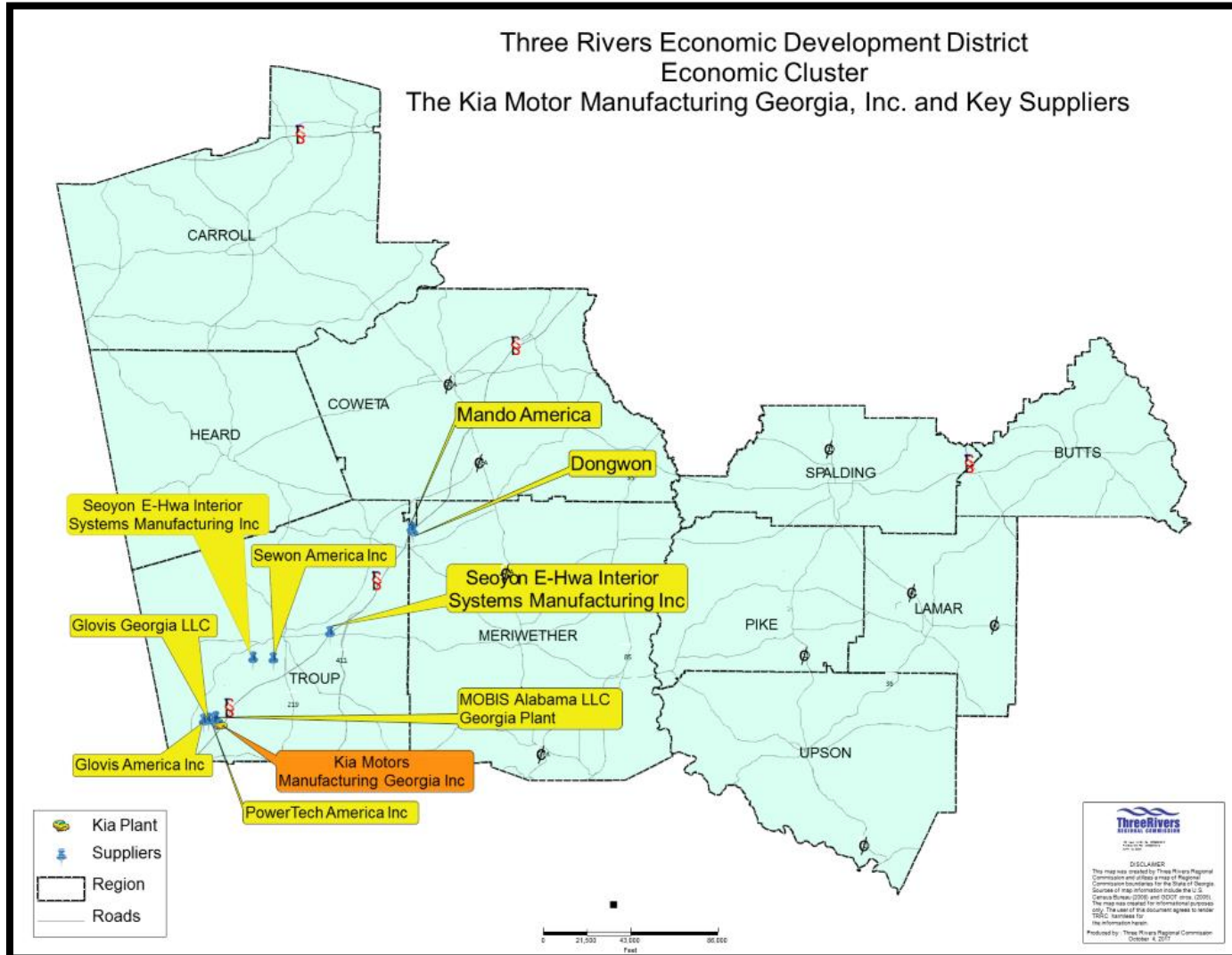
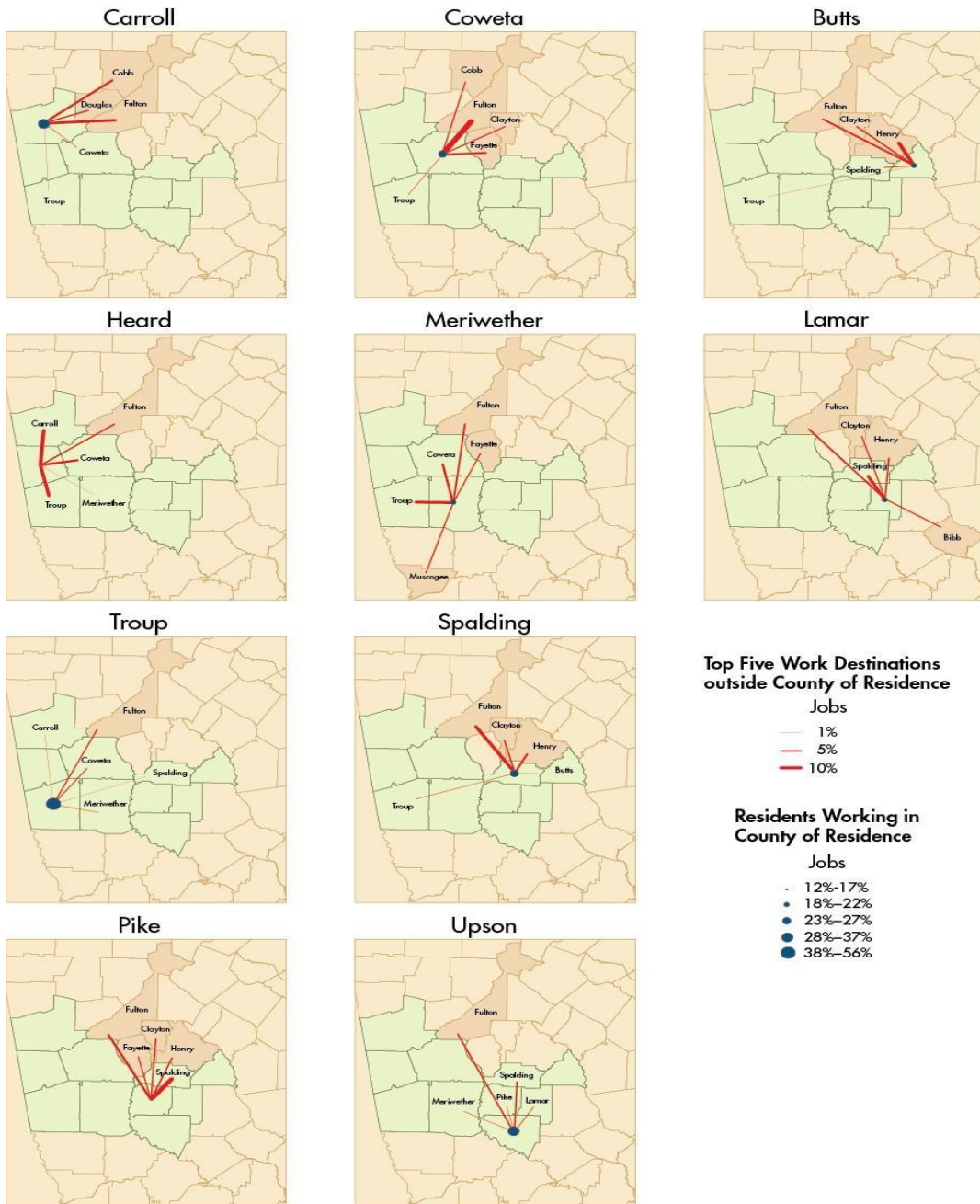


