ROCKDALE IN MOTION

Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Existing Conditions + Needs Assessment Report

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY AND PURPOSE OF THE CTP PROGRAM

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) established the Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) program in the mid 2000s as a way to provide financial assistance to communities to develop long range transportation plans that can also serve as the foundation for regional planning efforts. Therefore, the CTP program is utilized to help cities and counties jointly identify and analyze their needs, develop solutions which are acceptable to the community, and better articulate their priorities when funding opportunities arise.

As a condition of providing financial assistance to develop a CTP, ARC has developed the expected outcomes below:

- Prioritized list of transportation investments necessary to support the visions for economic development and strong communities established by cities and counties.
- Five to ten year fiscally constrained action plan which reflects currently available funding sources and feasible policy actions that can be taken at the city/county level.
- Recommendations that have been vetted through a robust community engagement process and formally adopted by local government policy officials.
- Recommendations that leverage regional facilities, services and programs to address local needs and priorities.
- Recommendations that can knit together previous plans and projects identified at the community level through Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) studies, Community Improvement District (CID) work programs, county/city Capital Improvement Programs (CIP), corridor studies, and other initiatives.

CTP IN ROCKDALE

Rockdale County completed it's first ARC funded CTP in December 2009. Because transportation needs evolve and change and transportation projects get implemented, ARC has begun the process of funding updates through the Atlanta region. This CTP represents Rockdale County's first CTP update.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THIS CTP

As Rockdale County's first update to its inaugural CTP, this planning process is intended to address a handful of broader goals beyond ARC's expected outcomes. This CTP has been developed to take stock and understand what has changed since the completion of the original CTP in December 2009. This includes understanding the projects and initiatives that have been implemented since the original CTP. It also includes re-examining the projects recommended in the original CTP that have not yet been implemented. Finally, it includes understanding where additional transportation needs may exist and develop new projects and initiatives to address emerging changes in the community.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS

There are macro-level events that affect overall transportation conditions and demand. Periods of economic uncertainty often result in reduced travel and transportation funding. Changes in costs of living (and the price of gas and other transportation related energy sources) can also have great impact on the transportation needs of the future. Similarly, social trends can influence transportation – for instance, much has been made of the millennial generation's attitude to transportation, with a perceived desire for more walkable and urban

communities with a focus on transportation options that do not rely as heavily on a privately owned passenger vehicle. As the millennial generation grows older, their collective desires may reinforce this (or change entirely) while younger generations may develop entirely different values in regards to transportation. As with the majority of mainstream transportation planning (and consistent with the approach taken by regional, state, and federal entities) this plan assumes no major structural changes to our society's transportation values other than presuming a continued interest in multi-modal transportation options, a value that the transportation planning profession collectively recommends. Likewise, the plan assumes in the long run that periods of economic downturn will be offset by periods of economic growth. Finally, the plan also assumes that the costs related to using transportation will be not be so dramatically changed as to result in a major reorganization of transportation priorities.

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

Finally, there has been significant interest in Autonomous Vehicles (AV) in recent years and many speculations on how that may affect future attitudes to transportation. As that implies, there are a variety of theories on what the impact of AV will be.

Some predict that AV will change patterns of vehicle ownership resulting in large portions of society not actually owning a personal vehicle but rather using AV as a personal on-call transit vehicle. From that assumption, some predict that the amount of total Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by our vehicle fleet will eventually decrease as vehicles are able to maximize efficiency in serving ready and nearby passengers. From the same agreed upon assumptions, others actually see a potential increase in VMT due to the potential for 'deadhead' trips (basically trips in between serving passenger), despite the possibility of each 'deadhead' trip being relatively short.

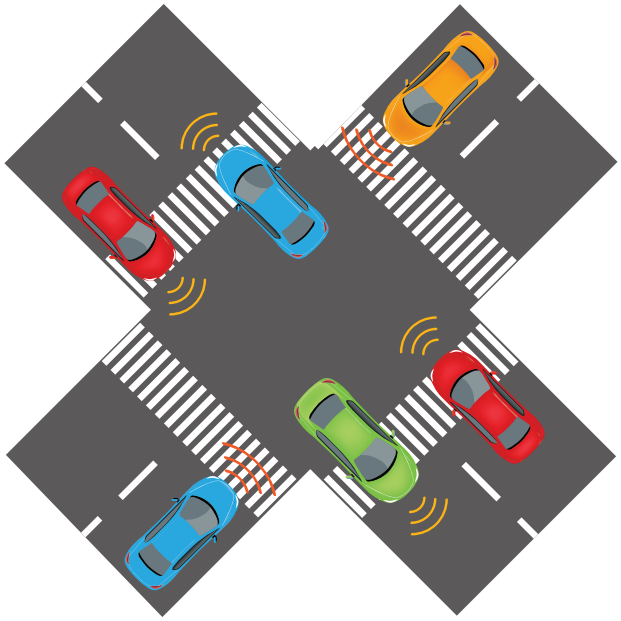
There is tremendous focus on how AV may change the physical capacity of our transportation system, with vehicles being able to travel at high speeds in close proximity to each other as part of an integrated and coordinated system that manages all AV. In the short-term, car manufactures are focusing more on the predicative and automated driving capabilities of vehicles rather than standardizing to a common system where vehicles can communicate to each other.

There are certainly broader implications on how the implementation of AV may change land use patterns and attitudes to multi-modal travel. Some suggest that AV will allow us to dedicate less physical space to vehicles resulting in denser communities that will increase walking and biking for local trips. Similarly, an integrated capacity boosting AV system may allow individuals to live further and further away from employment and activity areas which could conversely result in more urban sprawl. There are similar theories that the ease of AV may make walking and biking – as well as public transportation – relatively obsolete.

The rollout of – and access to – AV will also greatly influence the type of impact possible. Some of the scenarios mentioned (particularly an integrated system of AV communicating to each other) would effectively require 100 percent compliance and the possibility of an entirely different type of transportation infrastructure as support. Likewise, there are equity issues associated with AV. For instance, even if our vehicle ownership structure changes to accommodate an AV system that represents personal on-call transit vehicles, this still does not guarantee that all members of our society can afford or have access to those vehicles.

Given the large number of uncertainties related to AV, this plan makes the assumption that through the year 2040, AV will not have any substantial impact on travel behavior, the capacity of our transportation system, or the land use and character of the community. This is consistent with the current approach to the transportation planning activities of the County, Regional, State, and Federal agencies.

Nonetheless, this assumption should not be interpreted as a dismissal of the impacts that AV will one day have to our transportation system. Rather, it is an acknowledgment that at the time of the plan's completion (2018), the technology and its impacts were far too speculative to directly incorporate into its recommendations. As with any of the other macro assumptions made, future iterations of



this plan should be sensitive to changing conditions and emerging research and to the degree possible, consensus on likely futures.

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THIS EXISTING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

This Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment Report is the first in a series of standalone documents that will be compiled into the eventual CTP update for Rockdale County. Therefore, it will be followed by a separate Recommendations report and a final CTP document. As such, this report is used to document the CTP planning process during its initial phases that are focused on understanding existing conditions and developing an assessment of needs. Likewise, it includes a variety of technical analyses, observational findings, and community feedback that will be used to develop a baseline from which recommended transportation projects and policies will be made and evaluated.

The forthcoming Recommendations report will include suggestions on transportation project and policies to implement based on the needs assessment in this report. The Recommendations report and final CTP will also include an evaluation process to determine which projects and policies are likely to be most successful, a timeframe for suggested implementation, and considerations relative to transportation funding.

This report is structured to help the reader understand from a narrative perspective how the study team came to understand the transportation conditions and needs in Rockdale County and includes the following sections:

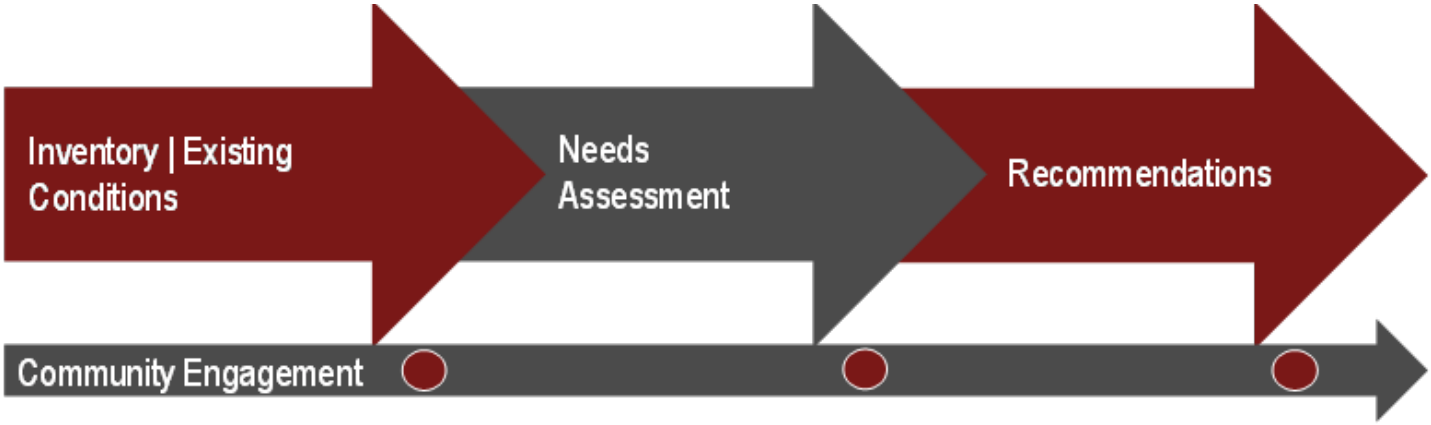
Community Profile. This section reviews underlying community oriented conditions in Rockdale County that have a relationship to transportation demands and needs.

Legacy of Planning. This section reviews a variety of local, regional, state, and federal planning initiatives that form the context for this CTP update.

Community Vision. This section reviews the community and stakeholder engagement conducted in order to understand existing conditions and assess needs. It likewise includes an articulation of the goals and objectives of this CTP update.

Transportation Assessment. This section includes a lengthy technical analysis and review of the transportation system's existing and anticipated conditions in order to highlight where there are either existing or anticipated transportation needs.

Conclusions. This section summarizes the overall understanding of transportation needs that will need to be addressed by the recommendations to this CTP update.



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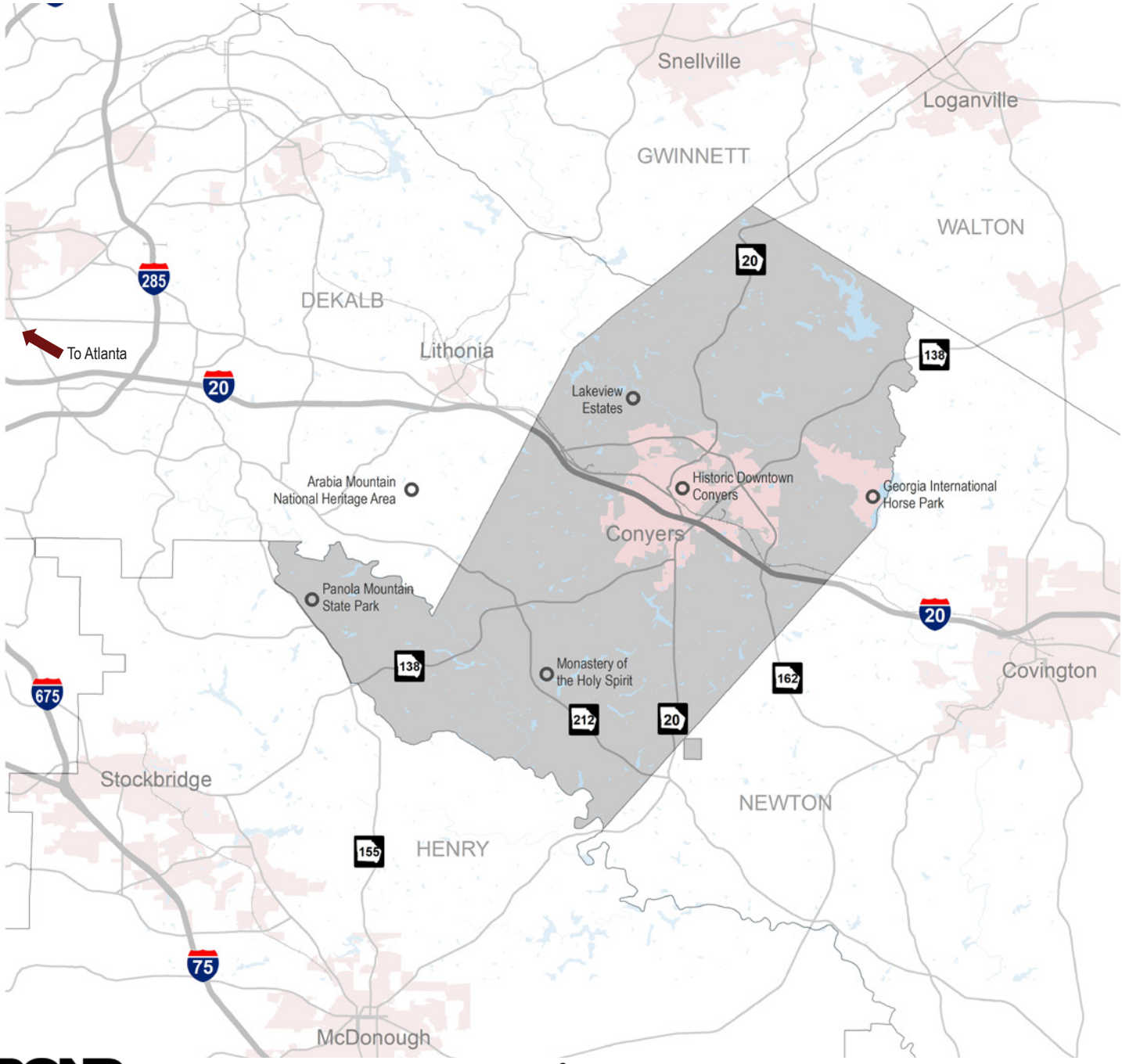
COMMUNITY PROFILE

Originally an area along the Hightower Trail, settlers first began to inhabit what is known today as Rockdale County in the 1700s. Recognizing the area's strategic location near between Marthasville (present day Atlanta) and Augusta, prominent banker Dr. W.D. Conyers donated land that would be used to construct a railroad connecting these two cities. The construction of the railroad and depot is what prompted growth in the area, leading to the creation of the City of Conyers in 1854, and subsequently Rockdale County almost 20 years later.



COMMUNITY PROFILE

Rockdale County was formed on October 18, 1870 from the northern portion of then Newton County following Conyers' growth during the Reconstruction Period. The county's name is in reference to the granite strata under much of the soil in the area.

Since its founding, Rockdale County has grown substantially. Located less than 30 miles east of downtown Atlanta, Rockdale County is comprised of suburban communities that provide small-town living in a rural setting - with easy access to Atlanta. Rockdale County is home to a variety of attractions, most notably the Georgia International Horse Park and Monastery of the Holy Spirit. The county has also acquired the designation of a "Camera Ready Community," serving as a filming location for several successful films and television shows.

TRENDS IN POPULATION

HISTORICAL AND PROJECTED GROWTH

As shown in **Table 1**, the population of Rockdale County has grown steadily since 1950, and is expected to exceed 100,000 by the year 2040, according to ARC estimates.

