



***THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2019 Update***



**PREPARED BY:**  
**Three Rivers Regional Commission**  
**[www.threeriversrc.com](http://www.threeriversrc.com)**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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**THREE RIVERS REGIONAL COMMISSION  
COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY  
2019 Update**

**RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS**, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy has been updated for the Three Rivers Economic Development District; and

**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; and

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

**NOW, BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, the Council of the Three Rivers Regional Commission hereby approves and adopts the update to the Three Rivers Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

ADOPTED this 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2019.

**COUNCIL OF THE THREE RIVERS  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

  
Jim Thornton, Chairman

  
Kirk Fjelstul  
Executive Director

## INTRODUCTION

The 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 of the Three Rivers Regional Commission, 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 CEDS Strategic Advisory Committee.

The Three Rivers Regional Commission (TRRC) is a multi-county organization consisting of 10 counties and 43 municipalities. TRRC is designated as a regional planning agency charged with the responsibility of implementing the Georgia Planning Act of 1989. It is also designated as an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) with the responsibility of administering programs to serve the elderly. In 2013, TRRC was appointed as the grant recipient and fiscal agent for workforce investment, now known as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA).

Through its designation as an Economic Development District, TRRC provides grant writing assistance and outreach to its local governments and the private sector through the various programs offered by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and other federal and state agencies. It encourages communities with creative and viable development projects to apply for available program assistance in support of job creation and economic stability.

This document serves as a 2019 update to the CEDS that was completed for 2017-2022. The CEDS has been prepared to continue to meet the prerequisite for the TRRC's designation as an Economic Development District under EDA. TRRC 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:

- A complete an analyzation of local conditions; the identification of problems and opportunities, the creation of a vision and goals; the development of strategies to accomplish goals; the coordination of activities to implement the strategies; and an evaluation process to measure the performance.
- The creation of a document that supports the formulation and implementation of a program and activities that create jobs, raises income levels, diversifies the economy, and improves the quality of life for local communities.

## **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 that create jobs, foster stability, diversity 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 initiatives through an integrated, synergistic and results-oriented approach to economic development planning and implementation.

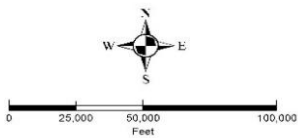
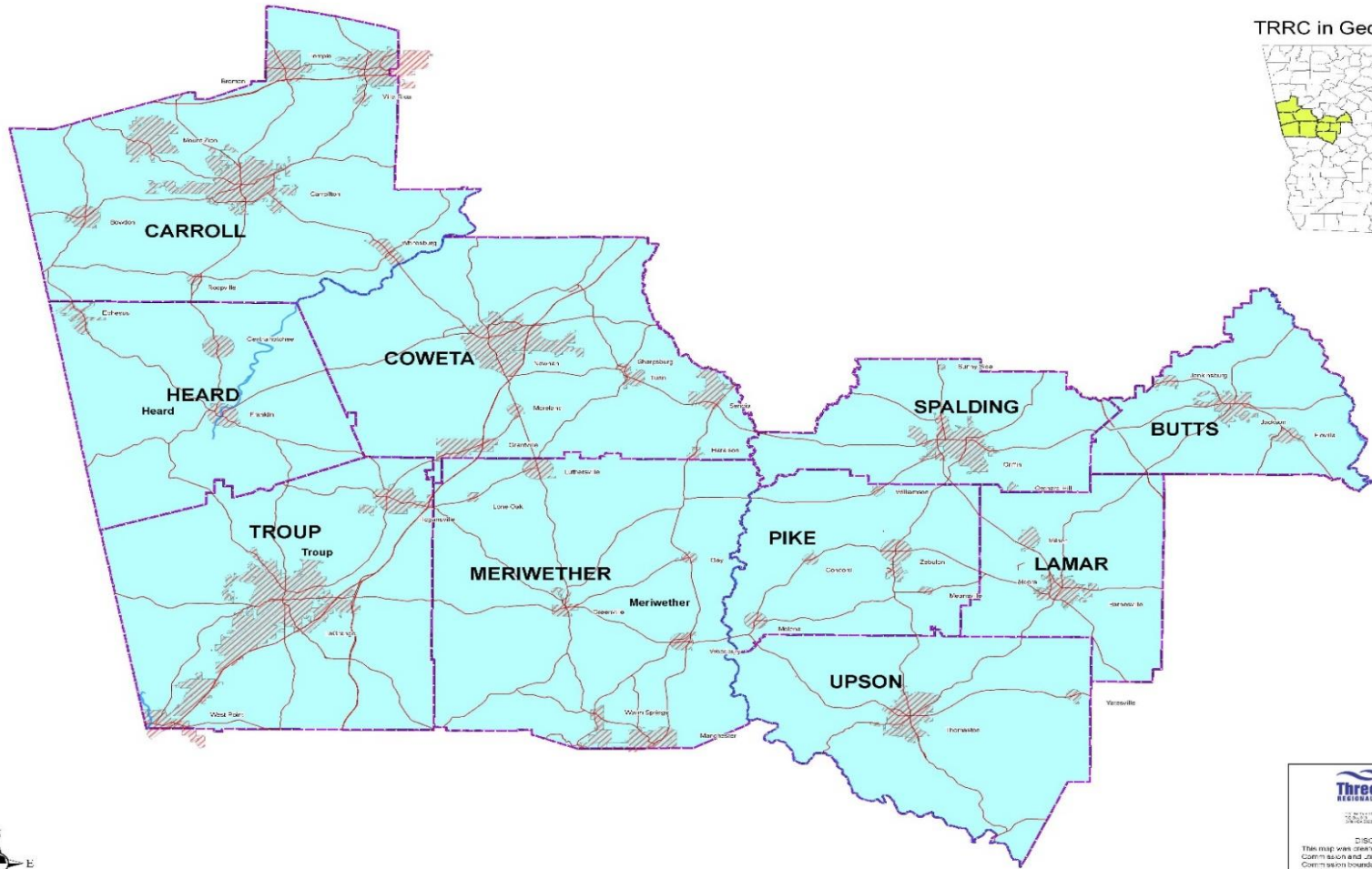
TREDD has decided to combine components of its CEDS with the Three Rivers Regional Plan Update 2019-2039. The merging of these two documents will provide a more comprehensive approach to identifying the needs and opportunities of our local communities and developing goals and policies to address those with positive results.