FIGURE 2

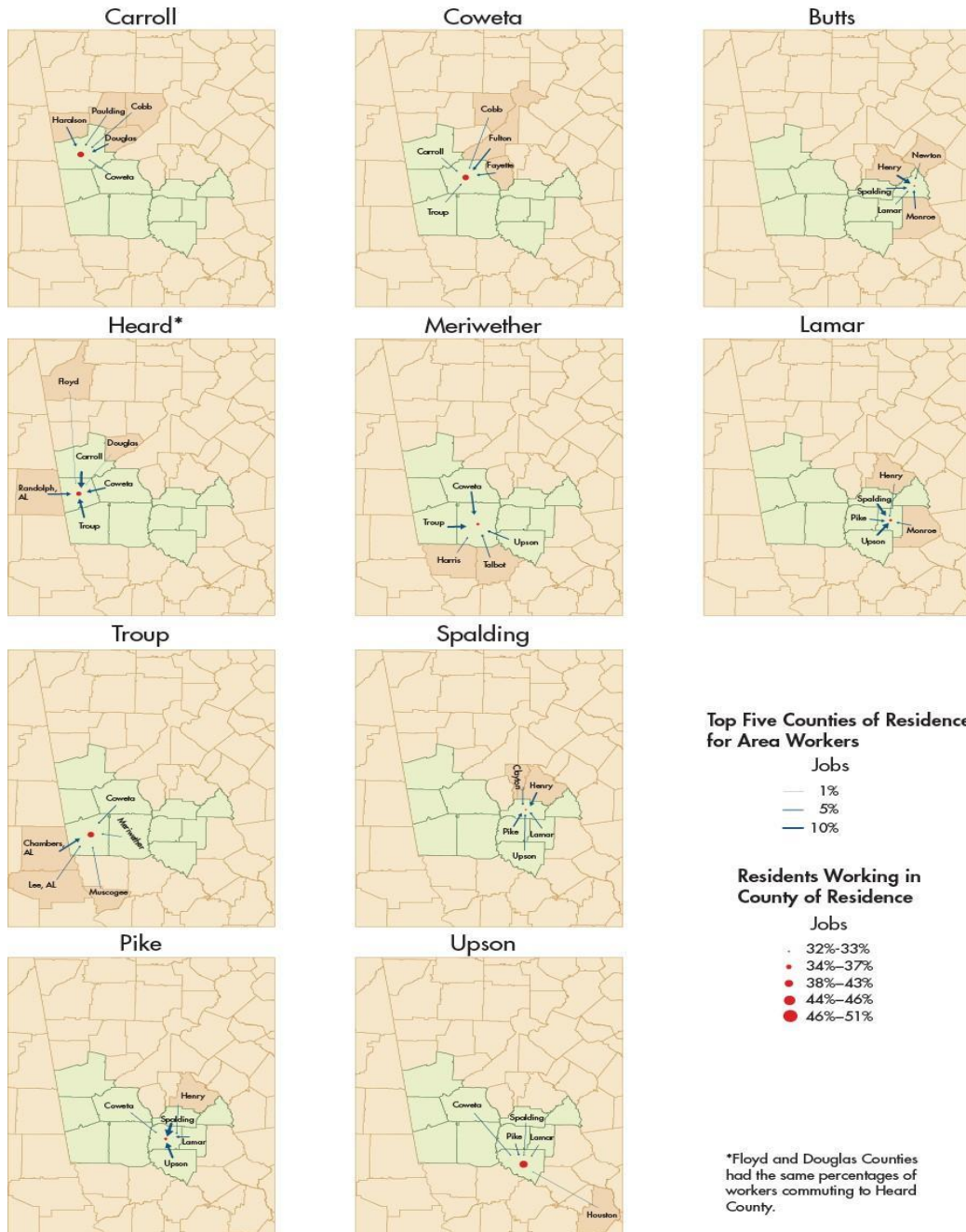
Three Rivers Region Commuting Patterns Outflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, Carl Vinson Institute of Government
 Three Rivers Workforce Development Board Local Plan Program Year 2016 - 2019

FIGURE 3

Three Rivers Region Commuting Patterns Inflow



Source: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap, Carl Vinson Institute of Government
 Three Rivers Workforce Development Board Local Plan Program Year 2016 - 2019

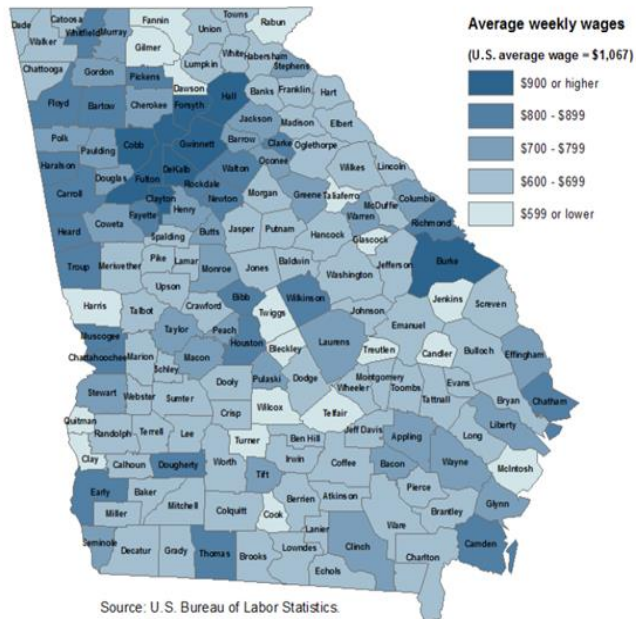
Table 4 shows the top 10 largest employers in the TRRC region. This includes a wide variety of employment from healthcare, retail, education, and manufacturing. Figure 4 displays geographically the average weekly wage across the state.