Table 1
Rockdale County Population

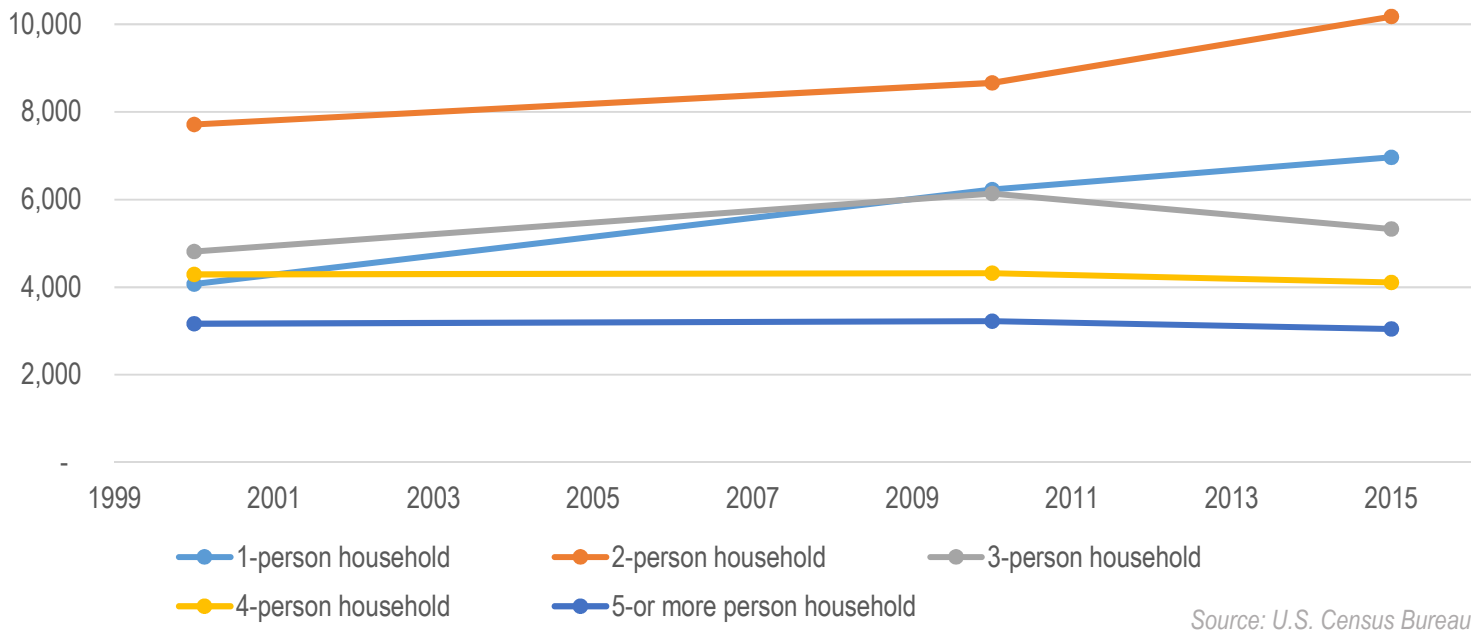
Year	Population
1950	8,464
1960	10,572
1970	18152
1980	36,747
1990	54,091
2000	70,724
2010	85,434
2015	88,856
2040 (projected)	128,103

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, ARC

HOUSEHOLD SIZE

1-person households have seen the biggest long-term growth in Rockdale County -- an increase of over 70 percent (71.13%) between 2000 and 2015. 2-person households grew substantially in the short term, increasing over 30% between 2010 and 2015. In contrast, larger household sizes (>4) have been slowly decreasing since 2000. These dramatic changes in household size typically result in higher trip generation, resulting in more overall transportation demand. These changes can be seen in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1
Household Size in Rockdale County 2000-2015

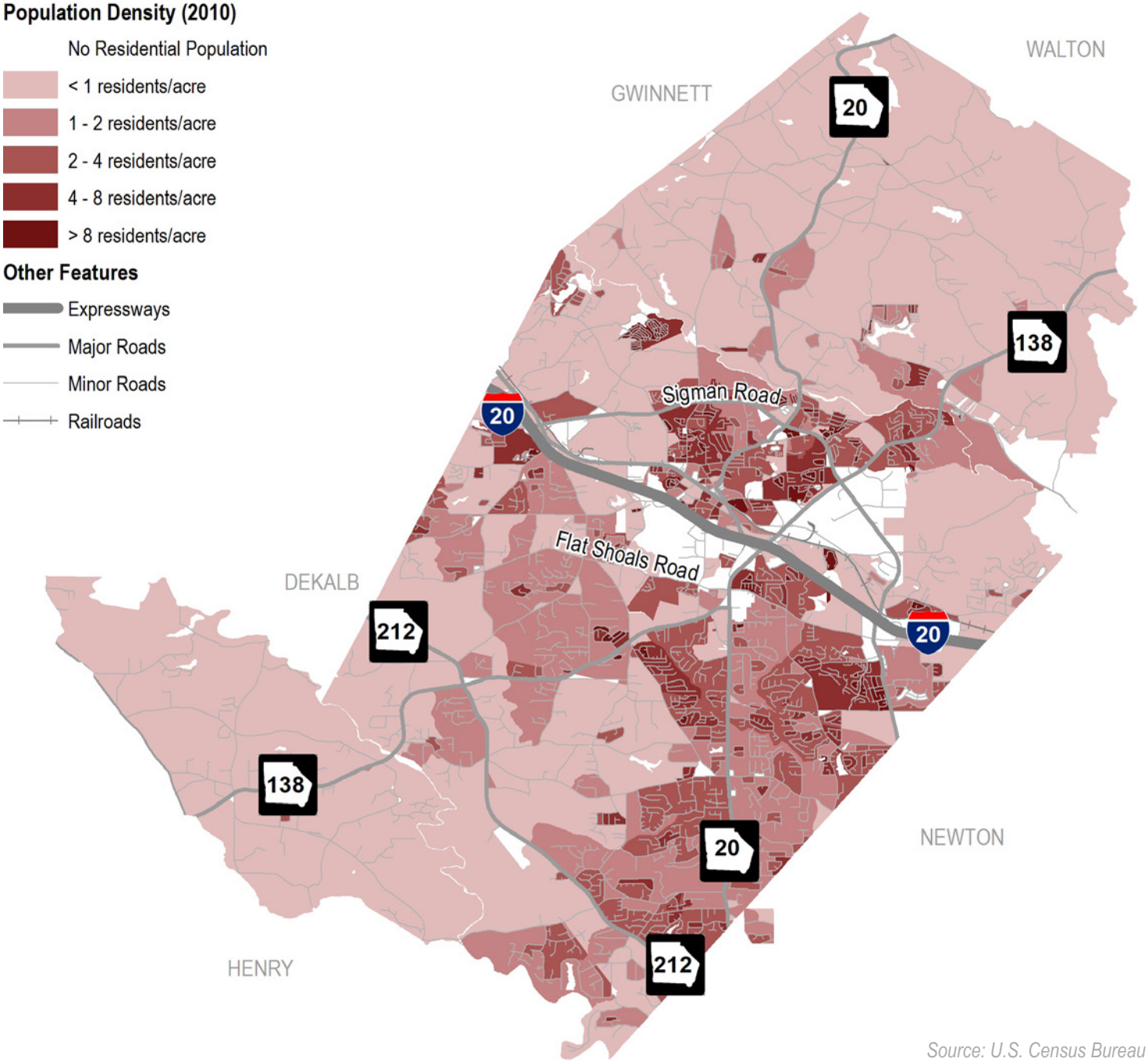


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

POPULATION DENSITY

Population within Rockdale County is heavily concentrated in the central portion of the county – particularly within the City of Conyers. As shown in **Figure 2**, areas north of Interstate 20 tend to be more densely populated than areas south of I-20, but there is a larger geographic swath of the County along the SR 138 corridor that is relatively dense and populated.

Figure 2
Population Density (2010)

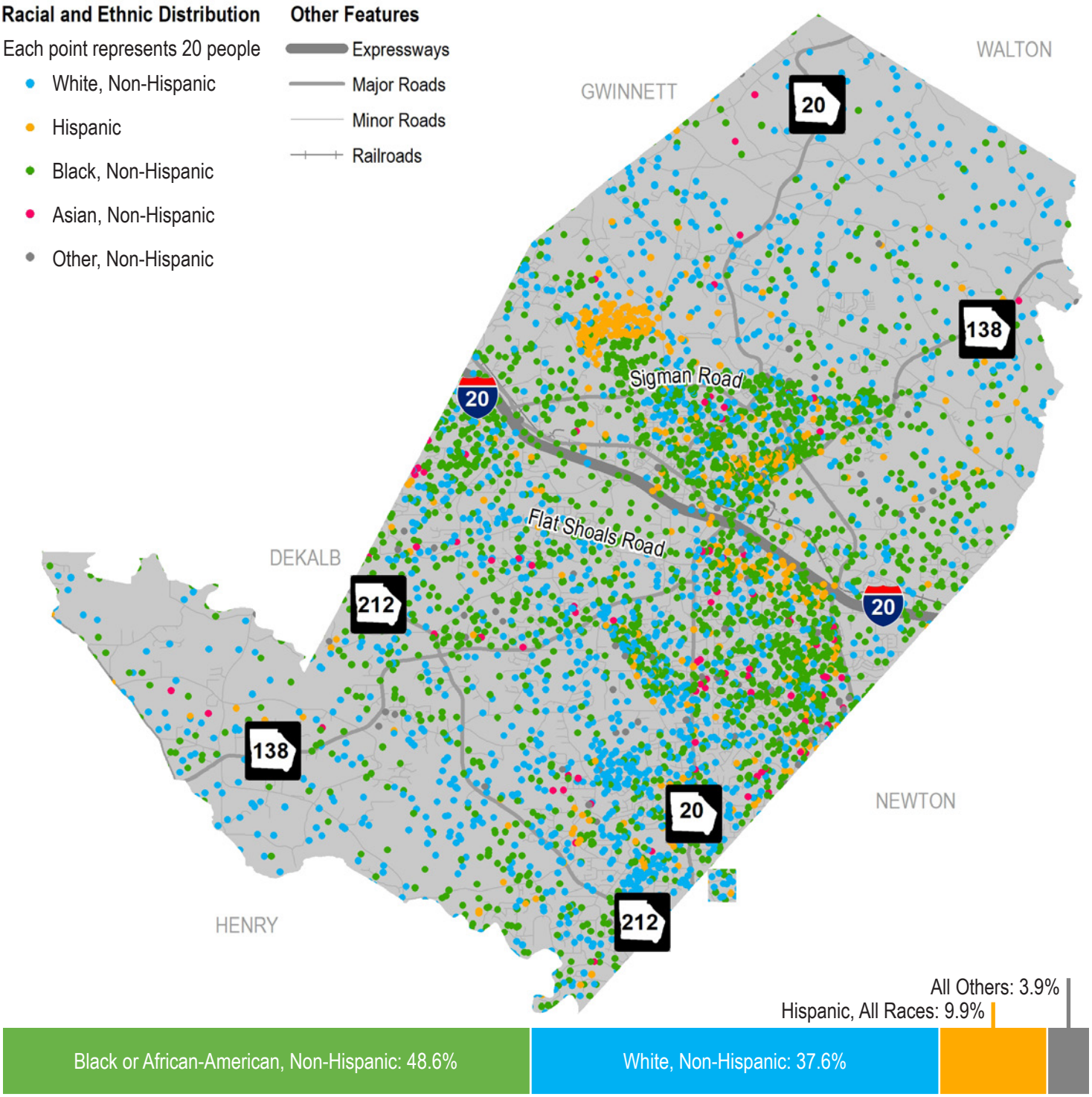


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

CHANGE IN RACIAL MAKEUP

Along with the growth in population, the racial composition of Rockdale County has become more diverse, with Hispanics being the largest minority group in the county. Specifically, the Hispanic population within Rockdale County is concentrated primarily within the Lakewood Estates community northeast of Conyers. The ethnic and racial distribution of Rockdale County's population can be seen in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3

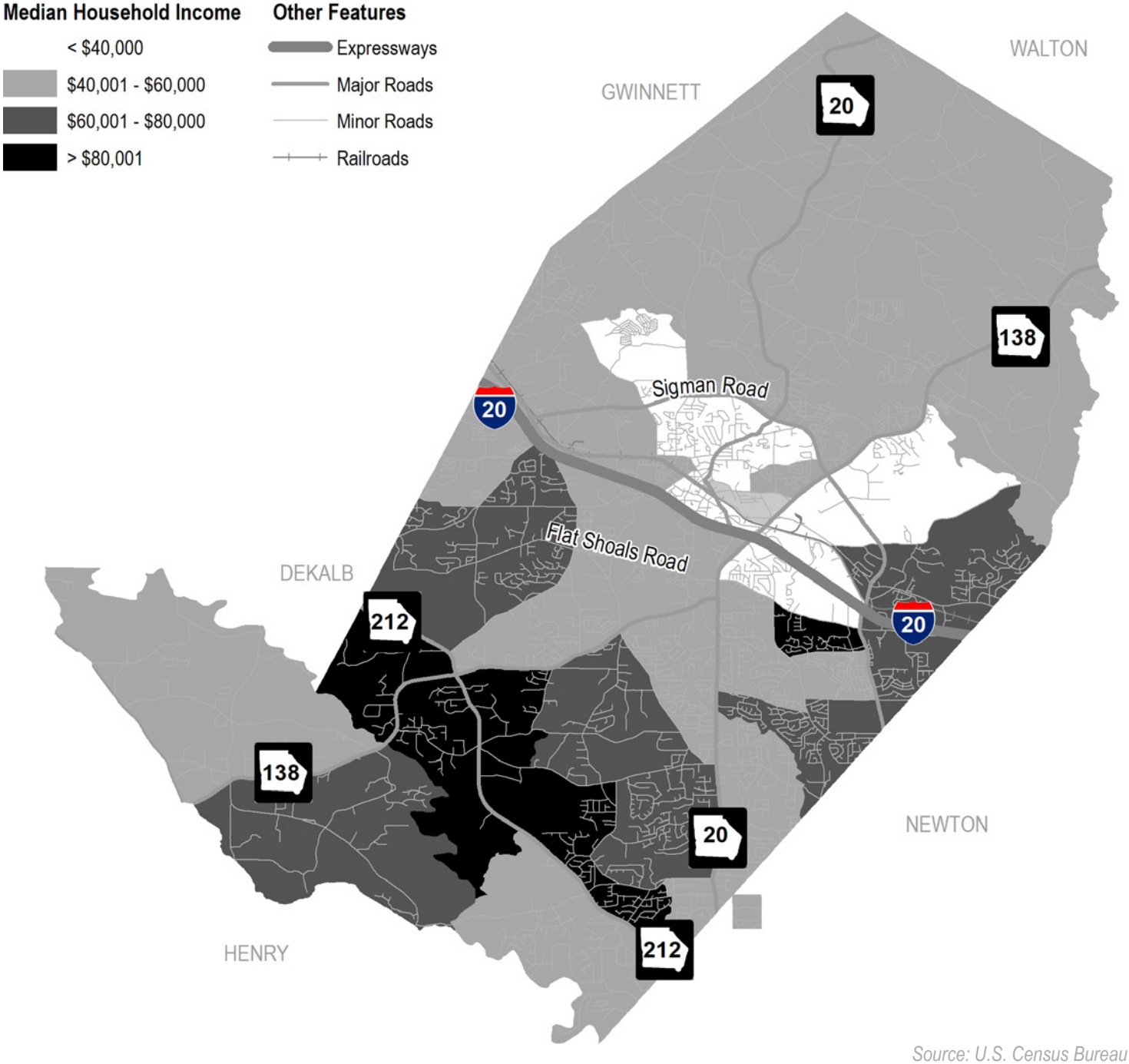


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Overall, household incomes in the central and southern portions of Rockdale County are higher than households in the northern portion, with a particularly high income area along the SR 212 corridor. In contrast, several census tracts report more than 50% of households falling under the poverty line in the Conyers and central parts of the County, as shown in **Figure 4**.