## Map 1 - TRRC Region

### Three Rivers Regional Commission: Region

TRRC in Georgia



**Three Rivers**  
REGIONAL COMMISSION

DISCLAIMER  
This map was created by Three Rivers Regional Commission and utilizes a map of Regional Commission boundaries for the State of Georgia. Sources of map information include the U.S. Census Bureau (2000) and CDOT data. (2005). This map was created for informational purposes only. The user of this document agrees to render TRRC harmless for the information herein.  
Produced by Three Rivers Regional Commission  
October 4, 2017

## **REGIONAL ECONOMY**

### **Economic Development Portfolio**

The TRRC 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 a number of Developments of Regional Impact (DRI). 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.

Kia Motors Manufacturing is one of the most successful growth stories the auto industry has experienced. The firm'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 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.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Population

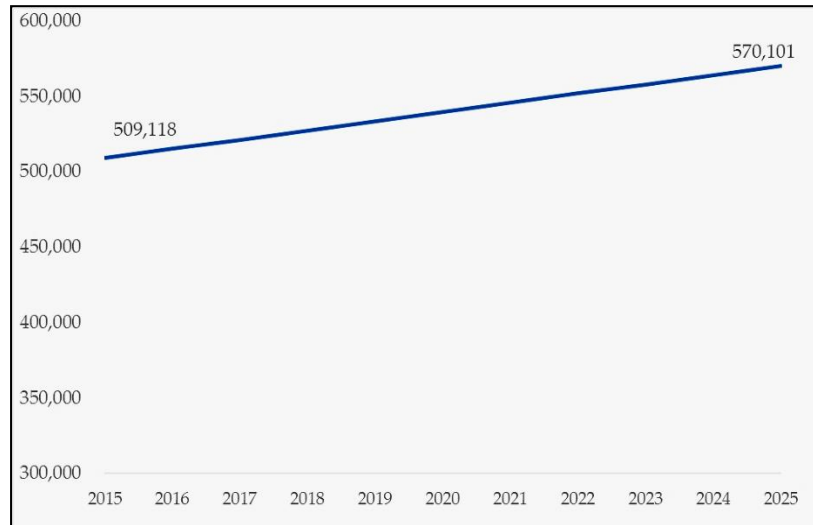
The overall population in the TRRC region has been on an upward trend. Since the 2010 Census, the region's population has grown by 6.25%. The estimated population for the region for the year 2017 was 521,108. When broken down by county, Carroll and Coweta Counties are growing at the highest rate. Two (2) TRRC counties are currently experiencing a decrease in population, which include Meriwether, and Upson. Much of the population is geographically dispersed; and the 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	2018	2010-2018
Butts	19,522	23,747	24,193	1.89%
Carroll	87,268	110,667	118,121	6.74%
Coweta	89,215	127,915	145,864	14.03%
Heard	11,012	11,837	11,879	0.35%
Lamar	15,912	18,264	19,000	4.02%
Meriwether	22,534	21,830	21,068	-3.49%
Pike	13,688	17,918	18,634	3.99%
Spalding	58,417	64,066	66,100	3.17%
Troup	58,779	67,053	70,038	4.45%
Upson	27,597	27,060	26,215	-3.12%
TRRC	403,944	490,357	521,108	6.27%

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. The information in Table 2 provides 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.

The table below shows a snapshot of 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. By 2026, the arts, construction, healthcare, and real estate industries are projected to grow fastest in the region.

**TABLE 2**

<b>Three Rivers Region - Industry Snapshot</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>2016 Jobs</b>	<b>2026 Jobs</b>	<b>2016 - 2026</b>	<b>2016 - 2026% Change</b>
<b>Animal Production, Forestry and Logging</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>Utilities</b>	1,240	1,390	150	12%
<b>Construction</b>	6,820	8,300	1,480	22%
<b>Manufacturing</b>	30,620	34,400	3,780	12%
<b>Wholesale Trade</b>	4,980	5,410	430	9%
<b>Retail Trade</b>	20,010	22,240	2,230	11%
<b>Transportation and Warehousing</b>	5,480	6,240	760	14%
<b>Information</b>	2,170	2,210	40	3%
<b>Finance and Insurance</b>	3,300	3,530	230	7%
<b>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</b>	1,150	1,350	200	19%
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical</b>	2,960	3,300	340	12%
<b>Management of Companies</b>	1,500	1,740	240	16%
<b>Administrative and Support</b>	14,540	15,040	500	3%
<b>Educational Services</b>	16,620	18,760	2,140	13%
<b>Health Care and Social Assistance</b>	21,010	25,710	4,700	22%
<b>Arts, Entertainment</b>	960	1,440	480	49%
<b>Accommodation and Food Services</b>	14,830	15,630	800	5%
<b>Other Services</b>	6,630	7,410	780	12%
<b>Government</b>	10,810	11,450	640	6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	165,630	185,550	19,920	14%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, West Central Georgia Industry Projections 2016 to 2026.

As the population continues to age, services geared towards that sector will increase. The KIA plant is also a major contributor to job growth in the region. Table 3 shows a significant increase in jobs in the Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, Educational Services, Ambulatory Health Care Services, and Hospitals industries during the period of 2016 to 2026.

**TABLE 3**

<b>Top 20 Fastest Growing Industries, 2016-2026</b>					
<b>Description</b>	<b>2016 Jobs</b>	<b>2026 Jobs</b>	<b>2016 – 2026 Change</b>	<b>2016 - 2026 % Change</b>	<b>Projected Annual Growth Rate</b>
<b>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</b>	9,500	11,800	2,300	24.21%	2.19%
<b>Educational Services</b>	16,620	18,760	2,140	12.87%	1.22%
<b>Ambulatory Health Care Services</b>	6,550	8,370	1,820	27.89%	2.49%
<b>Hospitals</b>	8,180	9,600	1,420	17.38%	1.62%
<b>Social Assistance</b>	3,350	4,340	990	29.41%	2.61%
<b>Primary Metal Manufacturing</b>	2,720	3,690	970	35.46%	3.08%
<b>Specialty Trade Contractors</b>	4,780	5,700	920	19.25%	1.78%
<b>General Merchandise Stores</b>	4,930	5,740	810	16.37%	1.53%
<b>Crop Production</b>	5,080	5,710	630	12.36%	1.17%
<b>Local Government, Excluding Education and Hospitals</b>	7,060	7,640	580	8.18%	0.79%
<b>Nursing and Residential Care Facilities</b>	2,930	3,400	470	15.86%	1.48%
<b>Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers</b>	2,570	3,020	450	17.39%	1.62%
<b>Amusement, Gambling, and Recreation Industries</b>	830	1,280	450	53.99%	4.41%
<b>Construction of Buildings</b>	1,400	1,840	440	32.04%	2.82%
<b>Repair and Maintenance</b>	2,020	2,410	390	19.80%	1.82%
<b>Administrative and Support Services</b>	14,200	14,570	370	2.56%	0.25%
<b>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</b>	2,110	2,470	360	16.81%	1.57%
<b>Truck Transportation</b>	1,340	1,680	340	25.07%	2.26%
<b>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</b>	2,960	3,300	340	11.60%	1.10%
<b>Food Manufacturing</b>	2,120	2,410	290	13.67%	1.29%

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Long Term Industry Projections, July 2019.