TABLE 4

Ten Largest Employers 2016
Homenurse, Inc.
Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc.
Southeastern Regional Medical Center
Southwire Company
Tanner Health System
University of West Georgia
Walmart
West Georgia Medical Center, Inc.
Williams Charters & Tours, LLC.
Yamaha Motor Manufacturing

Source: Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile updated September 2017.

FIGURE 4



The unemployment numbers as of August 2017 are found in Table 5, below. The rates in Coweta, Pike, and Troup Counties are now below the state average.

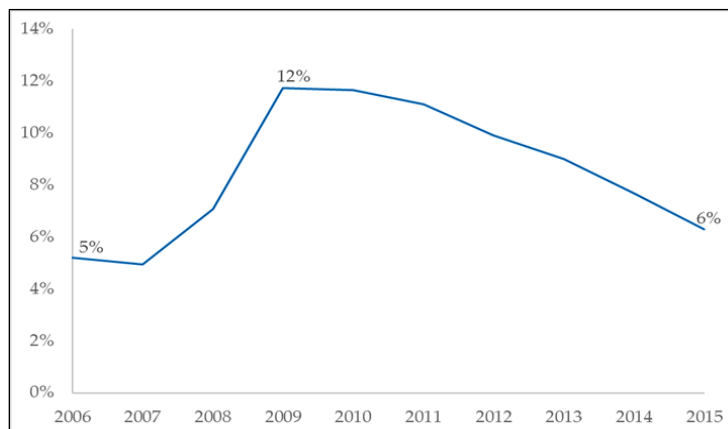
TABLE 5

Unemployment Rate	
County	August 2017
Butts	4.8%
Carroll	5.0%
Coweta	4.3%
Heard	5.1%
Lamar	5.6%
Meriwether	5.6%
Pike	4.4%
Spalding	5.8%
Troup	4.5%
Upson	5.6%
Region	4.9%
Georgia	4.7%

Source: GA Department of Labor

As seen in Figure 5, the unemployment rate spiked in 2009 but has returned to pre-recession levels. The unemployment rate for the TRRC region has decreased steadily since the recession, and is only 0.2% higher than the state overall.

FIGURE 5
Regional Unemployment Rate Trend, 2006-2015

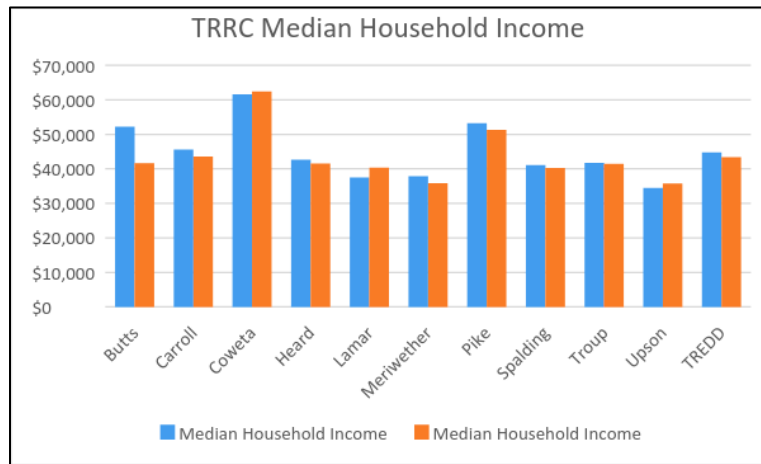


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Domestic Economy

Despite the growing economy and higher rates of employment, the median household income of the TRRC region was estimated to decrease from the 2010 census to the present. Coweta, Lamar, and Upson Counties were the only three to have increases median household income.

FIGURE 6



Source: American Community Survey, 2016

According to the American Community Survey, seven of ten counties within the TRRC region show a decrease in the median household income. Butts County had the most drastic change from the year 2010 to 2016, with a decrease of 25%. Lamar County had the highest increase within the region.

TABLE 6

Median Household Detailed Income			
County	2010	2016	Change
Butts	\$52,257	\$41,667	-25.42%
Carroll	\$45,559	\$43,586	-4.52%
Coweta	\$61,550	\$62,461	1.46%
Heard	\$42,685	\$41,525	-2.79%
Lamar	\$37,536	\$40,344	6.96%
Meriwether	\$37,845	\$35,832	-5.62%
Pike	\$53,213	\$51,338	-3.65%
Spalding	\$41,100	\$40,246	-2.12%
Troup	\$41,770	\$41,489	-0.68%
Upson	\$34,509	\$35,774	3.54%
TRRC	\$44,802	\$43,426	-0.82%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

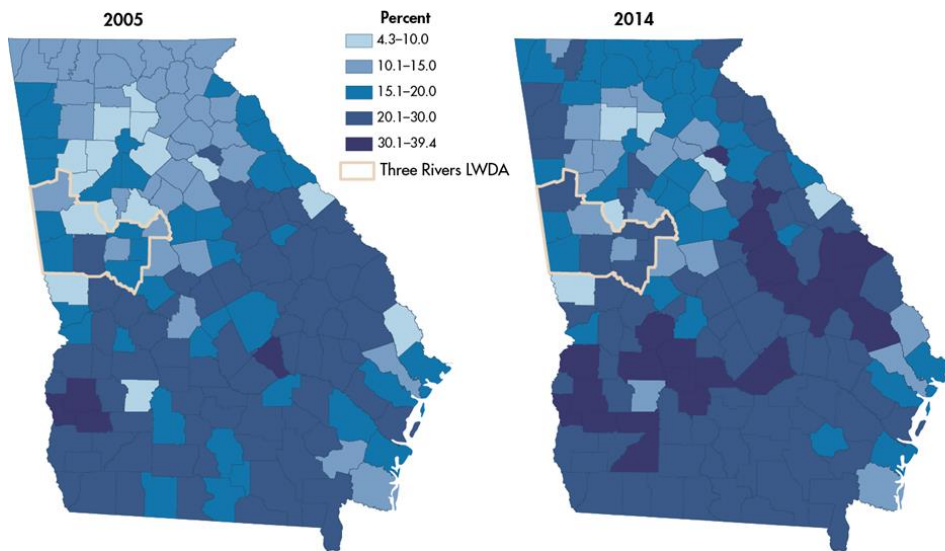
The rate of persons living below the poverty level is slightly higher in the TRRC region as compared to the State of Georgia, as seen in Table 7. Butts County and Lamar County saw the highest increase in poverty levels from the estimates in 2015 as compared to 2010. Heard County and Pike County saw slight decreases in the level of poverty. State poverty distribution can be found in Figure 7.