Figure 4



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LOW VEHICLE OWNERSHIP

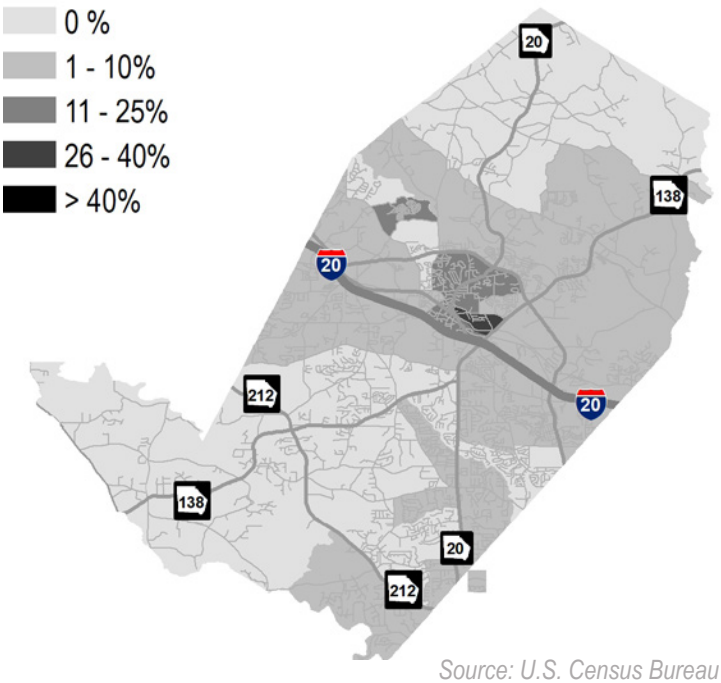
The prevalence of households with limited access to vehicles is particularly high within Conyers, as well as the Lakewood Estates Community. In both areas, the percentage of households with no vehicles available is greater than 40%. As shown in **Figure 5**, in other parts of the county, between 10 and 25% of households have access to zero vehicles.

RESIDENTS WHO BIKE TO WORK

Rockdale County has a very small percentage of residents who bike to work. There is one census tract shown in **Figure 6** near Conyers where greater than 10% of residents report biking to work.

Figure 5

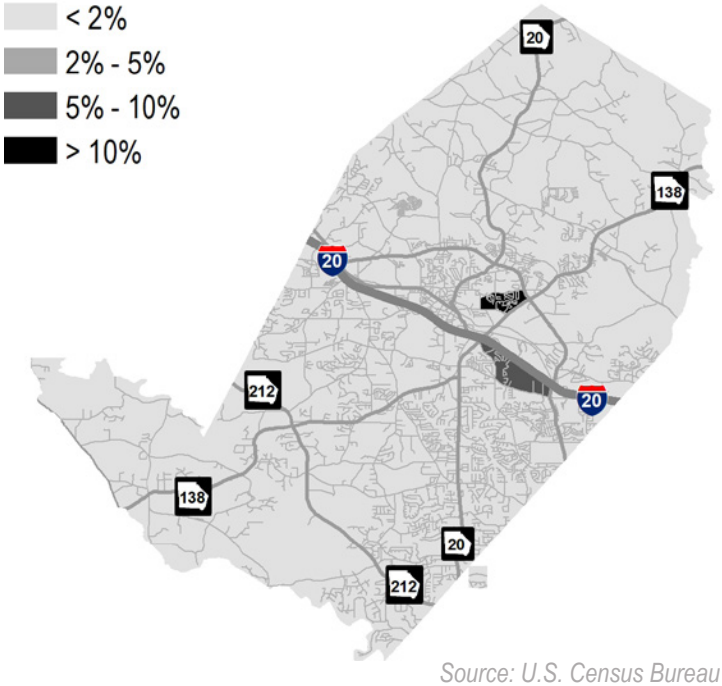
Percentage of Households With No Vehicle Available



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 6

Percentage of Residents Who Bike to Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

RESIDENTS WHO TAKE TRANSIT TO WORK

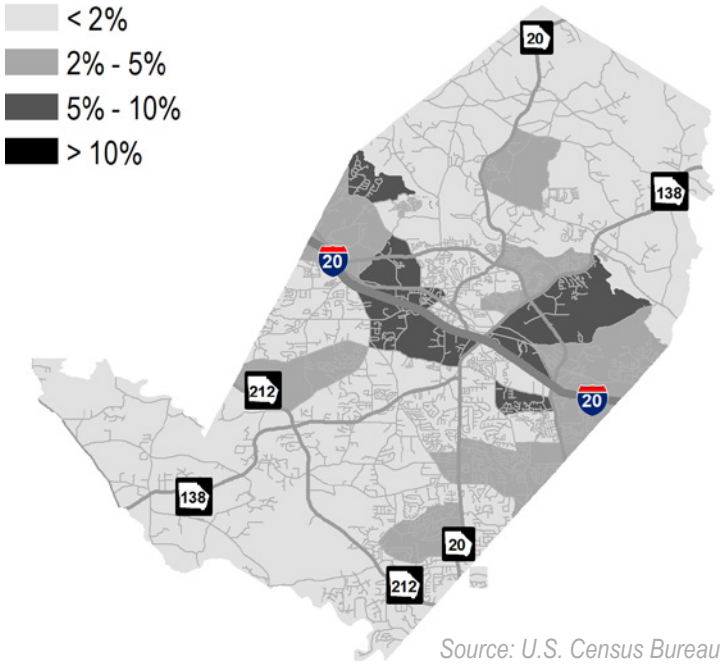
Most residents who take transit to work are in or near Conyers, and in proximity to Interstate 20 as can be seen in **Figure 7**. This is contrary to the extreme northern and southern portions of the county, where less than 2 percent of residents commute to work via transit.

RESIDENTS WHO WALK TO WORK

The number of residents who walk to work in Rockdale County is higher than those who bike or walk. More than 10% of residents who walk to work live at or near Conyers, and are close to Interstate 20., as reflected in **Figure 8** Of note, the census tracts reflecting higher percentages of residents who walk is like those that have higher percentages of residents in poverty.

Figure 7

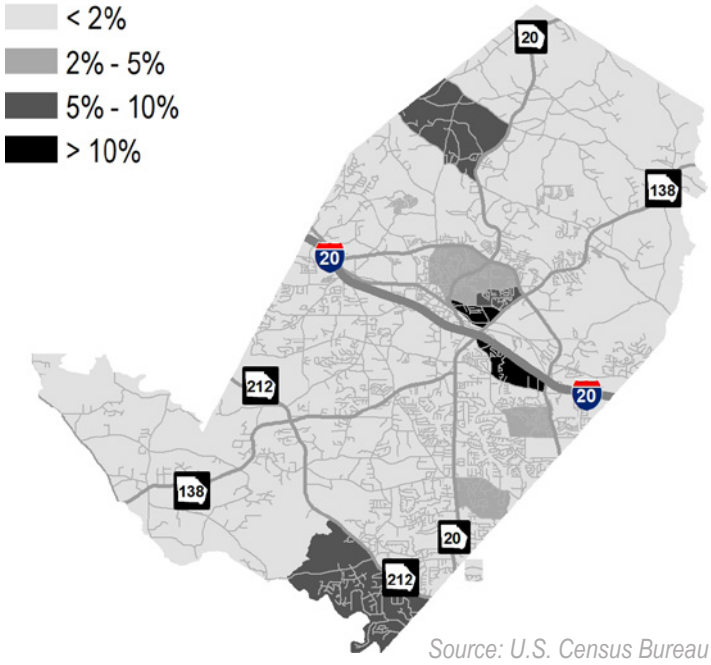
Percentage of Residents Who Take Transit to Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 8

Percentage of Residents Who Walk to Work



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

EMPLOYMENT AND WORKFORCE

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT AND PROJECTED GROWTH

As of 2015, there were over 32,000 jobs within Rockdale County. These jobs are shown by industry in **Table 2**. ARC has projected a nearly 40% increase in employment through 2040. This growth rate would result in a net increase of approximately 12,500 jobs, bringing the county's total number of jobs to over 44,600. Still, this increase is below average when compared to the projected employment growth for the Atlanta metro, which is around 44%.

CURRENT WORKFORCE

An area's workforce includes all residents that have a job, regardless of job location. A person who lives in Rockdale County but works in Dekalb County is part of Rockdale's workforce, but not part of Rockdale County's employment. Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau shown in **Table 3**, Rockdale County has approximately twice as many manufacturing jobs as manufacturing employees, and is home to many more educational professionals than educational positions.

Table 2
Employment in Rockdale County (2015)

Industry	Number
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	0-19
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	20-99
Utilities	111
Construction	3,046
Manufacturing	6,716
Wholesale Trade	688
Retail Trade	4,561
Transportation and Warehousing	585
Information	1,000-2,499
Finance and Insurance	838
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	359
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	922
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,000-2,499
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2,110
Educational Services	301
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,895
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	171
Accommodation and Food Services	4,245
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	1,213
Industries not Classified	2
Total	**32,079**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Table 3
Rockdale County Workforce (2015)

Industry	Number
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	44
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	17
Utilities	185
Construction	1,905
Manufacturing	3,054
Wholesale Trade	1,541
Retail Trade	4,319
Transportation and Warehousing	1,942
Information	1,044
Finance and Insurance	1,158
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	532
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,716
Management of Companies and Enterprises	481
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	2,876
Educational Services	2,458
Health Care and Social Assistance	4,532
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	327
Accommodation and Food Services	3,410
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	902
Public Administration	2,113
Total	**34,556**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

COMMUTE PATTERNS

Both data from the U.S. Census Bureau and surveys taken for this CTP indicate that the majority of Rockdale County's workforce commutes out of the county, and the majority of its employees commute in from other counties. Most commutes taken by Rockdale County residents are to areas west of the county – generally to Fulton and Dekalb Counties (i.e. Atlanta). A considerable amount of work trips are also made to Newton County (i.e. Covington). Rockdale County workers come from all areas around Rockdale County, with a signficant concentration of workers living in western Newton County, south of I-20 and a smaller but notable concentration living in eastern Dekalb County. Commute paths of Rockdale County Residents by ZIP Code are shown in **Figure 9,** and overall county commute statistics are shown in **Figure 10**.

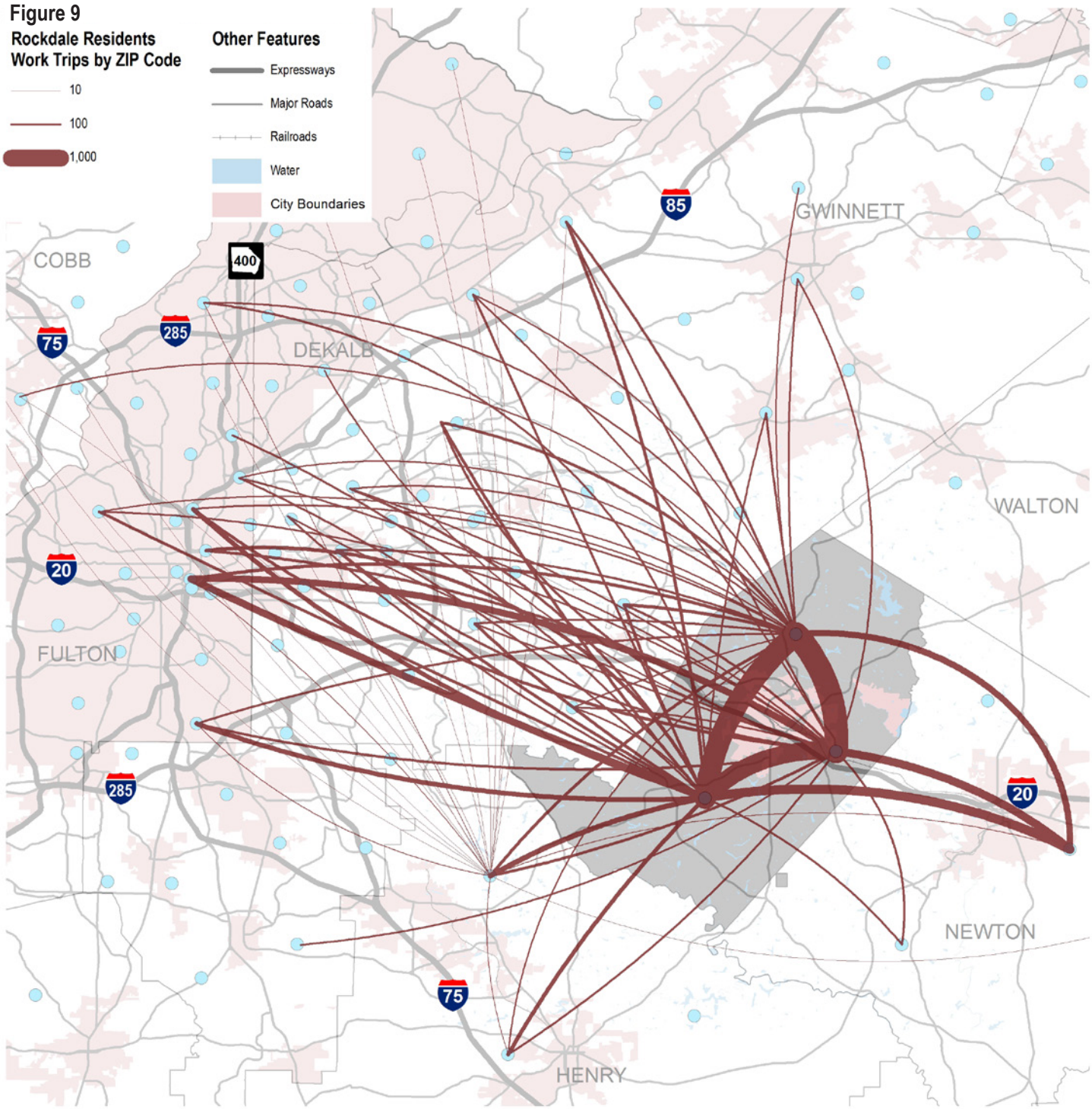
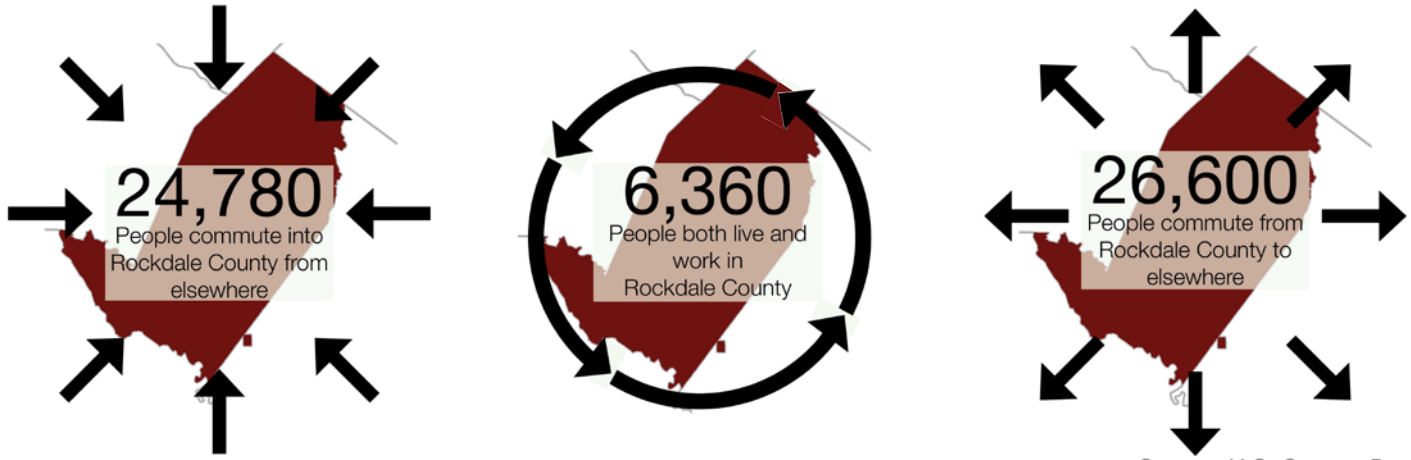


Figure 10
Overall Commute Patterns



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

LAND USE AND CHARACTER

RETAIL AREAS

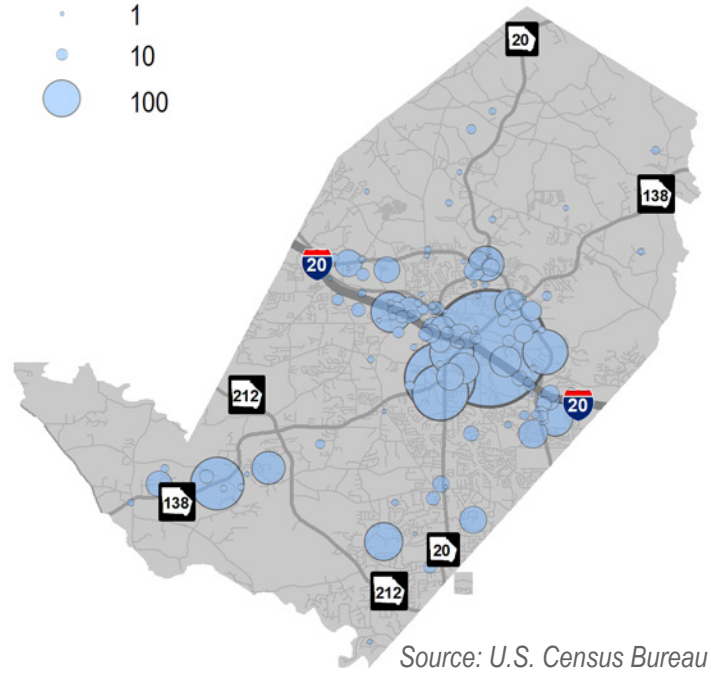
Figure 11 shows the distribution of retail-centered jobs in the county. Currently, the majority of Rockdale County's retail is concentrated in the City of Conyers – the county seat. Conyers's historic downtown (Olde Town Conyers), houses a variety of businesses, including several shops, restaurants, and several of the county's government offices. The walkability and dense nature of Olde Town Conyers supports a vibrant retail district that is an asset for both Conyers and Rockdale County overall.