The following table provides data on the long term occupational projections for the region during the period 2016 to 2026. The top five occupations with the fastest job growth are Personal Care Aides, Nurse Practitioners, Millwrights, Respiratory Therapists, and Software Developers will all experience a higher than 3% annual growth rate over the period. Two out of these top five occupations do not require a college degree.

**TABLE 4**

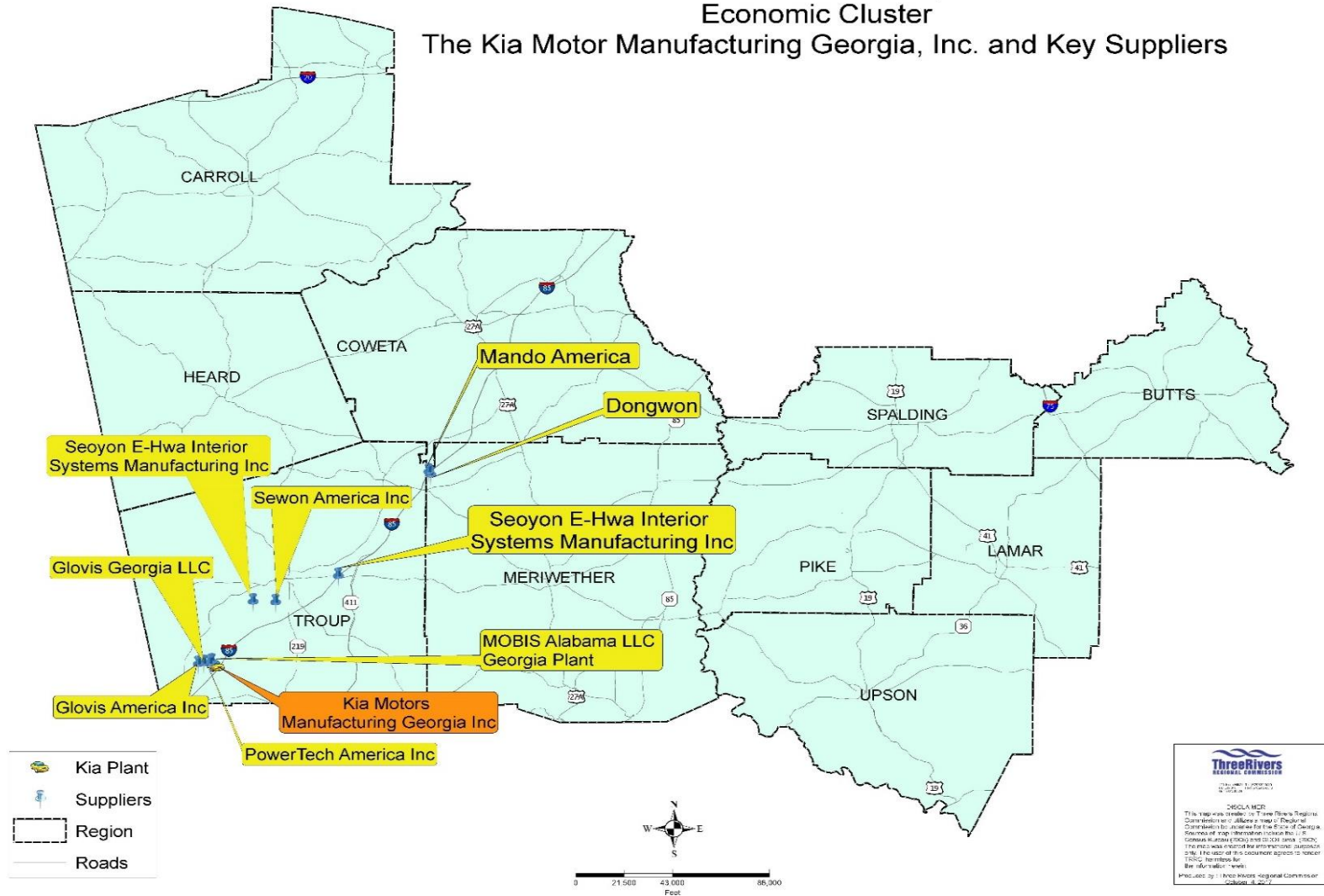
<b>Top 20 Fastest Growing Occupations, 2016-2026</b>					
<b>Description</b>	<b>2016 Jobs</b>	<b>2026 Jobs</b>	<b>2016 – 2026 % Change</b>	<b>Annual Growth Rate</b>	<b>Typical Education</b>
<b>Personal Care Aides</b>	1,660	2,410	44.62%	3.76%	High school diploma or equivalent
<b>Nurse Practitioners</b>	210	300	43.13%	3.65%	Master's degree
<b>Millwrights</b>	170	230	36.31%	3.15%	High school diploma or equivalent
<b>Respiratory Therapists</b>	170	240	36.21%	3.14%	Associate's degree
<b>Software Developers, Applications</b>	130	170	34.92%	3.04%	Bachelor's degree
<b>Mechanical Engineering Technicians</b>	70	90	32.35%	2.84%	Associate's degree
<b>Mechanical Engineers</b>	400	520	31.57%	2.78%	Bachelor's degree
<b>Nursing Instructors and Teachers, Postsecondary</b>	80	110	30.95%	2.73%	Doctoral or professional degree
<b>Aircraft Mechanics and Service Technicians</b>	90	120	30.85%	2.73%	Postsecondary non-degree award
<b>Medical Assistants</b>	700	910	29.43%	2.61%	Postsecondary non-degree award
<b>Diagnostic Medical Sonographers</b>	50	70	28.85%	2.57%	Associate's degree
<b>Physical Therapists</b>	190	240	28.57%	2.54%	Doctoral or professional degree
<b>Industrial Engineers</b>	600	760	27.33%	2.45%	Bachelor's degree
<b>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</b>	810	1,030	27.07%	2.42%	High school diploma or equivalent
<b>Helpers--Production Workers</b>	1,440	1,820	26.51%	2.38%	High school diploma or equivalent

Source: Georgia Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Statistics and Economic Research, Long Term Occupational Projections, July 2019.