TABLE 7

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty 2010			
County	2010	2015	% Change
Butts	16.50%	20.80%	4.30%
Carroll	19.00%	20.70%	1.70%
Coweta	11.00%	13.20%	2.20%
Heard	21.30%	20.50%	-0.80%
Lamar	17.80%	22.10%	4.30%
Meriwether	20.10%	22.70%	2.60%
Pike	12.70%	12.20%	-0.50%
Spalding	22.50%	22.70%	0.20%
Troup	21.10%	21.40%	0.30%
Upson	21.30%	23.70%	2.50%
TRRC	17.02%	20.00%	3.00%
Georgia	15.70%	18.40%	2.70%

Source: US Census

FIGURE 7: Three Rivers Region Poverty Levels, 2005 and 2014



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, Carl Vinson Institute of Government.

Regional graduation rates, for the year 2016, can be seen below in Table 8. Within the TRRC region, Carrollton City School District had the highest graduation rate at 91.3% and Spalding County had the lowest at 73%. There is approximately a 25% percent difference from highest rate and the lowest.

TABLE 8

Educational Achievement

System Name	2016 Graduation Rate (%)
Butts	80.7
Carroll	84.7
Carrollton City	91.3
Coweta	84.7
Heard	84.5
Lamar	83.1
Meriwether	86.7
Pike	86.8
Spalding	73.0
Thomaston-Upson	84.5
Troup	76.9

Source: Georgia Department of Education, 2016, 4-year Graduation Rates by District

TABLE 9

Age and Educational Attainment

Institution Type	Percent of Total	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65+
Elementary	6.0%	3.2%	3.7%	3.3%	4.7%	17.3%
Some High School	14.7%	20.6%	13.4%	10.8%	13.9%	17.7%
High School Grad/GED	36.8%	39.3%	33.6%	38.2%	38.1%	33.7%
Some College	21.1%	30.3%	24.9%	21.0%	18.7%	14.7%
College Grad 2 Yr	5.5%	2.9%	6.8%	7.0%	6.1%	3.3%
College Grad 4 Yr	10.5%	3.7%	13.4%	13.3%	11.2%	7.8%
Post Grad Studies	5.4%	0.2%	4.3%	6.4%	7.4%	5.5%

Note: Totals are based on the portion of the labor force between ages 18 – 65+. The “Some College” category represents workers with less than two years of college and no degree.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau – 2010 Decennial Census. Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile, updated September 2017.

According to Table 9 on the previous page, 42.5% of the population pursued post-secondary education opportunities. The majority of the TRRC area population has not sought additional education beyond high school.

Table 10 lists the post-secondary educational institutions within the TRRC region. The region contains both liberal arts and technical colleges.

TABLE 10

Institution	Website
Breton-Parker-Newnan	http://www.bpc.edu/newnan/
University of West Georgia-Newnan	http://www.westga.edu/newnan/index.php
Mercer University-Newnan Center	http://workingadults.mercer.edu/location/newnan
Gordon State College	www.gdn.edu
LaGrange College	www.lagrange.edu
Point University	www.point.edu
West Georgia Technical College	www.westgatech.edu
Southern Crescent Technical College	www.sctech.edu
The University of Georgia-Griffin	https://www.griffin.uga.edu/
University of West Georgia	www.westga.edu

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

TRANSPORTATION

The TRRC Region has readily and easy accessibility to nearby major interstate highways, a major international airport, Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL), and an extensive rail freight infrastructure — all providing convenient access to markets worldwide. There is also access to regional airports such as Birmingham International Airport (BHM), Middle Georgia Regional Airport (MCN), Columbus Metropolitan Airport (CSG), and Montgomery Regional Airport (MGM). Local airports also serve the region.

Major transportation infrastructure within the TRRC region includes:

Highways:

- Interstates 20, 75, 85 and 185.
- Federal routes are US Hwy 29, 27, 78, 19, 41, 23, and 341. Hwy 27 is a four-lane corridor in west Georgia running north to Chattanooga, Tennessee and south to Tallahassee, Florida.
- State routes are Georgia Hwy 109, 219, 100, 16, 362, 190, 34, 54, 154, 113, 166, 61, 5, 70, 18, 92, and 155.

Rail Service:

- Full-service rail facilities are provided by CSX and Norfolk Southern.

Bus Service:

- Greyhound bus service.

Truck Lines:

- Interstate carriers total – 9.
- Intrastate carriers total – 30.
- Three local terminals serve the area.

Seaports:

- Port of Savannah, GA – 280 miles.
- Port of Mobile, AL – 270 miles.

TRRC has managed a Unified Transportation System (UTS) funded by the Georgia General Assembly and the State Department of Transportation. The TRRC UTS specifically provides transportation to the elderly, disabled, Medicaid recipients, and job-training program for low-income areas. This regional system serves as the monitor for any future upgrades for traditional public transit services in the region. The Planning Staff prepares the Transportation Development Plans (TDP) for local member governments. Transportation planning is essential and works hand in hand with any local government comprehensive and economic development plans. The plans provide a basic structure and overall goals for meeting long-term transportation needs.

REGIONAL VISION, GOALS, AND STRATEGIES

THE REGIONAL VISION

The Three Rivers Economic Development District hopes to increase regional prosperity by being a globally competitive, business-friendly region, comprised of healthy communities that sustain a high quality of life.

SWOT Analysis

The TRRC CEDS Stakeholder Committee conducted a SWOT Analysis to determine the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results were grouped into four broad categories:

1. Human factors:

Human factors are those influences that people and have on the region's overall economic health.