Aside from the businesses within Conyers's downtown, the rest of Rockdale County's retail is concentrated in more decentralized strip mall development located near I-20 and SR 20/138. Contrary to Olde Town Conyers, the retail in these areas is mainly comprised of big-box stores, restaurants, and hotels.

FREIGHT CONCENTRATIONS

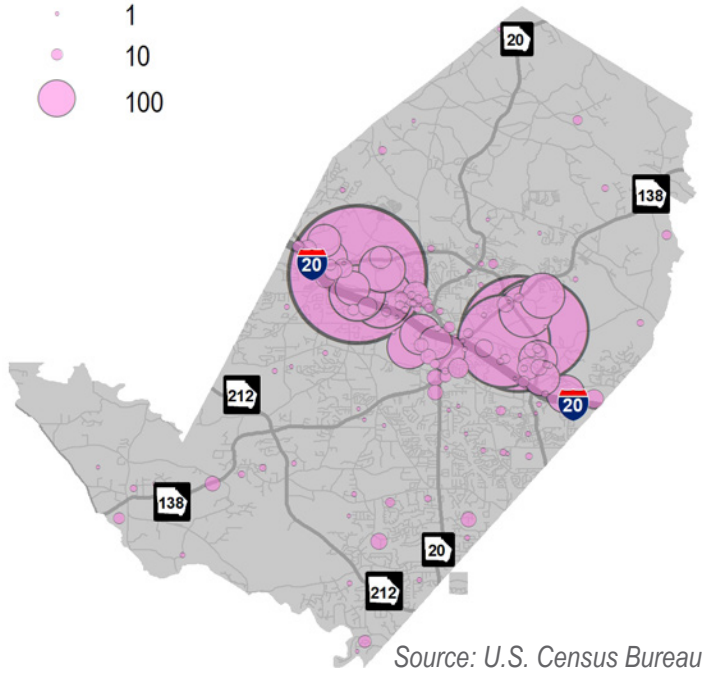
Rockdale County's location in the Atlanta metro area and its proximity to I-20 make freight activity an important part of the county's economy. **Figure 12** illustrates freight-focused employment within Rockdale County. Unsurprisingly, concentrations of freight-focused employment are in areas near Interstate 20 or other major roads. In the more rural areas of the county, there is little to no freight- focused employment.

Figure 11
Retail-Centered Jobs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 12
Freight-Centered Jobs



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

COMMUNITY AMENITIES

As mentioned previously, the City of Conyers is where much of Rockdale County's activity is concentrated. The concentration of retail and municipal services in Olde Towne Conyers make the city's historic downtown a cultural and civic hub for Rockdale County. However, Rockdale County's semi-rural landscape has allowed the county to preserve greenspace for recreation purposes. Several of these facilities include the Georgia International Horse Park, Johnson Park Recreation Center, and Panola Mountain State Park, among others.

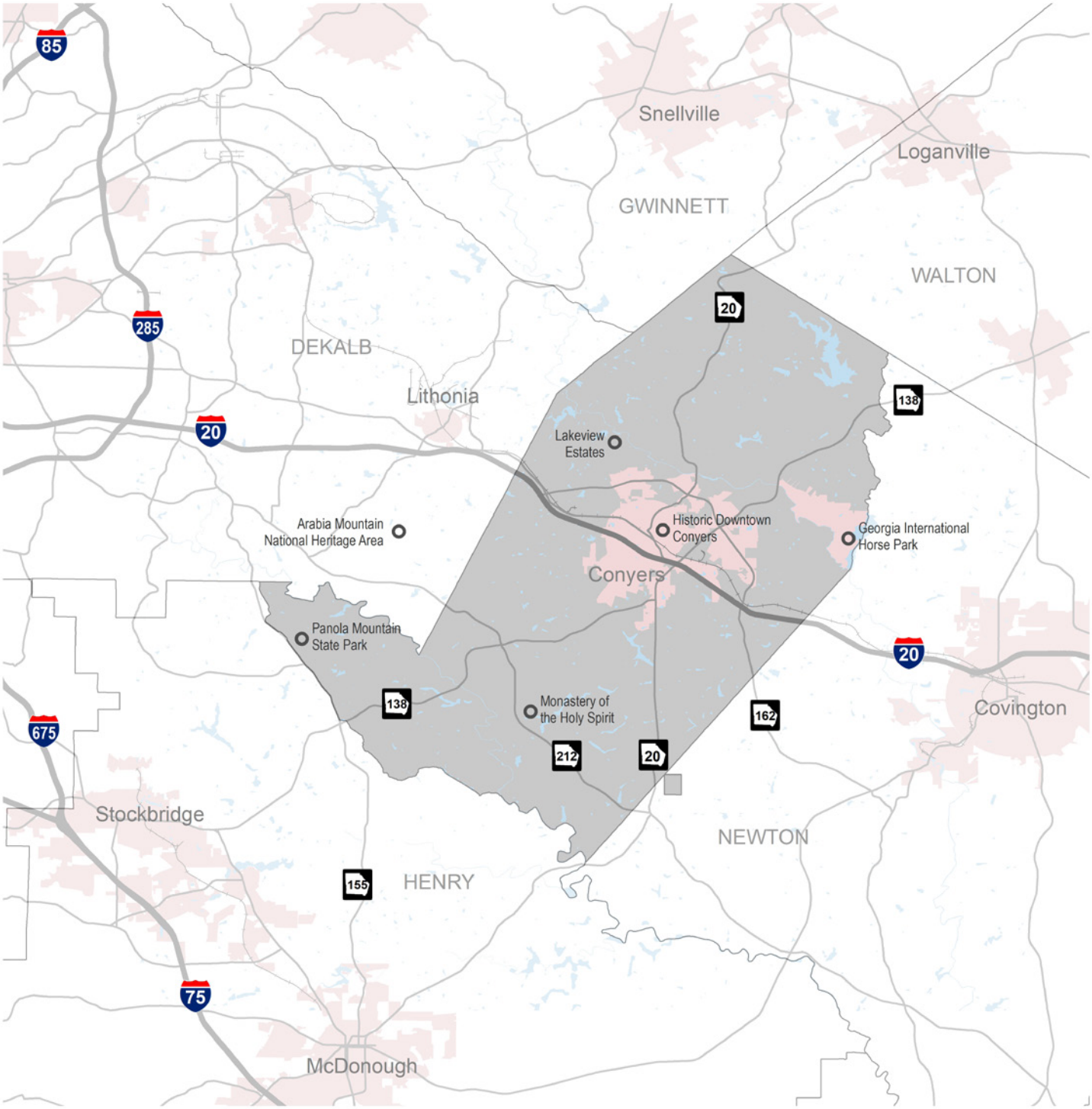
Additionally, the county has prioritized recreation, mainly in the form of multi-use trails. While many of the multi-use trails and bike facilities are within Conyers city boundaries, this infrastructure also extends to some of Rockdale County's more rural areas, underscoring recreation as an important community amenity in Rockdale County.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Much of residential development in Rockdale County is classified as medium density, mainly in the form of single-family residences. However, pockets of higher density residential development (primarily apartment complexes) are located near Olde Town Conyers. Low density residential development is concentrated almost exclusively in south east Rockdale County which is more rural in nature.

RURAL AND UNDEVELOPED AREAS

Given that Rockdale County's population and density is concentrated within the City of Conyers, most of the county's rural landscape is located outside of Conyers city boundaries, closer to the boundaries of Henry and Walton counties. Much of the undeveloped land in Rockdale County is comprised primarily of wooded areas and fields.


85
Snellville
Loganville
GWINNETT
WALTON
20
285
DEKALB
Lithonia
138
20
Lakeview Estates
Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area
Historic Downtown Conyers
Georgia International Horse Park
Conyers
Panola Mountain State Park
20
138
Monastery of the Holy Spirit
162
Covington
675
212
20
Stockbridge
NEWTON
155
HENRY
75
McDonough

LEGACY OF PLANNING

FEDERAL INITIATIVES

MAP 21

Signed into law by President Obama in July 2012, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) reauthorized over $105 billion in funding between 2013 and 2014 for states to use towards transportation infrastructure projects. Aside from serving as a funding mechanism, the MAP 21 bill also redesigned the basis on how projects were assessed –which was meant to more adequately reflect an increasingly multi-modal and sustainable U.S. transportation network. With respect to transportation planning, the MAP – 21 bill upholds the requirement of short-term transportation improvement program (TIP), as well as long-range plans – both of which include projects that seek to achieve the performance-based goals outlined in MAP-21. These goal areas include: safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays.

FAST ACT

A supplement to the previous MAP-21 bill, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was enacted in December 2015 by President Obama - the first piece of federal legislation in over a decade that provides $305 billion for surface transportation infrastructure initiatives. As with MAP 21, the FAST Act encourages an inclusive planning process reflected in public-private partnerships, and upholds the same performance-based measures used to assess project success. Increased mobility, economic growth, accelerated project delivery, and innovative practices are all goals of projects funded by the FAST Act.

STATE INITIATIVES

STATEWIDE PLAN

The latest update to the Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP) was released by GDOT in January 2016, building upon much of the work conducted to formulate the previous SWTP in 2006. Unlike previous plans, the 2040 SWTP, in conjunction with the Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP), provides a framework for long-range transportation planning by incorporating technical transportation analysis with the fiscal evaluations needed to effectively develop projects.

REGIONAL PLANNING

I-20 MARTA

Steady population and employment growth around DeKalb County, increasing congestion, and limited roadway options have raised concerns over the future state of the I-20 East Corridor. Following an identification of the corridor's transportation needs, assessment of transit alternatives, and screening of alternatives, MARTA released plans for the I-20 East Corridor Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in 2012. The I-20 East Corridor LPA recommends an extension of MARTA's green-line heavy rail system past Indian Creek Station to the Mall at Stonecrest, as well as bus rapid transit (BRT) service along I-20 from downtown Atlanta to I-285. The combination of extending heavy rail transit and adding bus rapid transit along the corridor would not only address issues regarding mobility and accessibility along the corridor, but also support economic development and revitalization efforts.

I-20 MANAGED LANES

The 2010 Managed Lanes System Plan (MLSP) and recent Managed Lanes Implementation Plan (MLIP) are studies coordinated by GDOT to assess the functionality of integrating priced managed lane projects into the Atlanta metro's interstate and limited-access facilities. Along with other initiatives at the local, state, and national level, the purpose of these plans is to improve mobility across the Atlanta metro in a manner that is efficient, safe, and cost-effective. As part of these plans, over 20 areas were identified as potential candidates for added managed lanes – one of which was the I-20 East corridor in Rockdale County. The MLIP found this corridor feasible for potentially integrating managed lanes and/or dynamic flex lanes, as well as movable barriers. However, these recommendations were not included in the RTP.

CONCEPT 3

Adopted by the Transit Planning Board in August 2008, Concept 3 is a multi-modal plan that outlines MARTA's 30-year vision to upgrade and expand its current system into an integrated, high-capacity, regional network. Some elements of the Concept 3 plan include heavy rail line extensions, commuter rail lines, streetcar lines, and bus rapid transit. Providing increased service, more travel options, and connection to regional activity centers would allow riders to more easily traverse the metro area, therefore strengthening the overall function of MARTA's system. The I-20 East Corridor Project is one project of the Concept 3 plan involving Rockdale County, shown below in **Figure 13.**

Figure 13
Excerpt of Concept 3 Map

Network depicted as modeled by the Atlanta Regional Commission, November 2012

Map is not to scale

ARC FREIGHT STUDY

Recognizing the significance of the Atlanta metro in nationwide freight mobility, the Atlanta Regional Commission released its first Freight Mobility Plan in February 2008, with assistance from the Atlanta Regional Freight Task Force and GDOT. The plan addresses policy and infrastructure challenges facing freight movement, and identifies opportunities for increased coordination and efficiency – with the goal of enhancing the economic vitality of the metro area. Some of the recommendations from the report include developing a region wide truck route plan, preserving freight-supportive land use guidelines and zoning ordinances, and implementing performance measures to assess freight-related projects.

Given the growth in freight activity throughout the Atlanta metro, the ARC released its update to the Regional Freight Mobility Plan in 2016, building on several of the recommendations made in the 2008 version. In both plans, the I-20 East Corridor in Rockdale County is identified as one of the region's major freight activity clusters, generating a significant amount of the region's freight movement. The increased activity along the corridor raises concerns over congestion, to which the plans recommend infrastructure improvements, primarily in the form of road widenings (i.e. Sigman Road, Conyers Road/Loganville Highway). These recommendations are reflected as recommendations in the ARC RTP.

ARC'S WALK. BIKE. THRIVE!

As part of its commitment to increase bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure across metro Atlanta, the Atlanta Regional Commission released its "Walk, Bike, Thrive!" plan in 2016. The plan describes ARC's "active transportation strategy" – one that seeks to provide bike and pedestrian infrastructure that is safe, accessible, and well-connected to the region's transportation system. Aside from overall upgrades and additions to the region's bicycle and pedestrian network, a notable goal of the Walk. Bike. Thrive! plan is to create a regional trail system shown in **Figure 14**, linking local trails with trails of regional significance. Creating such a network of inter-connected, multi-purpose trails would provide greater transit and recreational opportunities, revitalize surrounding areas, and create a greater sense of place – all which can improve quality of life.

ARC 2040: WINNING THE FUTURE

Originally adopted by the Atlanta Regional Commission in 2011, ARC 2040 is a long-term, comprehensive blueprint that outlines the agency and its cooperating partners' plan for addressing the social, environmental, and economic vitality of the Atlanta region. Aspects of Plan 2040 include a $61 billion investment in transportation improvements, Regional Agenda for land use, and continuation of both the Livable Centers and Lifeline Communities Initiative programs – all of which will continue the ARC vision of improving quality of life for residents across the Atlanta region.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM + REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

In the ARC region, short-term transportation initiatives are articulated in a fiscally constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and a Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The projects in the TIP are anticipated to utilize some amount of federal or state funding in the next 5 years in order to advance. In some projects' cases, funding may be committed for construction, in which case projects are considered to be "Programmed." Conversely some other projects may only have funding committed for preliminary engineering and their overall implementation status remains "Long Range."