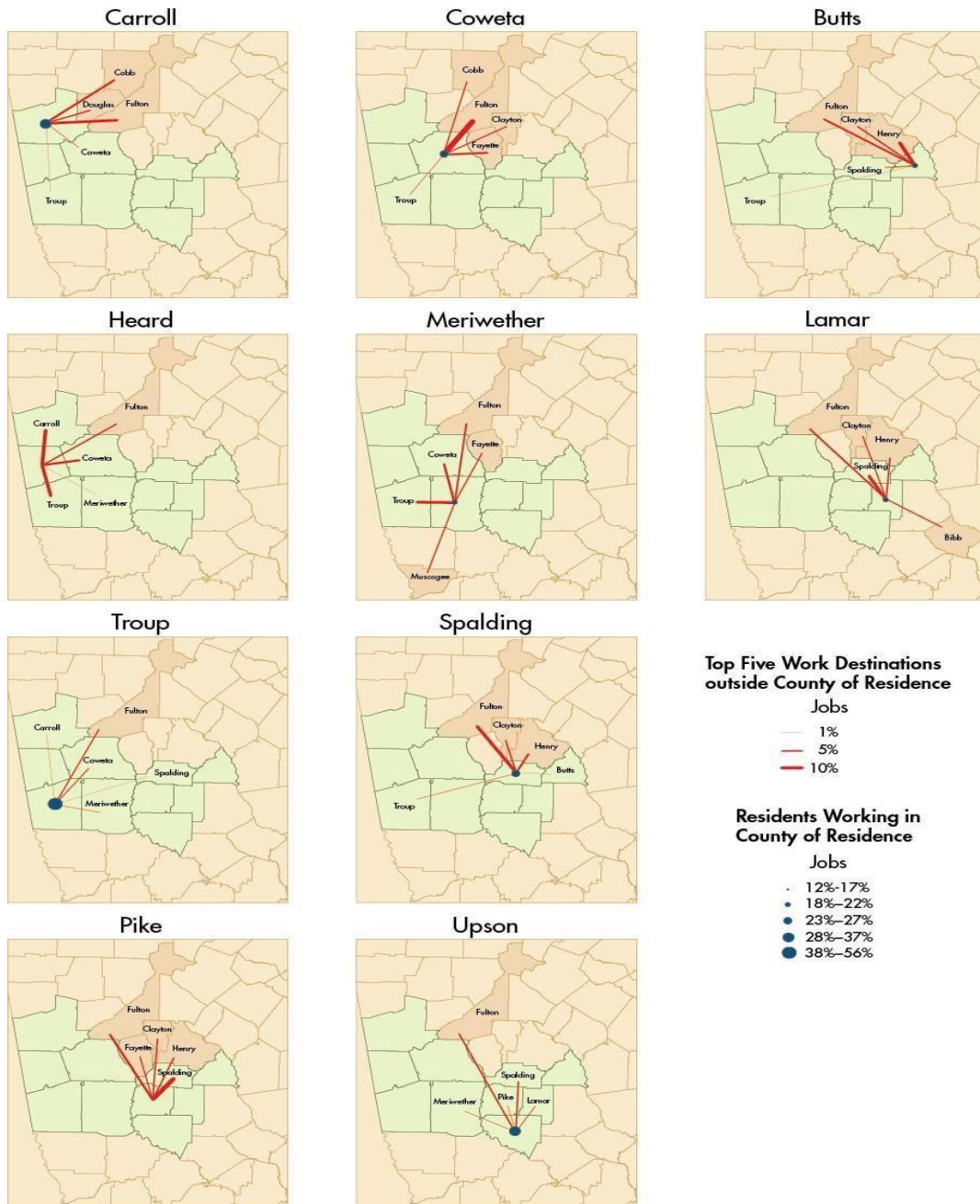


## Map 2 – TRRC Economic Development Cluster

### Three Rivers Economic Development District Economic Cluster The Kia Motor Manufacturing Georgia, Inc. and Key Suppliers