2. Local assets:

Local assets are the existing resources, which work to promote or hinder economic vitality.

3. Necessary infrastructure:

Necessary infrastructure is the physical resources needed to make economic activity happen.

4. Business environment:

Business environment involves the political and economic climate, which can determine economic vitality.

HUMAN FACTORS

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Workforce Development in higher education● Programs available to support all ages● Demographics help us qualify for grants● Progressive Senior Centers● Strong and affordable higher education● Educational collaboration	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Using our state legislators to champion our region● Communities can better utilize the services of the Regional Commission● Better promotion of the Move on When Ready program● Marketing the Technical Colleges to unskilled workers● Create a youth incubator● More youth leadership programs
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lots of unfilled jobs and skills gap● Poverty rate● Drugs and crime● Brain drain-youth population loss● Graduation rate needs improvement● Poor work ethic among youth● Tax burden on Senior Citizens● Leadership lacks experience or training● Limited assistance provided to seniors in rural areas● Getting veterans more involved in community leadership● More activities needed for youth● Citizen apathy	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lack of financial and educational resources for caregivers● Automation● Lack of educated workforce● Culture of dependency● Drug-related crime● Economic gap created by manufacturing loss

LOCAL ASSETS

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Presence of the film industry● Historic resources● Tourism● Sustainable agriculture● Healthcare facilities● Available housing● Ecotourism and nature tourism● Recreation and leisure activities● Quality of life● Small town feel	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Rail-Trail development could connect us to another region● Expansion of the trail system● Expand access to healthcare● Create more historic districts● Blue Trail development● Creative senior living● Promotion of film locations through Reel-Scout
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Lack of senior housing● Lack of affordable housing● Historic facilities are being demolished● Limited rural healthcare● RC is not fully utilized	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Environmental issues: air quality, climate change, clean water● Senior healthcare access● Senior living facilities● Loss of community character

NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Rail access● Multi-modal transportation● Regional bus program● Availability of water● Ample infrastructure available	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● More opportunities to improve transportation● Develop more rail spurs for local industries● Logistics: More freight access and trucking
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Broadband access● Lack of progress on Import/Export Highway● Access to transportation● Targeted planning for growth	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Freight and logistics bottlenecks● Uncontrolled growth and growth pressures

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Room for growth and expansion● Vibrant Downtowns● Access to Hartsfield Jackson airport● Diversity of industry● Near the port of Savannah● More time to be proactive with planning● Regional government cooperation● Strong support from state senators and representatives● Strong local leadership	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Close to Atlanta● Funding for infrastructure● Marketing-tell our story● Potential for KIA and Honda supplier growth● Expand the use of Public-Private partnerships● Form more regional committees● Location/proximity to major economic centers
<p style="text-align: center;">WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Branding of our region● Pro-growth vs. Anti-growth mentality● Need to create/develop Region 4 as a destination	<p style="text-align: center;">THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Rising health care costs● Financial burden of caring for aging population● Lack of revenue● Political and racial divisions that override similarities● Volatility of economic markets● Local elections● Court challenges to water resources-Water Wars● EPD restrictions on coal● Terrorism● Lack of regional cooperation● Corruption● Outside workforce competition with neighboring states

REGIONAL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The CEDS Stakeholder Committee identified goals and strategies that are specific to its SWOT Analysis and overall vision.

GOAL 1 Improve overall quality of life for Three River’s residents and enhance the Three Rivers Economic Development District’s fiscal well-being.

Strategy 1: Increase the District’s commercial and industrial tax base.

Strategy 2: Implement the economic development visions outlined in the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and continue to attract and encourage quality developments to enhance the appeal of the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

Strategy 3: Continue to attract and retain a skilled workforce to meet the needs of business and industry in the District.

GOAL 2 Increase job availability within the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

Strategy 1: Establish workforce development and economic development as a top strategy for the District and improve resident’s access to jobs.

Strategy 2: Match workforce development services to skill levels and needs for residents.

Strategy 3: Utilize and promote established workforce development programs to residents.

GOAL 3 Establish the Three Rivers Economic Development District as a premier, unique, natural, and cultural destination in the State of Georgia.

Strategy 1: Encourage municipalities to implement and maintain design guidelines.

Strategy 2: Capitalize and build on existing natural and cultural assets through historic preservation and environmental design.

Strategy 3: Identify opportunities to create passive and active recreation.

Strategy 4: Identify opportunities to create cultural gathering spaces, events, and experiences.

GOAL 4 Protect the region’s cultural and economic diversity.

Strategy 1: Maintain the diverse business representation on local main streets and downtowns.

Strategy 2: Expand economic opportunities for low/moderate income citizens by targeting reinvestment and utilizing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and other financial resources.

Strategy 3: Promote workforce development through job fairs, mobile career unit strategies and work-based learning programs.

GOAL 5 Promote quality development that implements the vision of the CEDS.

Strategy 1: Eliminate economic distress through revitalization and development.

Strategy 2: Encourage the highest and best use of Three River's limited and underdeveloped land.

Strategy 3: Encourage affordable housing for members of our community.

GOAL 6 Facilitate achieving economic development goals by the implementation of transportation Strategies.

Strategy 1: Continue to work with the State and local governments to implement existing transportation plans.

Strategy 2: Coordinate economic development decisions that support the goals of transportation efforts within the District.

Strategy 3: Explore multi-modal enhancements to the District.

GOAL 7 To support the expansion of Georgia's Export/Import Highway from I-85 in LaGrange to I-75 near to Macon.

Strategy 1: Collaborate with Troup, Meriwether and Upson Counties, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Georgia Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to evaluate parallel alternatives to I-20 that provide a direct route across the State of Georgia from the Port of Savannah to West Central Georgia.

Strategy 2: Conduct a corridor study to identify feasible locations and alignment alternatives for a multi-lane highway between LaGrange and Macon.

Strategy 3: Conduct public forums and other citizen involvement strategies to increase public awareness about the economic impact of Georgia's Export/Import Highway.

GOAL 8 Increase the number of business and industries that establish, expand and maintain operations within the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

- Strategy 1:** Promote the Three Rivers Economic Development District as a business-friendly community.
- Strategy 2:** Provide subsidies, tax breaks, loans or grants to help new businesses establish themselves and existing business grow within the Three Rivers Economic Development District.
- Strategy 3:** Attract and attain a variety of businesses providing goods and services in all neighborhoods.