Figure 14
Regional Trail System Concept from ARC's Walk, Bike, Thrive! Plan

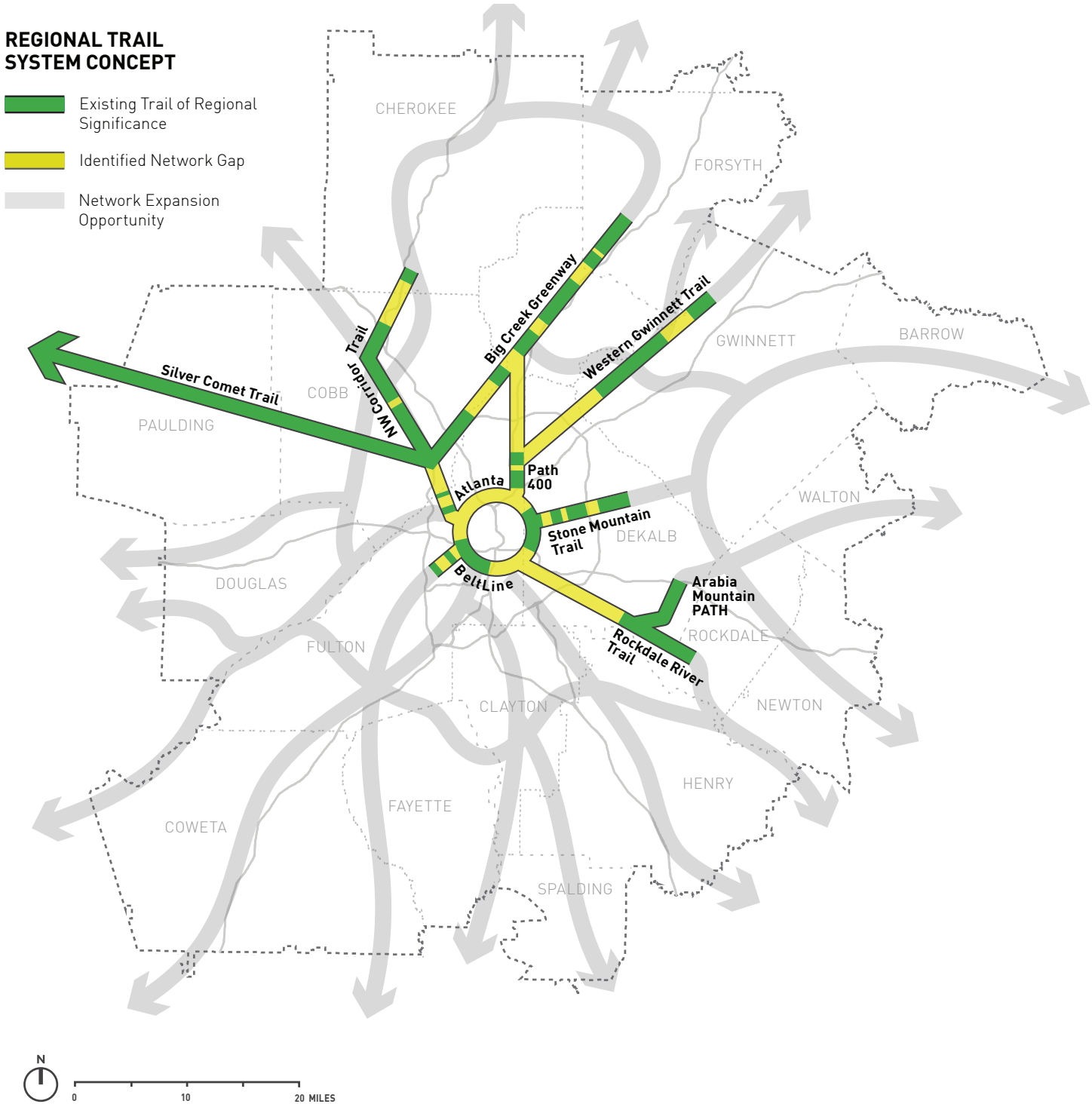


Table 4
Regional Transportation Plan Projects in Rockdale County

ARC PROJECT NUMBER	GDOT PI NUMBER	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LENGTH (MI)	SERVICE TYPE	PHASE	REMAINING PHASES FUNDED IN TIP
RO-015F	None	Millers Chapel Road Widening (from SR 138 (south) to SR 20/McDonough Highway)	0.6	Roadway / General Purpose Capactity	Long Range	None
RO-025C	None	Flat Shoals Road Widening (from Old Salem Road to Salem Road)	1.4	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-138B	0002040	SR 138/Stockbridge Highway Operations and Safety Improvements (from east of Almand Creek to East of Amherst Lane)	1.1	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Programmed	ROW: $327,000 CST: $1,052,170
RO-138C	721582-	Old Salem Road Connector - Realignment and Intersection Reconstruction (from Iris Drive west of SR 20/138 to Iris Drive east of SR 20/138)	0.8	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Programmed	ROW: $22,506,300 CST: $3,093,090
RO-206	0013628	SR 162/Salem Road Widening (from Flat Shoals Road in Rockdale Cnty to Old Salem Road in Newton Cnty)	1.9	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Programmed	ROW: $14,544,000 UTL: $1,513,260 CST: $13,015,974
RO-217A	None	Old Salem Road Widening (from Flat Shoals Road to 650 feet north of Salem Gate Drive)	1.0	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-217B	0006078	Old Salem Road Widening (from Flat Shoals Road to 650 feet north of Salem Gate Drive)	3.4	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-222B	None	East Freeway Drive Extension: Phase II - New Alignment (from Old McDonough Highway to Parker Road)	0.6	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-235A	0006931	Sigman Road Extension / Hayden Quarry Road - New Alignment (from DeKalb Cnty line to I-20 at Sigman Road)	0.9	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-235C	0013163	Sigman Road Widening (from east of Lester Road to Irwin Bridge Road)	1.3	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Programmed	CST: $12,938,876
RO-235D	0013594	Sigman Road Widening (from Irwin Bridge Road to SR 138)	2.9	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Programmed	PE: $2,450,000

Table 4 (continued)
Regional Transportation Plan Projects in Rockdale County

ARC PROJECT NUMBER	GDOT PI NUMBER	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	LENGTH (MI)	SERVICE TYPE	PHASE	REMAINING PHASES FUNDED IN TIP
RO-235E1	0013594	Sigman Road Widening (from SR 20/138/Walnut Grove Road to Old Covington Road/Dogwood Drie)	2.4	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Programmed	PE: $500,000
RO-237	0006932	Klondike Road Intersection Realignment (at McDaniel Mill Road)	N/A	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Programmed	UTL: $21,933 CST: $3,221,915
RO-242A	0007869	SR 20/Loganville Highway Widening (from Sigman Road to Pleasant Hill Road)	7.1	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Long Range	None
RO-243	0006934	Courtesy Parkway Extension / I-20 Overpass - New Alignment (from current alignment of Courtesy Parkway south of Old Covington Highway to intersection of Flat Shoals Road and Mission Ridge Drive)	1.5	Roadway / General Purpose Capacity	Programmed	ROW: $9,100,000
RO-247	0006697	Georgia Veterans Memorial Park in Rockdale County	N/A	Last Mile Connectivity/ Pedestrian Facility	Programmed	CST: $2,227,356
RO-256	0012886	Sigman Road Multi-Use Trail - Segment 1 (from east of Lester Road to Irwin Bridge Road)	1.3	Last Mile Connectivity/ Joint Bike-Ped Facilities	Programmed	CST: $216,854
RO-257	0012816	SR 138/Old McDonough Highway Signal Upgrades (at Old Salem Road)	N/A	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Programmed	ROW: $100,000 CST: $260,000
RO-258	0015099	I-20 Interchange Lighting Improvements (at Sigman Road and SR 162/Salem Road)	N/A	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Programmed	CST: $1,300,000
RO-259	0015100	Honey Creek Road Bridge Replacement (at Snapping Shoals Creek)	0.2	Roadway / Bridge Upgrade	Programmed	ROW: $50,000 CST: $2,500,000
RO-AR-138	731048-	I-20 East Interchange Improvements (at SR 20/138/Walnut Grove Road/ McDonough Highway)	0.3	Roadway / Interchange Capacity	Programmed	ROW: $10,452,333

LOCAL PLANNING

LIVABLE CENTERS INITIATIVE (LCI)

Created by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) in 1999, the Livable Centers Initiative is a program that provides funding on a competitive basis to municipalities and other entities seeking to pursue planning projects related to transportation and community development. By effectively linking transportation and land use development strategies, the LCI program seeks to achieve numerous goals, including promoting multi modal access, mixed income residential development, and inclusive community engagement. Since its inception the LCI program has awarded over $200 million in funding to 120 communities across the ARC's jurisdiction, many of which have been successfully implemented.

Rockdale County has been the recipient of several LCI projects, the first of which was the City of Conyers LCI Study in 2001. The study identified four distinct activity centers within Conyers in where there was potential for development. The recommendations provided in the report for the activity centers focused on mixed-use, infill development, increased residential development, as well as a zoning overlay district to be established within the four activity centers.

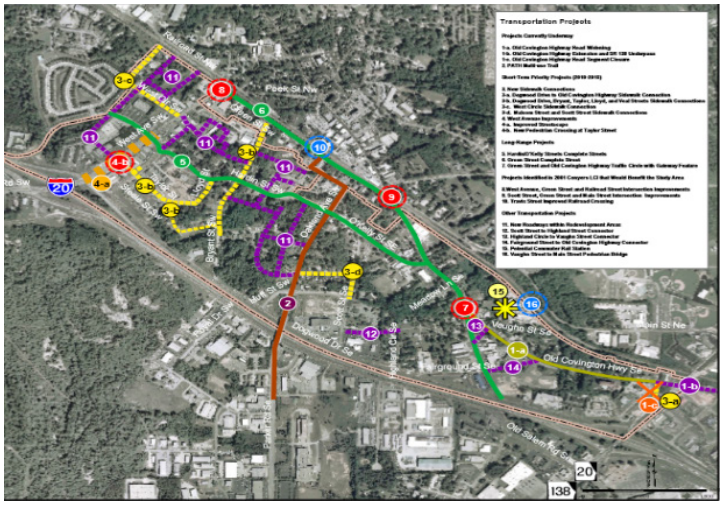
Following the 2001 report and a 2006 update to the first LCI, Conyers was again awarded funding to conduct the Central Conyers Activity Center LCI in 2008. Specifically, this project sought to connect Olde Town Conyers to the study area identified, south of the city's historic downtown. Numerous recommendations were provided in the study, including the creation of a "Town Green", surrounding mixed-use and residential development, and complete street upgrades along Green Street and O'Kelly Street. Many of these recommendations were geared towards increasing walkability in around Conyers' downtown area in a manner that was efficient and aesthetically pleasing.

CONYERS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

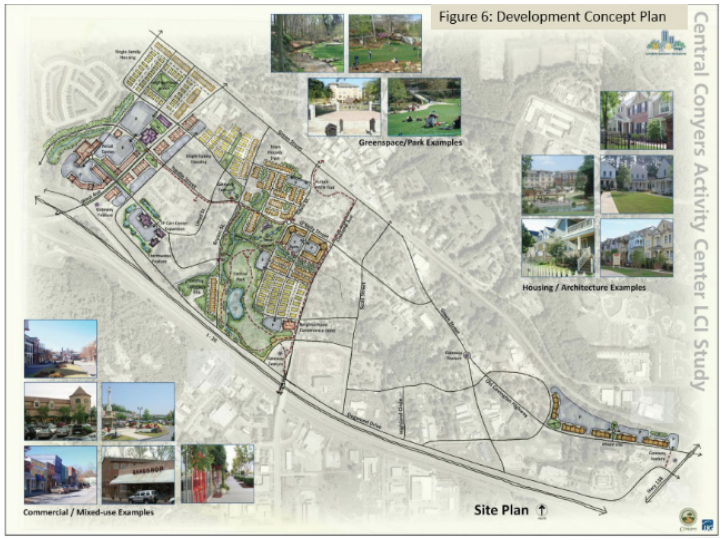
As per the Georgia Planning Act, the City of Conyers has created a comprehensive plan that outlines the municipality's vision with regards to planning efforts. The most recent partial update to the plan (2008) also recommends some of the same development strategies outlined in previous programs (i.e. residential infill development, historic preservation), as well as new recommendations (i.e. protecting impaired waters, functional consolidation of municipal services). An update to the City of Conyers Comprehensive Plan is anticipated by October 2018.

ROCKDALE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan for Rockdale County was partially updated in 2008. While it is considered independent of the Conyers Comprehensive Plan, many of the recommendations provided in the Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan mirror suggestions



Transportation Concept for Central Conyers Activity Center LCI
Source: Central Conyers Activity Center LCI

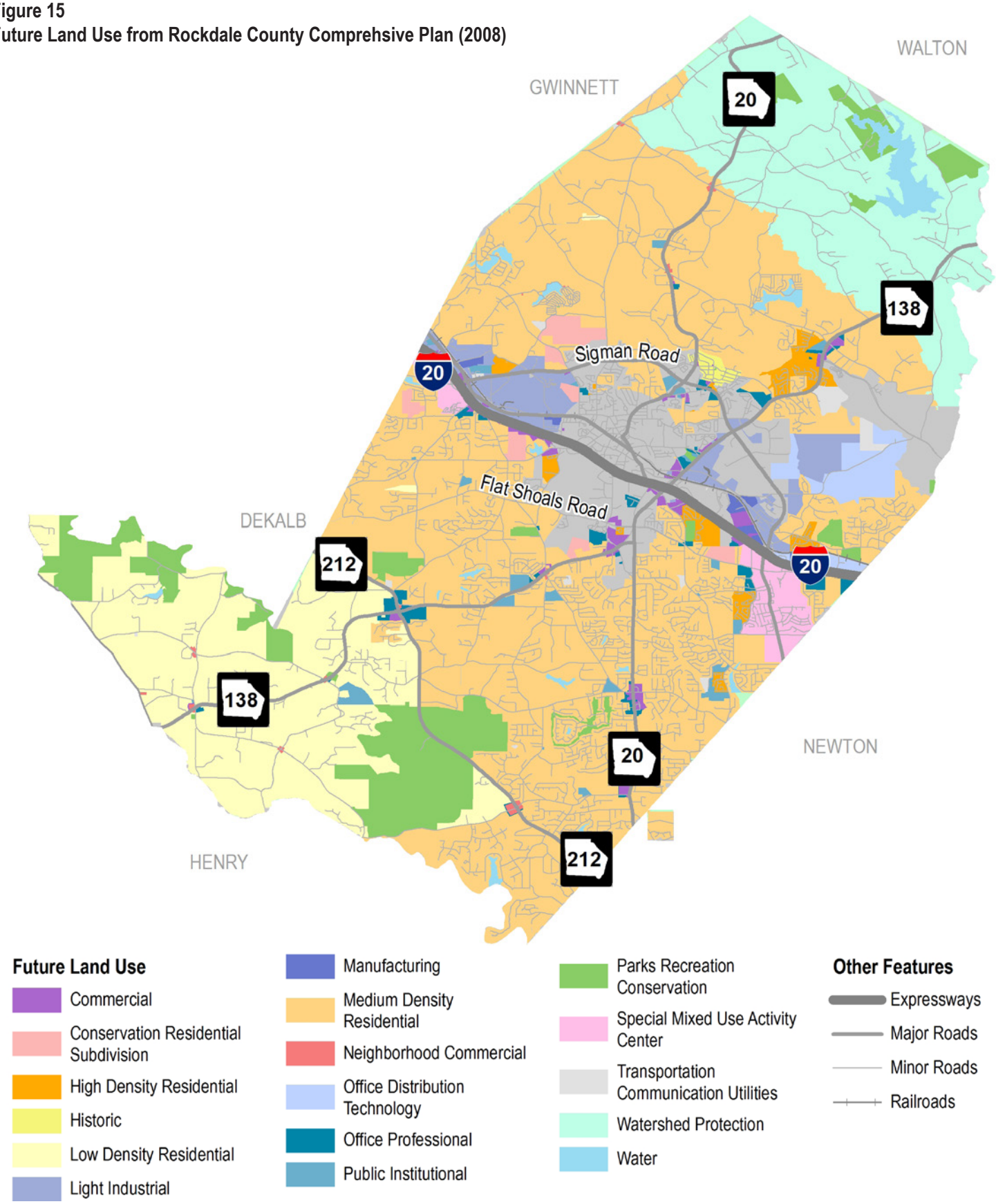


Development Concept for Central Conyers Activity Center LCI
Source: Central Conyers Activity Center LCI

discussed in both the Conyers LCI and Comprehensive Plan. With regards to development patterns, the recommendations set forth in the updated comprehensive plan are relatively consistent to what has been proposed in the past. A map of Future Land Use from this plan is shown in **Figure 15**.