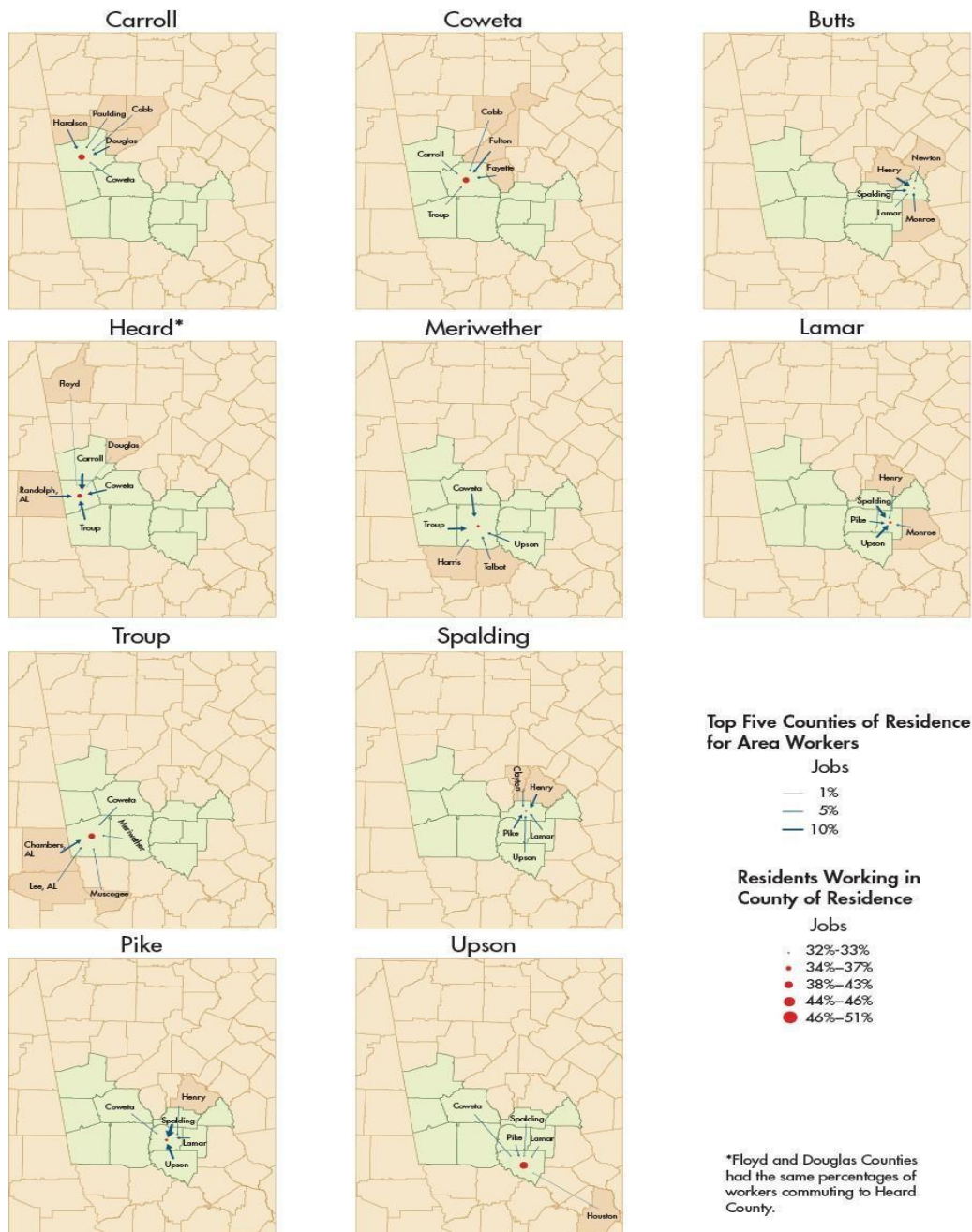


**FIGURE 2**  
**Three Rivers Region Commuting Patterns Outflow**



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

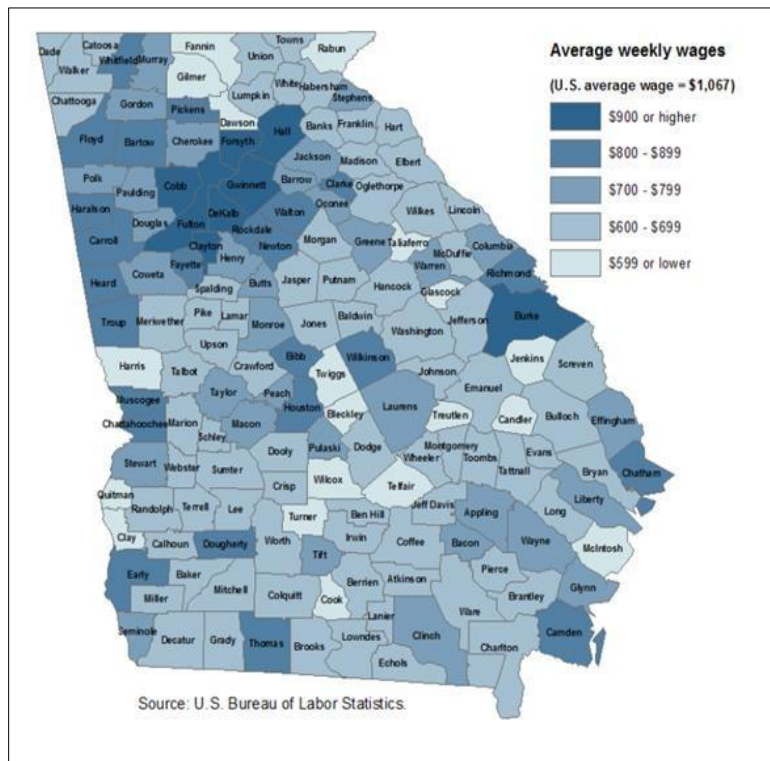
Table 5 shows the top ten largest employers in the TRRC region. This includes a wide variety of employment from healthcare, retail, education, and manufacturing. Figure 4 displays a geographical view of the average weekly wages across the State of Georgia during the third quarter of 2019.

**TABLE 5**

Three Rivers Region - Ten Largest Employers 2019	
HomeNurse, Inc.	
Kia Motors Manufacturing Georgia, Inc.	
Piedmont Newnan Hospital, Inc.	
Security Forces, LLC	
Southwire Company	
Tanner Medical Center, Inc.	
University of West Georgia	
Walmart	
Wellstar Health System	
Yamaha Motor Manufacturing	

Source: Georgia Department of Labor Area Labor Profile updated 2019.

**FIGURE 4**





The unemployment numbers for 2018 are listed in Table 6. As of this period, the rates in Coweta and Pike Counties were below the state average.

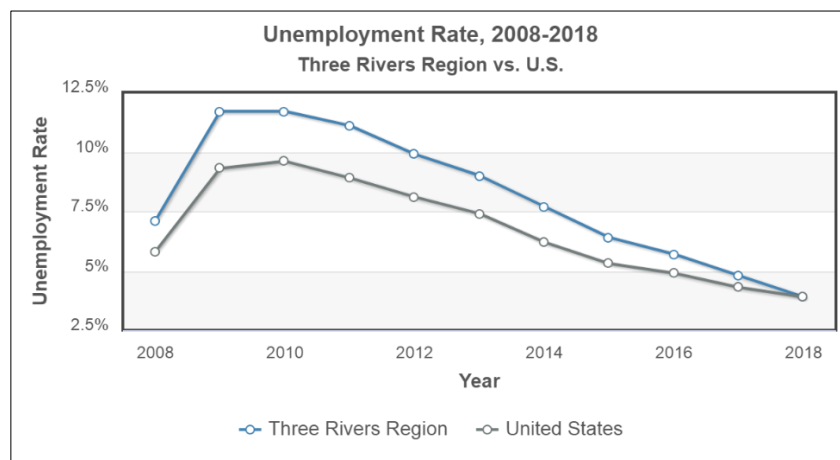
**TABLE 6**

<b>Three Rivers Region Unemployment Rates</b>	
<b>County</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Butts</b>	4.2%
<b>Carroll</b>	4.3%
<b>Coweta</b>	3.8%
<b>Heard</b>	4.2%
<b>Lamar</b>	5.0%
<b>Meriwether</b>	5.5%
<b>Pike</b>	3.8%
<b>Spalding</b>	4.8%
<b>Troup</b>	4.2%
<b>Upson</b>	4.5%
<b>Region</b>	<b>4.4%</b>
<b>Georgia</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