GOAL 9 Strengthen the role and vitality of main streets and downtowns, and building regional commercial districts.

- Strategy 1:** Improve the aesthetics of public places and spaces, existing squares, commercial streets through the use of available financing.
- Strategy 2:** Adopt Tax Allocation Districts (TAD) and Enterprise and Opportunity Zones, and other programs to target Strategy projects or district improvements
- Strategy 3:** Develop the quality, vitality mix of businesses within all commercial districts, main streets, and downtown squares.
- Strategy 4:** Promote more intense development of regional centers where appropriate to promote employment and tax base for major industrial/commercial centers.
- Strategy 5:** Build on existing nodes to create more efficiency in the regional centers and minimize the impact on other areas.

GOAL 10 Implement and refine the plans for the District’s largest industrial areas and plan for the reuse of underutilized buildings.

- Strategy 1:** Seek funding for brownfield cleanup and hazardous waste removal.
- Strategy 2:** Analyze trade-offs between loss and retention of industrial uses.

GOAL 11 Continue to support the State of Georgia’s efforts to deepen the Savannah River to serve the Savannah Port.

- Strategy 1:** Interact with various state agencies and stakeholders to discuss the overall benefits of deepening the Savannah River channel to the Port of Savannah.
- Strategy 2:** Continuously educate our communities about the importance of the deepening of the Savannah River.
- Strategy 3:** Work with industries that seek to expand or establish a business that supports access to the Savannah Port.

GOAL 12 Establish program initiatives through public and private partnerships to improve soft skills of the District’s workforce.

Strategy 1: Educate students K-12 about the importance of soft skills.

Strategy 2: Encourage public agencies and private industries to work together to find innovative methods to teach everyday skills of running a business.

Strategy 3: Strengthen mentorships and apprenticeships programs that focus on soft skills and on-the-job training; in particular by strengthening the College & Career Academies in the District.

Strategy 4: Encourage private industries to commit to workforce development in various community programs that target school-aged children ages 8 to 16 and assist with the development of career pathways.

Strategy 5: Expand job training for Seniors in the District.

GOAL 13 Expand broadband to underserved rural communities and increase opportunities for business development.

Strategy 1: Continue the regional broadband taskforce to identify solutions to gain access to broadband in rural communities.

Strategy 2: Support state initiatives for broadband implementation and expansion.

Strategy 3: Seek various funding sources to help fund the expansion of broadband services to rural communities.

Strategy 4: Increase consumer awareness of the benefits of broadband access in rural areas.

GOAL 14 Expand Tourism opportunities within the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

Strategy 1: Seek opportunities that support natural and cultural tourism within the region.

Strategy 2: Seek opportunities to expand agri-tourism throughout the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

GOAL 15 Seek opportunities to expand movie and film production within the Three Rivers Economic Development District.

Strategy 1: Streamline permitting process.

Strategy 2: Identify a contact person from each local government to manage production companies.

Strategy 3: Develop a local database of shooting locations.

GOAL 16 Promote and expand agriculture in our District.

Strategy 1: Support agriculture education in our schools.

Strategy 2: Promote and support farmers markets.

Strategy 3: Promote extension agencies in our District.

Strategy 4: Support and encourage sustainable and local agriculture.

Strategy 5: Support local food in our schools.

GOAL 17 Expand and improve access to rural healthcare in our District.

Strategy 1: Seek funding for rural healthcare facilities.

Strategy 2: Expand mental health and geriatric facilities.

PLAN OF ACTION

The Three Rivers Regional Commission, the TRRC CEDS Committee, local governments and stakeholders are all responsible for implementation of the CEDS goals, strategies, and work program. The TRRC, utilizing Economic Development Administration Planning Investment funds, will assist and guide responsible parties in the implementation of the CEDS. In addition to EDA grant funds the TRRC will employ the following implementation tools in meeting the CEDS goals and projects:

- Georgia Department of Community Affairs Business Development Funds.
- Appalachian Regional Commission Grant Funds.
- US Department of Agriculture-Rural Development Economic Development Programs.
- One Georgia Authority.
- Georgia Recreational Trails Program.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Also, local and statewide initiatives such as Freeport Exemption, Job Tax Credits, Enterprise Zones and job training programs.

The action plan of the CEDS details the highest priority projects, both large and small, which are essential for continued work toward economic prosperity within the region. Many of the regional priorities are listed, along with several localized priorities within each county. Each of these action items should be realistically accomplishable by the Three Rivers Regional Commission or a local government of the region, provided that requisite support and cooperation are present from partner entities, such as boards of education or private businesses.

TABLE 11

TRRC Priority Projects

ENTITY AND DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	JOBS CREATED
Regional	Georgia Import/Export Highway	\$480,000,000	GDOT, Federal Highway Administration	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes the expansion of Georgia’s Import Export Highway Corridor which spans approximately 80 miles from I-85 near Lagrange to I-75 near Macon.			
Regional	West Georgia Broadband Project	\$1,000,000	West Central GA Broadband Authority	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to expand broadband services to underserved rural counties including Heard, Troup Meriwether, and Upson Counties.			
Butts County	West Butts Elevated Water Storage Tank	\$1,000,000	City of Jackson and Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to install 500,000 gallons elevated storage tank in southwest Butts County to provide for additional storage, pressure regulation, and fire protection to serve industrial and commercial properties on I-75 corridor.			
Butts County	Bucksnort Land Application Spray Fields	\$500,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to install five spray fields at the Butts County, et al. Water and Sewer Authority's land treatment facility to increase capacity from 550,000 gallons per day to 800,000 gallons per day. This will increase capacity to server industrial and commercial properties.			
Butts County	Fieldstone Multi-Use Development Water and Sewer Infrastructure	\$350,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to install water mains and appurtenances, gravity sewer and appurtenances, on-site lift station to serve an 80-acre multi-use commercial/residential development on Highway 16 near I-75.			