Recommendations were made to continue the pattern of focusing density within the City of Conyers and central portion of Rockdale County. Specifically, the Salem Road Corridor and Stonecrest area were identified as zones for potential redevelopment – both of which were included in the Conyers Comprehensive Plan.

Figure 15
Future Land Use from Rockdale County Comprehsive Plan (2008)



Rockdale 2040, is an update to the previous iteration of the county's Comprehensive plan from 2008. The update will provide new recommendations guiding growth in the county over the next 20 years in terms of land use, transportation, economic development, and other elements of development as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The new plan will take into consideration the recommendations provided in the 2008 update, as well as new recommendations derived following technical analyses and public involvement. Although specific to Rockdale County, the Rockdale 2040 plan does follow framework set forth in ARC's The Atlanta Region's Plan (Plan 2040). The plan is ongoing and is expected to be completed by October 2018.

ROCKDALE SPLOST

As with many other local and county jurisdictions across Georgia, Rockdale County has participated in the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) program. The law, passed by the Georgia Legislature in 1985, allows counties and cities to enact an optional 1% sales tax that would fund capital projects. The funds from the SPLOST program are managed by an Oversight Committee of county volunteers. This Oversight Committee is also tasked with prioritizing the project list and monitoring projects through completion.

PREVIOUS COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Rockdale County last completed a CTP in December 2009. As with this CTP, the previous effort examined demographic data and existing transportation conditions, referenced external plans, and made recommendations for improvements to the County's transportation network. Maps of the plan's recommendations are shown in **Figures 16 and 17.** Many of these recommended projects have been completed, and others will be updated or removed based on the changing needs in the community. Completed projects are identified in **Table 5**.

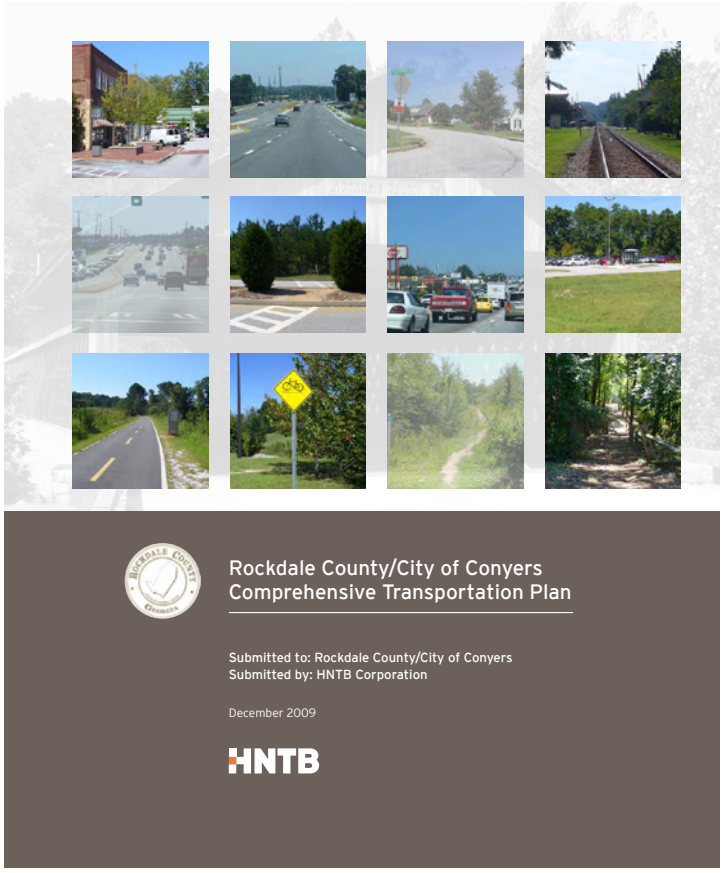


Figure 16
Vehicular Recommendations from the 2009 CTP

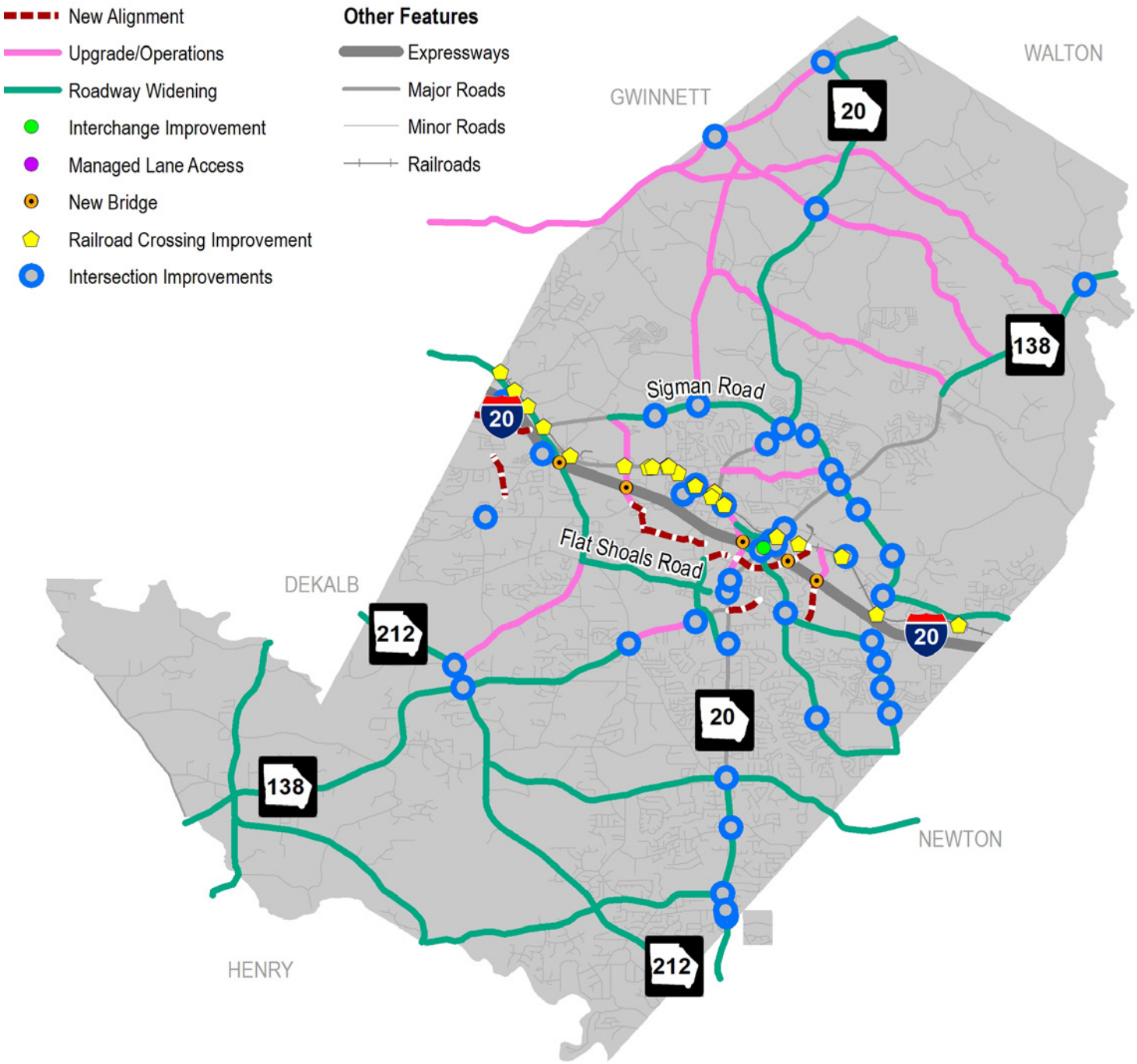


Figure 17
Bike and Pedestrian Improvements from the 2009 CTP

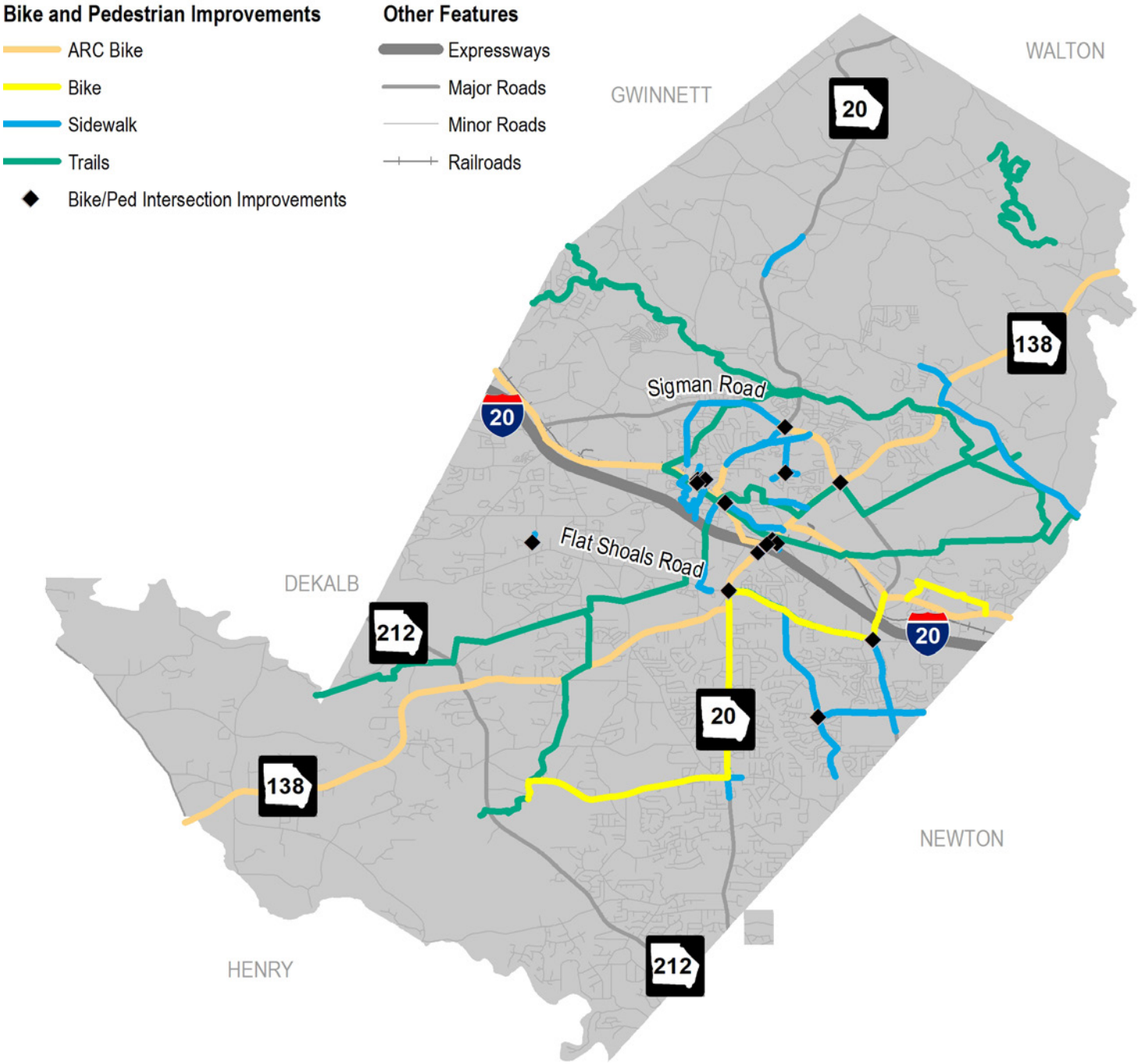


Table 5
Completed Projects from Previous CTP

PROJECT REF NUM	PROJECT TYPE	CORRIDOR	FROM/ MAJOR	TO/MINOR	IMPROVEMENT DESCRIPTION
139*	Widening	Parker Road	Culpepper Road	SR 138	Widen from 2 lanes to 4 lanes
142	Upgrade/ Operations	Railroad Street	Center Street	West Avenue	Traffic operation improvements and signalization on 2 lanes
145	Upgrade/ Operations	Eastview Road	SR 20/Sigman Road	Millstead Avenue	
202	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Iris Drive	McDaniel Mill Road	Upgrade from T-intersection, one-way stop to added right turn lane on EB of Iris Drive + left turn lane on WB
203	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Millers Chapel Road	SR 20	Signalization
204	New Alignment	N/A	Milstead Road	Milstead Avenue	Signalization & realigmnet, added turn lanes
205	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	North Salem Road/Sigman Road	Old Covington Road NE	Upgrade from signalized, one-lane facilities to added left turn lanes on each approach, and added right turn on three approaches
206	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Old Salem Road	McCalla Road	Upgrade from signalized to added left turns on Old Salem Road onto McCalla Road and Evergreen Drive, and right turn lane on McCalla Road onto Old Salem Road
207	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Pleasant Hill Road	Lenora Church Road	Upgrade from signalized to added left turn lanes on Pleasant Hill Road and Lenora Church Road; added right turn lane along Pleasant Hill Road
208	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Sigman Road	Gees Mill Road	Upgrade from four-way stop control to signalized intersection; added left turn lanes and right turn laes at all four intersection approaches
225	Upgrade/ Operations	N/A	Sigman Road	E View Road	Upgrade from two-way stop control; added signlization and added turn lanes on Sigman Road
300	Bridge Upgrade	N/A	Irwin Bridge Road	Yellow River	Bridge Upgrade
308	Bridge Upgrade	N/A	Bailey Creek Road	Bailey Creek	Bridge Upgrade
309	Bridge Upgrade	N/A	SR 212	Honey Creek	Bridge Upgrade
403	Sidewalk	Flat Shoals Road	Hunting Creek Drive	Old Salem Road	New sidewalk

* Project 139 was originally set from Culpepper Drive to SR 20. The section from Culpepper Road to SR 138 has been completed, and the project has been revised to only include the section between SR 138 and SR 20

Table 5 (continued)
Completed Projects from Previous CTP

PROJECT REF NUM	PROJECT TYPE	CORRIDOR	FROM/ MAJOR	TO/MINOR	IMPROVEMENT DESCRIPTION
406A	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	West Avenue	North Streeet & Railroad Street	Paint crosswalks
407A	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	SR 20/138	Dogwood Drive	Paint crosswalks
410A	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	Sigman Road	Milstead Avenue	Construct pedestrian crossing islands
411	Sidewalk	Milstead Ave	Turner Street	Sigman Road	New sidewalk
412	Sidewalk	Parker Road & Flat Shoals Road	Culpepper Drive	East of Parker Road	New sidewalk
416A	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	Old Salem Road	McCalla Road	Paint crosswalks and construct pedestrian crossing islands
421	Sidewalk	South Main Street	Pine Log Road	SR 20	New sidewalk
422	Sidewalk	Irwin Bridge Road	Lakeview Drive	Sigman Road	New sidewalk
426	Sidewalk	Underwood Road	Old Salem Road	Underwood Drive	New sidewalk
448	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	SR 20	SR 138	Construct pedestrian crossing islands
450	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	SR 138	Sigman Road	Paint crosswalks and construct pedestrian crossing islands
451	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	SR 20/138	I-20 Interchange	Paint croswalks
500	Rail Crossing Improvements	N/A	Plunkett Road	Rail Crossing	Repave markings, place advanced warning signs
421A	Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements	N/A	South Main Street	Pine Log Road	Paint crosswalks and construct pedestrian crossing islands
441**	Multi-Use Trail	Olde Town Conyers Trail	Green Street and Oakland Avenue	Johnson Park	New multi-use trail

* Project 441 originally extended from SR 20/138 south of Pine Log Road to South Rockdale Community Park. A central section of the trail was completed, with the norther section in new project 441A and southern section in new project 441C.

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In order to best serve the community of Rockdale County, a series of outreach efforts were made to a wide range of groups within the community. The meetings and events detailed below were opportunities to provide information to the public, and were used to receive input from the public. The input received was then used by the consulting team to refine goals, and to guide the overall process of the plan.

FREIGHT MEETING

On April 20, 2017, the Rockdale CTP team met with freight stakeholders identified by the County. The group participated in two activities. The first activity was a roundtable discussion about the needs of the freight community, prompted by a few starter questions. Discussion from the meeting noted a need for truck layover/parking locations and concerns about crossing I-20, especially with respect to the SR 20/138 interchange. A copy of the comments board from this discussion along with a sign-in sheet and presentation materials are included in **Appendix C**.