Source: U S Bureau of Labor Statistics 2018

Figure 5 provides information on the unemployment rates for the period 2008-2018. It demonstrates how the rate peaked in 2009 but has since returned to pre-recession levels. The unemployment rate for the TRRC region has decreased steadily since the recession and is only 0.5% higher than the state, overall.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Regional Unemployment Rate Trend, 2008-2018**

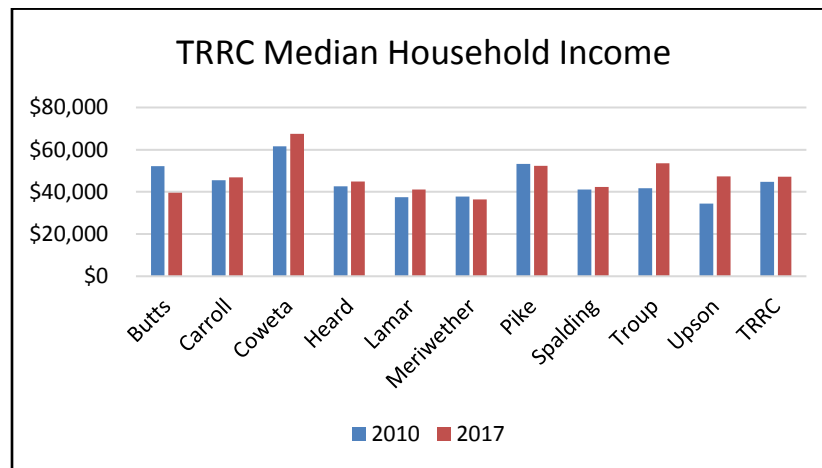


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

## 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, 2017

According to the American Community Survey, three of ten counties within the TRRC region show a decrease in the median household income since 2010. Butts County had the most drastic change from the year 2010 to 2017, with a decrease of 24%. Coweta County had the highest increase within the region.

**TABLE 7**

Median Household Income			
County	2010	2017	Change
Butts	\$52,257	\$39,655	-24.12%
Carroll	\$45,559	\$46,844	2.82%
Coweta	\$61,550	\$67,570	9.78%
Heard	\$42,685	\$44,897	5.18%
Lamar	\$37,536	\$41,157	9.65%
Meriwether	\$37,845	\$36,368	-3.90%
Pike	\$53,213	\$52,377	-1.57%
Spalding	\$41,100	\$42,398	3.16%
Troup	\$41,770	\$43,597	4.37%
Upson	\$34,509	\$35,375	2.51%
TRRC	\$44,802	\$45,024	0.49%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey

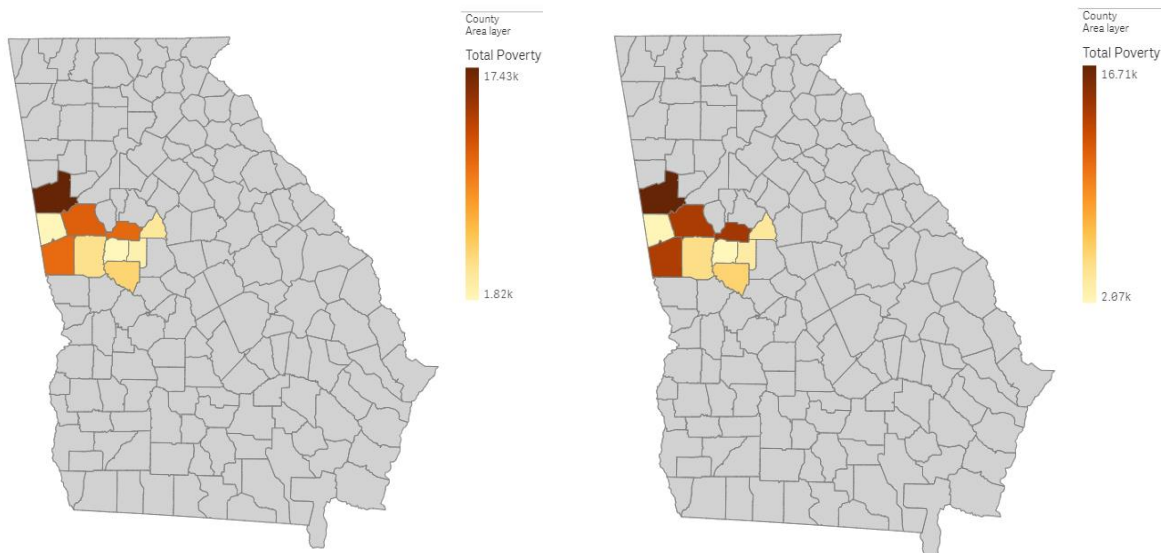
The information in Table 8 reveals that the rate of persons living below the poverty level is slightly higher in the TRRC region as compared to the state. Butts and Lamar Counties saw the highest increase in poverty levels from the estimates in 2010 as compared to 2017. Heard and Pike saw slight decreases in their levels. State poverty distribution is displayed in Figure 7.

**TABLE 8**

Percentage of Persons Below Poverty			
County	2010	2017	% Change
Butts	16.50%	23.50%	7.00%
Carroll	19.00%	18.60%	-1.60%
Coweta	11.00%	11.60%	0.60%
Heard	21.30%	17.40%	-3.90%
Lamar	17.80%	20.80%	3.00%
Meriwether	20.10%	22.70%	2.60%
Pike	12.70%	12.30%	-0.40%
Spalding	22.50%	21.60%	-0.90%
Troup	21.10%	21.30%	0.20%
Upson	21.30%	22.70%	1.40%
TRRC	17.02%	19.25%	2.23%
Georgia	15.70%	16.90%	1.20%

Source: US Census.

**FIGURE 7: Three Rivers Region Poverty Levels, 2008 and 2016**



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

Regional graduation rates are provided below in Table 9. Within the TRRC region, Pike County had the highest graduation rate at 93.9% and Meriwether County had the lowest at 82.3%. There is approximately an 11.6% percent difference from highest rate and the lowest.