ENTITY AND DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	JOBS CREATED
Butts County	Hwy 16 Sewer-Expansion Project-East of I-75	\$750,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to complete sewer on HWY 16, east of I-75 to Colwell Road, both north and south of Hwy 16.			
Butts County	Riverview Business Park/Short Road Gravity Sewer	\$600,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to complete gravity sewer within Phase I of Riverview Business Park, running on Georgia HWY36 and then along Short Road. This will provide direct access to gravity sewer to commercial properties in the area.			
Butts County	Riverview Business Park-Business Park Drive	\$1,000,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to complete construction and paving of the main road in Phase 2 of the Riverview Business Park.			
Butts County	Water and Sewer Expansion to Serve Industrial Uses	\$500,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes the extension of water and sewer infrastructure to accommodate new industrial user's demands.			
Butts County	Hwy 42 Rail Spur	\$500,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to install a rail switch and new rail track, complete grading, and engineering to serve a potential industry with rail access.			
Carroll County	Industrial Property Infrastructure Expansion	\$15,000,000	Carroll County	600-1100
Project Description	This project involves developing an approximately 200-acre industrial mega-site, including extended water, sewer, gas and rail access.			
Carroll County	Corridor Improvement in Industrial Parks	\$40,000,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project involves corridor improvements to support industrial sites in Carrollton, Villa Rica, Temple and unincorporated Carroll County.			

ENTITY AND DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	JOBS CREATED
Carroll County	Temple Industrial Infrastructure Improvements	\$3,500,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project involves industrial improvements at Interstate 20 and GA Highway 113.			
Carroll County	Villa Rica Industrial Infrastructure Improvements	\$2,500,000	Carroll County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project involves industrial improvements at Interstate 20 and Liberty Road.			
Lamar County	Project Presto	\$750,000	Lamar County and City of Barnesville	80
Project Description	This project proposes to install new infrastructure for an existing industrial site.			
Lamar County	Gas Line Project	\$500,000	City of Barnesville	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to install a gas line for an existing industrial site.			
Spalding County	Project Red Star	\$100,00,000	City of Griffin and Spalding County	80
Project Description	The roughly 127,000 square foot facility will produce unique packaging solutions for food, medical, and electronic applications.			
Upson County	266 Technology Park Natural Gas Line Expansion	\$400,000	Thomaston-Upson IDA	To Be Determined
Project Description	The Thomaston-Upson IDA proposes to expand a six-inch natural gas line from Technology Park to a speculative building located at 266 Technology Parkway.			
Upson County	266 Technology Park Water Expansion	\$10,000	Thomaston-Upson IDA	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes the expansion of existing six-inch water lines from 266 Technology Park to the speculative building (approximately 450 feet).			

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Three Rivers Regional Commission staff will measure the success of CEDS goals and report outcomes to the TRRC Council, which serves as the CEDS Committee. Specific performance measures that may be used to measure success for identified goals include the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">HUMAN FACTORS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workforce Skills: Increased number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs. ● Educational Attainment: Increased number of residents that have high school diplomas, have graduated from College and Career Academies, and have received post-secondary certificates or degrees. ● Human Services: Increased number of programs that remove barriers to participation in the workforce. 	<p style="text-align: center;">LOCAL ASSETS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tourism and Film Industry: Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region. ● Quality of Life: Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region. ● Housing: Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce and senior housing
<p style="text-align: center;">NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Industrial Properties: Increase in ready to develop industrial parks and spec buildings. ● Transportation: Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development. ● High-Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in Three Rivers region. ● Traditional Infrastructure: Number of projects that provide or improve basic infrastructure. 	<p style="text-align: center;">BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improved Business Environment: Increase the number of programs supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors, enhanced access to capital, a number of new or improved business centers that act as incubators and accelerators providing business development services and space.

APPENDIX



Public Notice
October 20, 2017

Request for Public Comments for the Three Rivers Economic Development District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The Three Rivers Regional Commission has published a draft of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Plan for 2017 – 2022 for the Three Rivers Economic Development District (TREDD). This CEDS has been prepared, in part, to meet a prerequisite for designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) under the Economic Development Administration (EDA). The CEDS document is required to qualify for economic development assistance under its public works and economic adjustment grants, and most planning programs.

A thirty (30) day public comment review period is required prior to adoption and submittal of this report to the United States Department of Economic Development Administration.

PUBLICATION: The draft Three Rivers Regional Commission’s Economic Development Strategy 2017-2022 CEDS Plan is available for review on the Three Rivers Regional Commission website at <http://www.threeriversrc.com> Copies are also available upon request from the business address listed at the end of this notice.

DATE AND TIME: The public comment period for the CEDS is Wednesday, October 20, 2017 through November 17, 2017.

COMMENTS: Comments should be received no later than Friday, November 17, 2017 by 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. All comments may be submitted either by email at Jabraham@threeriversrc.com, via fax at 678-692-0513, or by mail to James A. Abraham, Sr., Three Rivers Regional Commission, Post Office Box 818, Griffin, GA 30224.

END OF NOTICE

DRAFT

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
ADOPTION RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been prepared for the Three Rivers Economic Development District;

WHEREAS, the 2017 – 2022 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan has been completed as required by the Economic Development Administration;

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been prepared in accordance with applicable provision of the Economic Development Administration under the Partners Planning Investment Program;

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy reflects the goals outlined by the local governments in the ten-county district of the Three Rivers Regional Commission; and

NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission, that the 2017 – 2022 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Plan be approved and adopted.

ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY of _____, 2017.

Peter Banks
Chairman

ATTEST:

Robert C. Hiett
Interim Executive Director

Three Rivers Regional Commission
CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting
July 26, 2017

AGENDA

1. Introductions-James Abraham, Planner-Three Rivers Regional Commission
2. SWOT Analysis Exercise-Carrie Barnes, Community Development Consultant-Georgia EMC
3. Establish next meeting date for the committee

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
 CEDS STRATEGIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
 CEDS 2018 -2023 UPDATES
 July 26, 2017 @ 10:00 a.m.
 Town of Turin – Town Hall

Sign-In Sheet

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE	SIGN
Tina Fryer	Marionette IDA	T.Fryer@marionetteida.com	704-672-3467	
Kim Duth	TRRC	kduth@threeriversrc.com	770-514-6026	
Seannie Brantley	TRRC	sbrantley@threeriversrc.com	678-692-0500	
James Abraham, Sr.	TRRC	jabraham@threeriversrc.com	678-692-0510	
Emily Rogers	Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging	erogers@threeriversrc.com	678-552-2850	
Robert Tolleson	Cowley Co	rtolleson@cowley.ga.gov	770-254-2635	
Bernice Horton	TRAC	ms@threeriversrc.com	770-358-1953	
Geel Weirant	Cowley County DA	gweirant@cowley.ga.us	770-324-1777	
Shanice Willis	1st Builders Ctry	frankie@trucksinc.net	770-312-7665	
Amy Golsby	Carroll Co	agolsby@carrollsherff.com	404-360-1128	
Indy Bush	Southwest Crescent	andy.bush@scetchedu.com	678-544-6231	
Paul Powell	TRAC	ppowell@threeriversrc.com	770-254-4506	