In the second activity, the members of the group were given three dots, and presented with a map of Rockdale County. They were asked to place their dots on the three biggest bottlenecks for them and their businesses. Aggregated results of this activity are shown in **Figure 18**. Scans of the original maps are also included in **Appendix C**.

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #1

A group of specfic stakeholders was formed to represent a variety of perspectives through the planning process. This group met for the 1st time on March 20th, 2017. As members entered, they were given three dots and asked to place them on a map at the three most severe bottlenecks in the county. As shown in **Figure 19**, the group focused on the SR 20, SR 138, and SR 162/Salem Road corridors, especially near those corridors' interchanges with I-20. All meeting materials, including sign-in sheets, presentation materials, and scans of activity boards, are included in **Appendix C**.

After an overview of the CTP process and data collected thus far, the stakeholder group was asked to discuss a vision for Rockdale's transportation system in the year 2040. The discussion discussed traffic concerns, but also a need to leverage sidewalks, trails, and

Figure 18
Bottlenecks Identified by the Freight Group

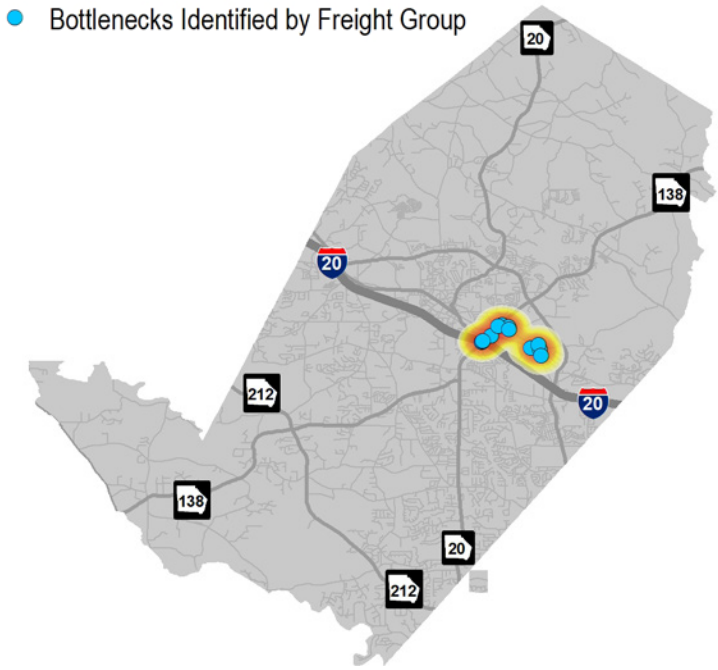
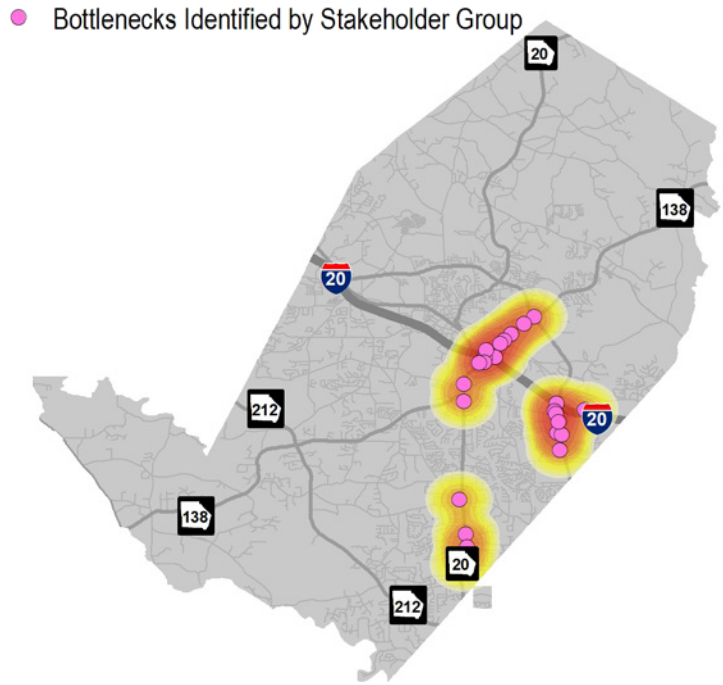


Figure 19
Bottlenecks Identified by the Stakeholder Group



potential transit to leverage existing amenities to attract young people to the county.

Following this discussion, the goals and objectives from Rockdale County's previous CTP were presented and the group was asked to place dots for each in either a "Keep", "Delete", or "Modify" column, which resulted in the general understanding that these goals and objectives should be retained. The text of these goals is shown in **Table 6**, on the following page

Following the goals and objectives activity, the stakeholder group was asked to rank project types. Each member of the group had been given numbered dots and were asked to rank the seven project types used in the previous CTP from one (least important) to seven (most important). The results from this activity are shown in **Table 7**.

Table 6
Project Category Scores from Stakeholder Meeting #1

Project Category	Average Score
Roadway Capacity and Operations	5.7
Intersections	4.4
Pedestrian Infrastructure	2.7
Freight and Aviation	2.4
Bridges	2.3
Transit	2.3
Bicycle Infrastructure	1.6

COMMUNITY MEETINGS ROUND #1

In May 2017, two public meetings were held, including identical content and activities. Both meetings ran from 5:30pm to 7:00 pm, but were held on different nights in different locations. The meeting on May 4, 2017 was held at the American Legion building on SR 20/138 just north of I-20, near Conyers and had 11 attendees. The meeting on May 11, 2017, was held at the St. Pius X Catholic Church on SR 20/McDonough Highway south of I-20 and had 10 attendees. All meeting materials, including sign-in sheets, presentation materials, and scans of activity boards, are included in **Appendix C**.

Both meetings were open houses, with informational boards and input activities available throughout the meeting, with a short presentation held near the middle of the meeting to provide context.

The activities made available at the public meeting were intentionally identical to activities conducted at the freight group and stakeholder group meetings. In one activity, attendees were given three dots and asked to identify the three worst bottlenecks in the county on a map. Aggregate results from this activity at both meetings are shown in **Figure 20** The most commonly noted bottlenecks were the I-20 interchanges with SR 20/138 and with SR 162/Salem Road, with additional bottlenecks noted by multiple attendees in the southern part of the county.

In the second activity, attendees were given a set of seven numbered dots and were presented with the seven project categories used in the previous CTP. Participants were asked to rank the project categories from one (least important) to seven (most important). Aggregate results from these meetings are shown in **Table 8**.

Figure 20
Bottlenecks Identified at the First Round of Community Meetings

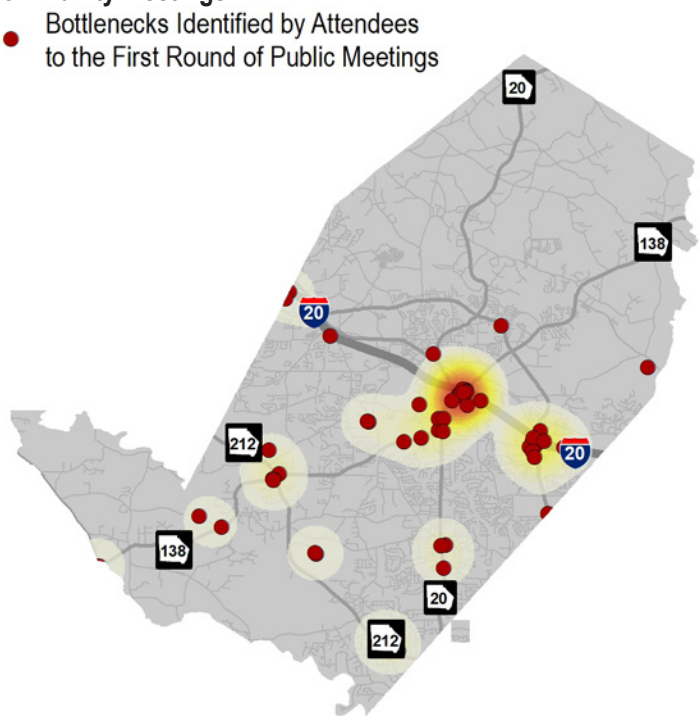


Table 7
Previous CTP Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Enhance access to jobs, homes, and services within Rockdale County and throughout the Atlanta Region through a multi-modal transportation system
Objective 1.1: Ensure that funding is established for bicycle and pedestrian improvements identified in the Long Range Transportation Plan
Objective 1.2: Explore projects that improve access to and from I-20
Objective 1.3: Work with the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) in support of future Xpress Park and Ride lot expansion and explore the potential for future regional rail transit connections
Objective 1.4: Improve cross county connections with DeKalb, Newton, Gwinnett, and Walton Counties
Objective 1.5: Coordinate with Planning Partners including the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority, the Atlanta Regional Commission, and neighboring Counties regarding regional plans and opportunities for partnership
Goal 2: Improve mobility within Rockdale County through enhanced multi-modal connectivity
Objective 2.1: Identify potential projects that provide key linkages between existing roadway facilities and/or improve linkages by upgrading existing facilities on a grid-like system
Objective 2.2: Address congestion corridors with solutions that enhance and connect existing roadways
Objective 2.3: Enhance north-south and east-west connectivity in the County by improving existing connections and creating new connections including additional crossings over I-20.
Objective 2.4: Connect residential and commercial activity center nodes through roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements along major transportation corridors
Objective 2.5: Explore the potential for future local transit connections within Rockdale County

Goal 3: Maintain a safe, reliable, and efficient transportation network which will sustain economic activity and promote economic development
Objective 3.1: Improve the safety of the roadway network by identifying high-crash locations and identifying safety-related funding sources to implement improvements at these locations
Objective 3.2: Identify projects that improve and enhance access to employment and activity centers
Objective 3.3: Ensure mobility for freight within the County
Objective 3.4: Explore transportation solutions that accommodate growth in travel demand while enhancing quality of life
Objective 3.5: Promote system preservation through projects and funding commitments that maintain and enhance the existing transportation network
Objective 3.6: Coordinate with the Rockdale County Chamber of Commerce and Development Authority regarding future initiatives and opportunities
Goal 4: Promote sustainability through the coordination of land use and transportation plans
Objective 4.1: Review the plan in conjunction with the future land use element of the Rockdale County Comprehensive Plan to assess potential impacts to the transportation system
Objective 4.2: Encourage transportation improvements compatible with area development types
Objective 4.3: As development is permitted, review the impact to the transportation system to ensure mobility is protected as parcel level development occurs.
Objective 4.4: Focus transportation improvements on developed and developing areas outside of the County's watershed protection area.
Goal 5: Facilitate implementation of plan recommendations through coordination efforts and local initiatives
Objective 5.1: Explore projects that link to other ongoing studies in the county, in neighboring Counties, and the Region
Objective 5.2: Identify programmatic funding sources for potential projects
Objective 5.3: Coordinate with Elected Officials and Citizens during the identification of projects to ensure support and identify potential issues early in the process.
Objective 5.4: Work with local Elected Officials and County Staff to appropriately integrate plan recommendations into ongoing County initiatives.

Table 8
Project Category Ranking from Community Meetings Round #1

Project Category	May 4th Avg. Score	May 11th Avg. Score	Overall Avg. Score
Roadway Capacity and Operations	5.7	6.0	5.8
Intersections	5.9	5.0	5.5
Pedestrian Infrastructure	4.7	3.4	4.0
Bridges	2.9	4.5	3.7
Transit	2.9	3.6	3.3
Bicycle Infrastructure	2.3	3.5	2.9
Freight and Aviation	3.0	1.9	2.5

STAKEHOLDER MEETING #2

The Rockdale CTP Stakeholder group met for a second time the morning of Wednesday, August 9, 2017. The meeting began with a short presentation given by the consultant team, reviewing the overall CTP process, presenting some of the same data shown at the first meeting, and then showing some new analysis – primarily the Bicycle and Pedestrian Suitability Analysis, and public input received thus far.

During the presentation, the stakeholder group was asked to provide input on eight transportation project needs that the consultant team had created to articulate the county's transportation needs. These eight goals were:

- Address north-south travel within Rockdale
- Address east-west travel within Rockdale
- Improve connectivity to surrounding communities
- Develop parallel alternatives to major routes
- Address bottleneck locations
- Identify opportunities for active transportation
- Enhance connections to I-20
- Invest in principal routes to maximize system efficiency

Stakeholders were each given twelve dots and were asked to distribute those dots to projects goals based on how important they thought each goal was. During this activity, the stakeholders created a ninth need: "Facilitate safe and efficient freight movement". Aggregate results from the activity are included in **Table 9**.

Table 9
Project Need Ranking from Stakeholder Meeting #2

Project Goal	Total Dots
Facilitate safe and efficient freight movement	19
Address north-south travel within Rockdale	17
Address east-west travel within Rockdale	17
Address bottleneck locations	17
Enhance connections to I-20	12
Identify opportunities for active transportation	10
Improve connectivity to surrounding communities	9
Invest in principal routes to maximize system efficiency	9
Develop parallel alternatives to major routes	5

This scoring indicates the highest preferences for vehicular travel, without a strong preference for a specific direction of travel. Following an introduction to the proposed project evaluation process, stakeholders were asked to provide comments on provided maps of projects from the previous CTP, divided into vehicular projects and bicycle and pedestrian projects. Much of the vehicular discussion centered on indicating projects that are a lower priority, such as a widening of Pleasant Hill Road in the north part of the county. The stakeholder group was instrumental in indicating trails and other bicycle and pedestrian facilities recommended by the previous CTP that have already been completed, or that are no longer consider realistic possibilities, for whatever reason. A detailed summary of this meeting is provided In **Appendix C**.

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

A Community Workshop was held on Wednesday, November 29, 2017 at the Rockdale County Board of Elections facility. A total of 25 individuals attended the community workshop. The sign-in sheet, all presented materials, and scans of activity materials are included in **Appendix C**. Attendees were escorted through four stations by a member of the consultant team. The first station contained general information regarding the CTP process, as well as a timeline of the Rockdale CTP. The second station presented a summary of the data collected for Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment Report. The third station included an interactive exercise, which will be discussed in greater detail below. The final station presented a description and timeline of the remainder of the Rockdale CTP process, specifically the evaluation of transportation projects, fiscal analysis, and Recommendations Report.

At the third station, attendees were asked to provide input on the same transportation project needs. Attendees were each given twelve dots and were asked to distribute those dots on a board with the projects goals based on how important they thought each goal was. Aggregate results from the activity are included in **Table 10.**

Table 10
Project Goal Ranking from Community Workshop

Project Goal	Total Dots
Address bottleneck locations	26
Enhance connections to I-20	25
Address north-south travel within Rockdale	22
Invest in principal routes to maximize system efficiency	20
Address east-west travel within Rockdale	18
Develop parallel alternatives to major routes	15
Identify opportunities for active transportation	12
Improve connectivity to surrounding communities	11
Facilitate safe and efficient freight movement	7

TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

As part of the outreach efforts, an online survey was made available to the public begining March 6, 2017. Physical copies of this survey were provided at CTP public meetings and other outreach events. The survey includes ten questions, which were intentionally constructed to be similar to the activities conducted in the other outreach actvivities. Aggregated survey results as of January 9, 2018, including some individual responses are included in **Appendix C**.

A map showing origin-destination lines of the commutes of respondents was created, and is shown in **Figure 21A**. For comparison, data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) was used to create a map showing origin-destination lines of all Rockdale County residents. This map is shown in **Figure 21B.** The two datasets show similar patterns, with large movements within Rockdale County, many trips between Rockdale County and various parts of Atlanta, and a significant number of trips to and from Covington. The thickness of each line relates to how many responses we got for each O-D

pair, but does not indicate the direction of these trips. Based on our survey, a large group of Rockdale residents work and live within County. Additionally, a significant group of respondents move between Covington and Rockdale County each day for work. While less concentrated, a large movement to areas in and near Atlanta can also be seen. While these commutes are more scattered, many of them end near Emory/Decatur, Downtown Atlanta or in the Perimeter Center area to the north.