**TABLE 9**  
**Educational Achievement**

System Name	2019 Graduation Rate (%)
Butts	83.5
Carroll	93.3
Coweta	86.9
Heard	83.3
Lamar	83.3
Meriwether	82.3
Pike	93.9
Spalding	88.6
Thomaston- Upson	90.9
Troup	86.6

Source: Georgia Department of Education, 2019, 4-year Graduation Rates by District

**TABLE 10**  
**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 Yrs.	5.5%	2.9%	6.8%	7.0%	6.1%	3.3%
College Grad 4 Yrs.	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 October 2019.



According to Table 10, 42.5% of the population pursued post-secondary education opportunities. The majority of the TRRC area population, however, has not sought additional education beyond high school.

Table 11 lists the post-secondary educational institutions within the TRRC region. The region contains both liberal arts and technical colleges.

**TABLE 11**  
**Three Rivers Region Post-Secondary Educational Institutions**

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

Source: Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The TRRC Region has 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 – 19, 23, 27, 29, 41, 78, 84, 341
- State Routes – 3, 5, 7, 8, 14, 16, 18, 22, 34, 36, 42, 54, 61, 70, 85, 87, 92, 100, 109, 113, 154, 155, 166, 173, 190, 219, 362

### **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 manages a Unified Transportation System (UTS) funded by the Georgia Department of Human Services and the Georgia Department of Transportation. The TRRC UTS provides transportation to the elderly, disabled, and clients in low-income areas who participate in job-training programs. Public transit services are also provided on a demand response basis. The UTS system serves as the basis for any future upgrades to the public transit services in the region.

## 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 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 result of 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

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

## LOCAL ASSETS

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

## NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE

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

## BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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

## REGIONAL GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The CEDS Stakeholder Committee for the Three Rivers Economic Development District identified the following goals and strategies that are specific to its SWOT Analysis and overall vision.

**GOAL 1 - Improve the overall quality of life for Three Rivers' residents and enhance the 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 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 District.**

**Strategy 1:** Establish workforce development and economic development strategies 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 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 Rivers' 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 for the District.

**GOAL 7 - 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; the Middle Georgia Regional Commission, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the 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 businesses and industries that establish, expand and maintain operations within the District.**

**Strategy 1:** Promote the District as a business-friendly community.

- Strategy 2:** Provide subsidies, tax breaks, loans or grants to help new businesses establish themselves and existing businesses grow within the 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 build regional commercial districts.**

- Strategy 1:** Improve the aesthetics of public places and spaces, existing squares, and commercial streets using 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 a quality and vital 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 a 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 and 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 senior citizens 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 District.**

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

**Strategy 2:** Seek opportunities to expand agritourism throughout the District.

**GOAL 15 - Seek opportunities to expand movie and film production within the District.**

**Strategy 1:** Streamline the permitting process for local filming production.

**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 the District.**

**Strategy 1:** Support agriculture education in local schools.

**Strategy 2:** Promote and support farmers markets.

**Strategy 3:** Promote extension agencies in the District.

**Strategy 4:** Support and encourage sustainable and local agriculture.

**Strategy 5:** Support local food in local schools.

**GOAL 17 - Expand and improve access to rural healthcare in the 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:

- 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

In addition, local and statewide initiatives such as Freeport Exemption, Job Tax Credits, Enterprise Zones and job training programs will be assessed as additional resources to implement the CEDS goals.

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. Regional priorities projects are provided along with several localized priorities within each county. Each of these action items should be realistically accomplishable by the Three Rivers Regional Commission or the appropriate local government, if 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
<b>Regional</b>	Georgia Import/Export Highway	\$480,000,000	GDOT, Federal Highway Administration	To Be Determined
<b>Project Description</b>	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.			
<b>Regional</b>	West Georgia Broadband Project	\$1,000,000	West Central GA Broadband Authority	To Be Determined
<b>Project Description</b>	This project proposes to expand broadband services to underserved rural counties including Heard, Troup Meriwether, and Upson Counties.			
<b>Butts County</b>	Hwy 16 Sewer-Expansion Project- East of I-75	\$750,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
<b>Project Description</b>	This project proposes to complete sewer on HWY 16, east of I-75 to Colwell Road, both north and south of Hwy 16.			
<b>Butts County</b>	Riverview Business Park/Short Road Gravity Sewer	\$600,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
<b>Project Description</b>	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.			
<b>Butts County</b>	Riverview Business Park-Business Park Drive	\$1,000,000	City of Jackson & Butts County	To Be Determined
<b>Project Description</b>	This project proposes to complete construction and paving of the main road in Phase 2 of the Riverview Business Park.			

ENTITY AND DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	JOBS CREATED
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.			
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.			
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.			
Carroll County	Bankhead Highway Corridor	\$2,500,000	City of Carrollton and IDA	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes commercial enhancement along the Bankhead Highway Corridor, transforming it from a five lane highway into a three lanes with a bicycle lane and infrastructure for future commercial venues.			
Carroll County	Bowdon Bypass Junction	\$10,000,000	City of Bowdon, GDOT, and Carroll County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to build a bypass and create an industrial park.			

ENTITY AND DESCRIPTION	PROJECT	ESTIMATED COST	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	JOBS CREATED
Heard County	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	\$5,500,000	Heard County and IDA	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes a water treatment plant upgrade that will increase capacity from currently treating 3 MGPD to 4MGPD. It will also replace failing equipment with new and more efficient equipment and add a generator for use during power outages.			
Pike County	Industrial Corridor Gas Improvements	\$6,000,000	Development Authority of Pike County	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes infrastructure improvements and expansion of a 6" HP steel main along the HWY 41 industrial corridor, serving major industries such as Yancey, Supreme, and K&K—also resulting in future capacity in place for additional recruitment.			
Upson County	Business and Technology Park Infrastructure	\$6,000,000	City of Thomaston and IDA	To Be Determined
Project Description	This project proposes to upgrade the wastewater infrastructure at the Central Georgia Business and Technology Park. A transfer pipe is needed.			