Three Rivers Regional Commission
CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting
August 16, 2017

AGENDA

1. Introductions-James Abraham, Planner-Three Rivers Regional Commission
2. Goals and Objectives-James Abraham, Planner-Three Rivers Regional Commission
3. Visioning-Kimberly Dutton, Planner-Three Rivers Regional Commission
4. Adjourn

Three Rivers CEDS – Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2018-2023
Strategic Advisory Committee Meeting
 August 16, 2017 @ 10:00 a.m.
 Town of Turin – Town Hall

Sign-In Sheet

NAME	ORGANIZATION	EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE	SIGN
Jane Fryer	Meriwether County Industrial Authority	jfryer@meriwethercountyga.gov	704/672-3467	
Emily Rogers	Three Rivers Area Agency on Aging (AAA)	erogers@threeriversrc.com	678 552 2850	
Robert Tolleson	Coweta County Planning Department			
Bennie Horton	Lamar County Board of Commissioners	BSTORTON6@yahoo.com	770 358-1983	
Greg Wright	Coweta County Development Authority	gwright@coweta.ga.us		
Frankie Willis	Butts County Historical Society	frankie@trucksinc.net		
Amy Goolsby	Carroll County	agoolsby@carrollsheriff.net	404-308 1128	
Andy Bush	Southern Crescent Technical College	Andy.bush@sctech.edu	678 544 6231	
Carrie Barnes	Georgia EMC			
Cornie Thornton	Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA)			
Stephanie Glenn	Three Rivers Workforce Development	sglenn@threeriversrc.com		
James Abraham, Sr	TRC Planning	jabraham@trcplanning.com		
Kindra	TRC	krdutton@trcplanning.com	708 54-6026	

Donna Lockey [Carroll Co. Clemmet](mailto:CarrollCo.Clemmet) donald.carroll@ga.gov 7/301-8199

Christine Curry [Zsulin Dunham Dev. Ash](mailto:Zsulin.Dunham.Dev.Ash) curry137@gmail.com 770 841-9268

Andy Bush southern.crescent andy.bush@sctech.edu 678 544 6231

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update
SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Great interstate access
 - I-20, I-75, I-85, I-185
- Room for growth and expansion
- Vibrant downtowns
- Presence of the film industry throughout the region
- Access to Hartsfield-Jackson Airport
- Rail access
- Historic Resources
 - Buildings and adaptable reuse of old properties
- Tourism
- Diversity of industry
- Near the Port of Savannah
- Workforce Development in Higher Education
- Sustainable agriculture
- Healthcare facilities
- Available housing
- More time to be proactive with planning
- Ecotourism and nature tourism opportunities
- Programs available to support all ages in our communities
- Regional governmental cooperation
- Recreation and leisure activities
- Multi-modal transportation
- Regional bus program
- Availability of water
- Ample infrastructure available
- Demographics help us qualify for grants
- Quality of life
- Progressive senior centers
- Strong and affordable higher education in our region
- Small town feel
- Educational Collaboratives
 - College and Career Academies
 - Innovative programs like the 12 for Life program with Southwire
 - Apprenticeships
- Strong support from state senators and representatives
- Strong local leadership
 - Government and non-profit leaders

WEAKNESSES

- Workforce Development
 - Lots of unfilled jobs
 - Skills gap
- Branding of our region
- Broadband access
- Poverty Rate
- Drugs and Crime
 - Especially in rural areas
- Lack of senior housing
- Lack of affordable housing

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update SWOT ANALYSIS

- Pro-growth vs. Anti-growth mentality
- Brain Drain- youth population loss
- Lack of water and sewer infrastructure in rural areas
- Historic facilities are being demolished
- Graduation Rate needs improvement
- Limited rural healthcare
- Lack of progress on Import/Export Highway
- Poor work ethic among youth
- Access to transportation
- Citizen apathy
- Targeted planning for growth
 - Roads, infrastructure
- Tax burden on senior citizens
- Leadership lacks experience or training
- RC and other resources aren't fully utilized
- Limited assistance provided to seniors in rural areas
- Getting veterans more involved in community leadership
- More activities/entertainment for youth
- Need to create/develop Region 4 as a destination

OPPORTUNITIES

- Close to Atlanta
 - Our region has seen population growth
- Rail-Trail development could connect us to another region
- Expansion of trail system
- Funding for infrastructure
 - Community grants
- Marketing—Tell our Story
- Using our state legislators to champion our region
- Our area has a lot of potential for growth with suppliers to KIA and Honda
- Communities can better utilize the services of the Regional Commission
- Expand the use of Public-Private Partnerships
- Form more regional committees to make sure we aren't working in silos
- Expand access to healthcare
- Better promotion of the Move On When Ready program
- Create more historic districts
- More opportunities to improve transportation
- Marketing the Technical Colleges to unskilled workers
- Develop more rail spurs for local industries
- Create a Youth Incubator
 - Programming focused on personal development, soft skills, and management training
- More youth leadership programs
- Blue Trail development
- Creative senior living
- Logistics: More freight access and trucking
- Location/proximity to major economic centers
- Promotion of film locations through Reel Scout

THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Update
SWOT ANALYSIS

THREATS

- Environmental Issues
 - Air quality, climate change, clean water
- Senior healthcare access
- Senior living facilities
- Rising health care costs
- Financial burden of caring for our aging population
- Increased competition in manufacturing (Regional, State, International)
- Loss of community character
- Lack of revenue
 - SPLOST/TSPLOST
- Lack of financial and educational resources for care givers
- Federal laws and policies that can hurt our local industries
- Political and racial divisions that override similarities
- Volatility of economic markets
- Technology
 - Automation
 - Education
- Local elections
- Lack of educated workforce
 - International competition
- Culture of dependency
- Court challenges to water resources- Water Wars
- Drug related crime
- Freight and logistic bottlenecks
- EPD restrictions on coal
- Loss of manufacturing created an economic gap in many communities
- Terrorism
- Lack of regional cooperation
- Uncontrolled growth and growth pressures
- Corruption
- Outside workforce competition with neighboring states
- Aging infrastructure