## 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:

<b>HUMAN FACTORS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Workforce Skills: Increase the number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs.</li><li>● Educational Attainment: Increase the number of residents that have high school diplomas.</li><li>● Human Services: Increase the number of programs that remove barriers to participation in the workforce development.</li></ul>	<b>LOCAL ASSETS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Tourism and Film Industry: Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region.</li><li>● Quality of Life: Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region.</li><li>● Housing: Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce and senior housing.</li></ul>
<b>NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Industrial Properties: Increase in ready to develop industrial parks and speculative buildings.</li><li>● Transportation: Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development.</li><li>● High-Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in Three Rivers region.</li><li>● Traditional Infrastructure: Number of projects that provide or improve basic infrastructure.</li></ul>	<b>BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 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.</li></ul>

## Report on Performance Measures

The following is a report on the performance measures for the period:

### Human Factors

- **Workforce Skills: Increase the number of students in career and technical education programs, including apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training programs.**
  - The total number of youths involved in training programs during the year was 370. The total number of adults and dislocated workers involved in training programs was 1,133.
- **Educational Attainment: Increase the number of residents that have high school diplomas.**
  - The total number of high school graduates for the Three Rivers region is 5,151 and is broken down by entity as follows:

County	2018-19 Graduates	County	2018-19 Graduates
Butts	213	Meriwether	130
Carroll	967	Pike	278
Coweta	1,584	Spalding	628
Heard	145	Troup	754
Lamar	164	Upson	288

Source: GDOE, Interactive Dashboard, K-12 Public School Report Card, 2018-2019

- **Human Services: Increase the number of programs that remove barriers to participation in the workforce development.**
  - The following training programs are provided by WorkSource Three Rivers that help to remove barriers to participation in the workforce development:
    - Customized Training (**0 participants**) - is designed to meet the special training needs of an employer or a group of employers by allowing them to tailor and design work-based skills training.
    - On-the-Job Training (**2 participants**) -provided by an employer in the public, private non-profit, or private sector to a paid participant while engaged in productive work train new employees for the specific job duties required by that employer.

- Incumbent Worker Training **(22 participants)** - designed to improve the skills of employees and the competitiveness of an employer (including a group of employers) to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees by assisting the workers in obtaining the skills necessary to maintain or retain employment or have the opportunity for increased earnings potential through promotion.
- Pre/Registered Apprenticeships **(0 participants)** - is an employer-driven training model that combines on-the-job training with job related instruction.
- Supportive Services **(318 participants)** - enable an individual to participate in activities such as, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, housing, health care, educational testing, and work-related tools.
- Financial Literacy Education **(2 participants)** - provides youth with the knowledge and skills that they need to achieve long term financial stability. Financial literacy education encompasses information and activities on a range of topics, such as creating budgets; setting up checking and saving accounts; managing spending, credit, and debt; understanding credit reports and credit scores; and protecting against identity theft.
- Entrepreneurial Skills Training **(0 participants)** - provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. This training helps youth develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as the ability to take initiative, creatively seek out and identify business opportunities, develop budgets and forecast resource needs, understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
- Paid Work Experience **(44 participants)** - is structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace and provides youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Work experience for youth: summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships and job shadowing, and on-the-job training.
- Occupational Skills Training **(394 participants)** - is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

- GED and Alternative Secondary School (**187 participants**) - services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education. Dropout recovery services are those that assist youth who have dropped out of school. Both types of services help youth to re-engage in education that leads to the completion of a recognized high school equivalent.

### **Necessary Infrastructure**

- **Industrial Properties: Increase in ready to develop industrial parks and speculative buildings.**

County	Available Buildings	Available Land Sites		County	Available Buildings	Available Land Sites
Butts	1	5		Meriwether	3	6
Carroll	4	8		Pike	8	2
Coweta	15	38		Spalding	19	18
Heard	0	7		Troup	12	30
Lamar	2	7		Upson	1	2

Source: County Industrial Development Authorities, 2019.

- **Transportation: Number of projects completed that are critical for regional economic development.**
  - Transit services are provided to local residents in the Three Rivers region. On demand services are provided in Butts, Carroll, Coweta, Lamar, Meriwether Pike, Spalding, and Upson Counties. Public transit services are provided, as well as services coordinated with the Georgia Department of Human Services that are available in all ten counties in the region.
- **High-Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet in Three Rivers region.**
  - The City of Woodbury began the installation of broadband services for local residents.

- **Traditional Infrastructure: Number of projects that provide or improve basic infrastructure.**
  - The City of Griffin has been the recipient of multiple Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) in its efforts to revitalize communities through the rehabilitation of local water and sewer infrastructure.
  - The City of Turin will work with Coweta County to replace water lines in its system that are dilapidated in contain asbestos.
  - The Cities of Barnesville and Hogansville received CDBG funds to rehabilitate water and/or sewer lines.
  - Pike County received CDBG funds to make much needed infrastructure improvements in housing, street and drainage in the Hilltop Community.

### **Local Assets**

- **Tourism and Film Industry: Increase in tourism and visitor spending in the region.**
  - The City of Haralson recently passed an ordinance to allow open containers in the downtown area for tourism purposes. Haralson is a filming location for the Walking Dead and is a tour site.
  - The City of Barnesville recently developed a tourist map of filming locations for Sharp Objects, which filmed in the area.
  - The City of Jackson recently developed a tourist map of filming locations for Stranger Things, which filmed in the area.
- **Quality of Life: Number of projects completed aimed at improving quality of life amenities in the region.**
  - The City of Bowdon established new parks in the area, Barr Park and Watts Park.
  - New cabins were installed at Spirewell Bluff in Upson County.
  - Spalding County serves as the home to an annual Pickleball Tournament.
  - A new healthcare facility opened in the City of Woodbury.
  - Leroy Johnson Park, including ballfields and walking tracks, opened in the City of Senoia.
  - The City of LaGrange has installed the Southbend Park which includes playgrounds, dog park, a skatepark, sports pavilion and seating spaces.
  - The friends of Lake Meriwether, in Woodbury, GA, continue to make needed upgrades to further improve this tourist site.
  - The LINC Trail opened in Newnan, GA. It serves as a 26-mile multipurpose trail for walking, running, skating, bicycling and other non-motorized vehicle use.

- **Housing: Number of projects completed that increases or improves availability of workforce and senior housing.**
  - The Griffin Housing Authority opened two senior housing complexes in Spalding County. The Iris at Park Pointe is an 85 unit senior living community, and the Terraces at the Park is a 68 unit living facility.

### **Business Environment**

- **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.**
  - The City of Luthersville recently utilized Community Development Block Grant Funds (CDBG) to rehabilitate an old historic bank building in the downtown area to attract new business and/or tourism to the area.

# **APPENDIX**

**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

**Georgia EMC's Community & Economic Development is a service of Georgia's Electric Cooperatives**



**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