To understand the overall credibility of the transportation survey, this data was compared to a similar map indicating commutes for all residents of Rockdale County, based on data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau's Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program. The data provided by this survey similarly shows very high movements within Rockdale County, east to Covington, or west and northwest to parts of Metropolitan Atlanta.

Figure 21A
Origin-Destnation Paths of Rockdale County Residents based on Survey Responses

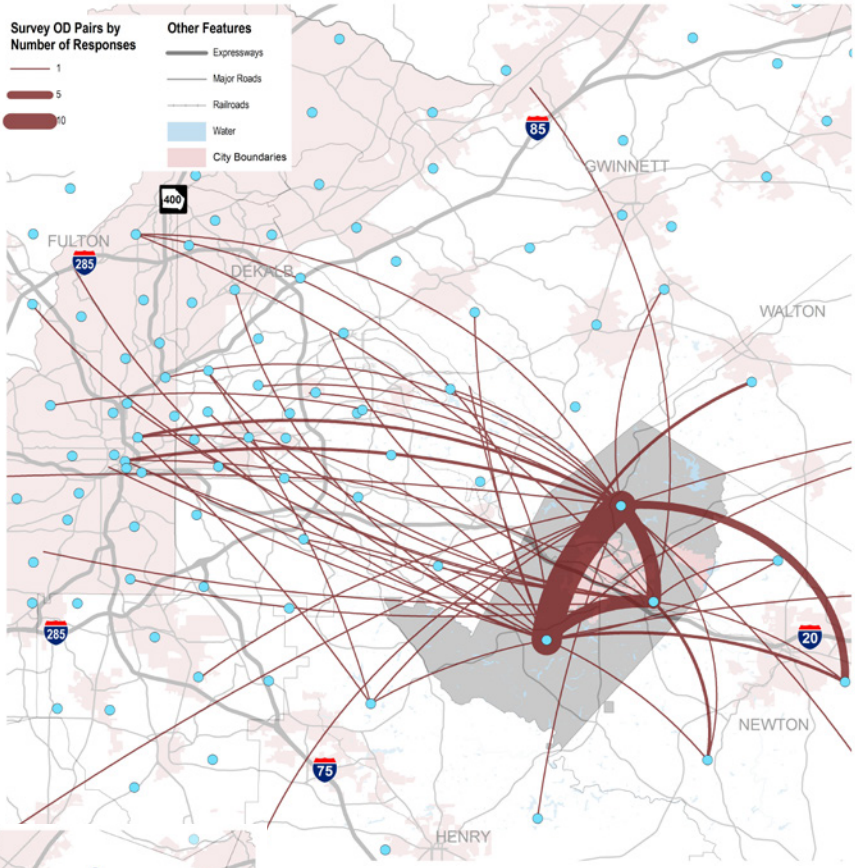
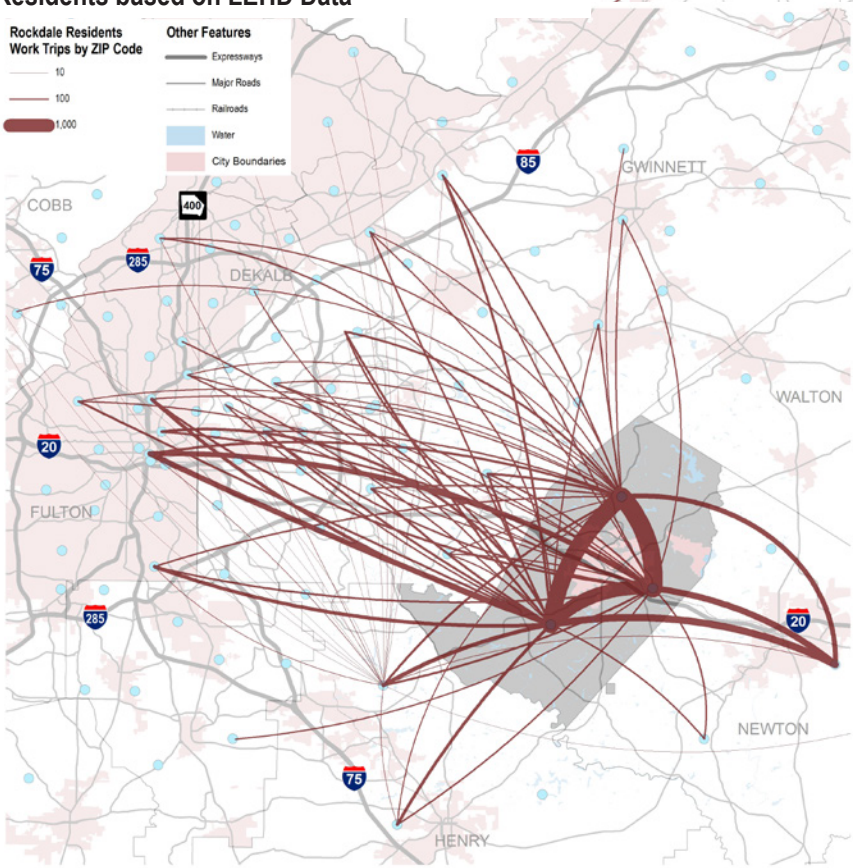
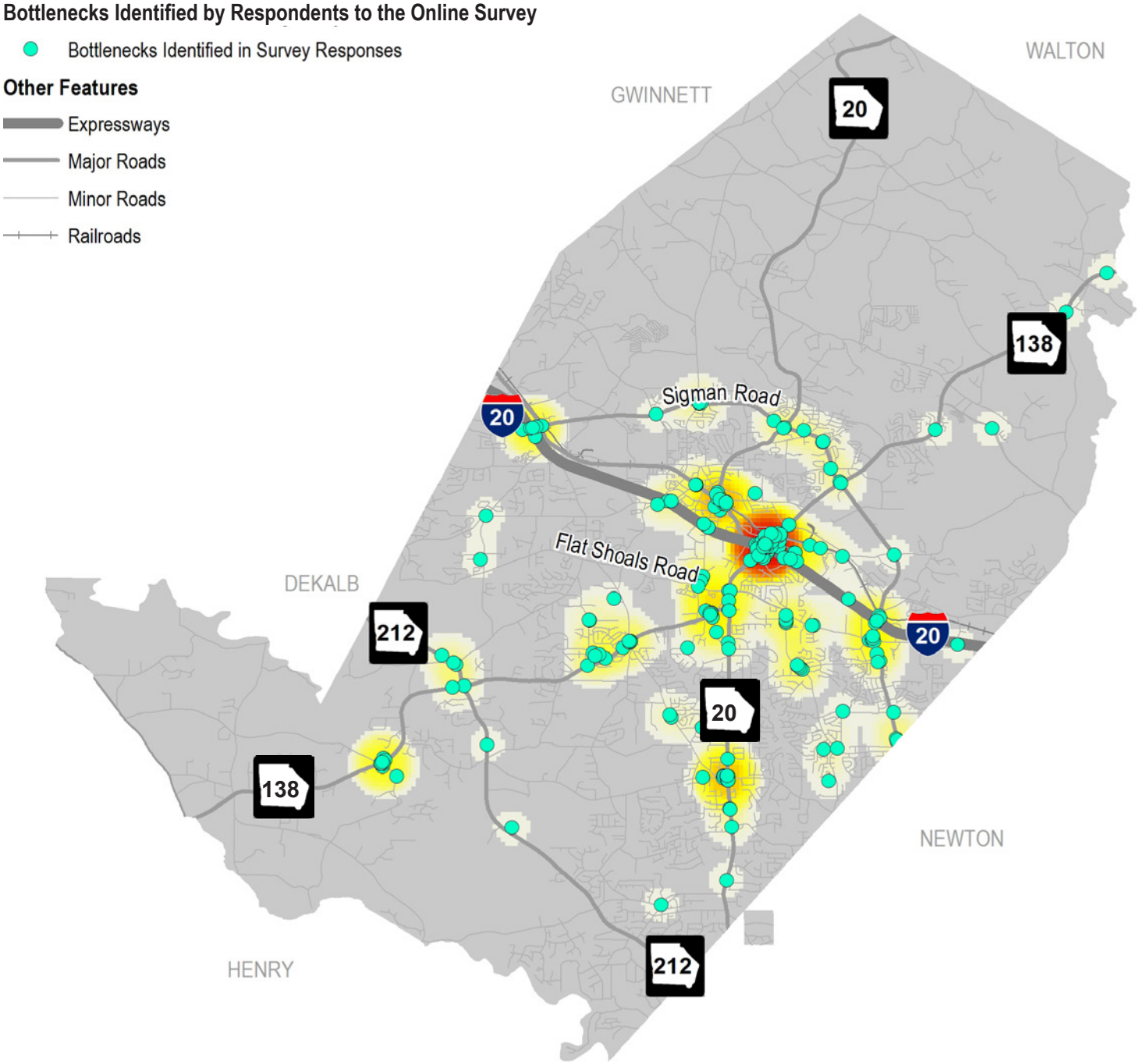


Figure 21B
Origin-Destnation Paths of Rockdale County Residents based on LEHD Data



Near the end of the survey, respondents are asked to identify the three biggest transportation challenges they face in the county. Responses from this question as of January 9, 2018 were mapped to create **Figure 22**. This graphic only includes responses that described a specific, single location. Some responses were more general, such as "SR 138" or "sidewalks in Conyers", and thus aren't included in this map. These responses follow similar patterns as the bottleneck activities conducted in the freight group, stakeholder group, and public meetings. The highest concentration of identified locations is at or near the I-20 interchange with SR 20/138, with other concentrations along major corridors like SR 20, Sigman Road, and Old Covington Highway.

Figure 22
Bottlenecks Identified by Respondents to the Online Survey



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TRANSPORTATION ASSESSMENT

ROADWAYS

Rockdale County includes over 700 miles of roadways, ranging in scale from I-20 to neighborhood streets. In order to assess the performance of those roadways and to anticipate future needs, a Travel Demand Model (TDM) was used. The TDM is created and maintained by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and was validated and calibrated to increase accuracy in Rockdale County. Full details on the calibration and validation process are included in **Appendix A**. TDM results were used to evaluate the County's roadway network, revealing where needs exist today and are anticipated to exist in the future. In addition to the TDM, data was also collected through a wide variety of means to understand travel patterns, real-world congestion, and crashes throughout the county.

FUNCTIONAL CLASS

Functional classification is a mechanism for transportation planners and engineers to categorize different highways, roads, and streets by the character or service that they provide. Overall there are four major categories:

- Limited access freeways
- Arterials
- Collectors
- Local Roads

Limited Access Freeways are the highest classification and are designed and constructed to maximize mobility and long-distance travel. These facilities do not provide access to adjacent land uses directly with access limited to only specifically designed interchanges. In Rockdale County, I-20 is the only facility designated as a limited access freeways.

Arterials are surface streets that also provide a high degree of mobility but can provide direct access to adjacent land uses. Examples in Rockdale County include SR 212, SR 138, Sigman Road, and SR 20.

Collectors serve a critical role in the roadway network as they 'collect' traffic from local roadways and funnel them to the arterial network. These facilities typically do not provide for long distance travel and often provide direct access to adjacent land uses. In Rockdale County, examples of Collector streets include McDaniel Mill Road, Ebenezer Road, and Centennial Olympic Parkway.

Local roads are not intended for long distance travel and provide direct access to adjacent land uses. Many local roads in Rockdale County are designed to discourage through traffic though they are public roads and are accessible for all public use.

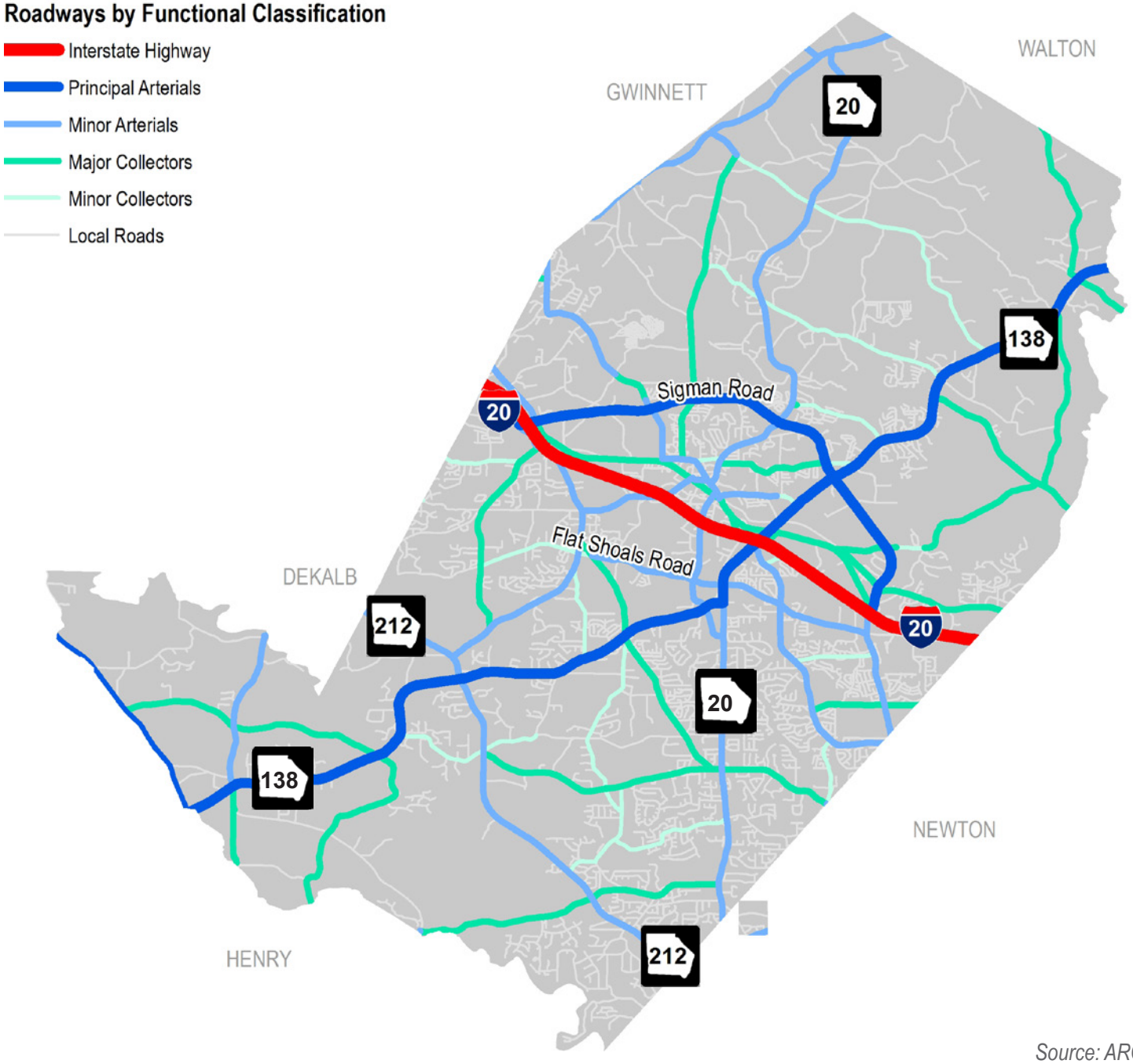
A map showing roadways in Rockdale County by functional classification is included in **Figure 23**.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of Service (LOS) is a comparison of how many vehicles use a road, compared to how many vehicles the road can process. As the number of vehicles on a road approaches the roadway's capacity, congestion increases. The maps on the **top row of Figure 24** of page 36 show LOS during the morning and evening peak travel times in year 2015, respectively, as calculated by the TDM. Generally, these maps show that congestion throughout the county is light, with some notable exceptions. The I-20 at SR 20/138 interchange shows a poor performance, as does SR 162/Salem Road. Various locations along I-20 itself are estimated to have moderate congestion as well, significantly more so in the evening than in the morning.

Based on population and employment projections created by ARC, combined with funded transportation improvements throughout the region, the TDM can also be run to project traffic conditions in future years. The **bottom row of Figure 24** includes LOS maps prepared for the year 2040. In these maps, several of the existing congested areas become more congested, and addition roads see a degradation in service, such as longer segments of I-20 and sections of SR 20 north and south of Conyers.

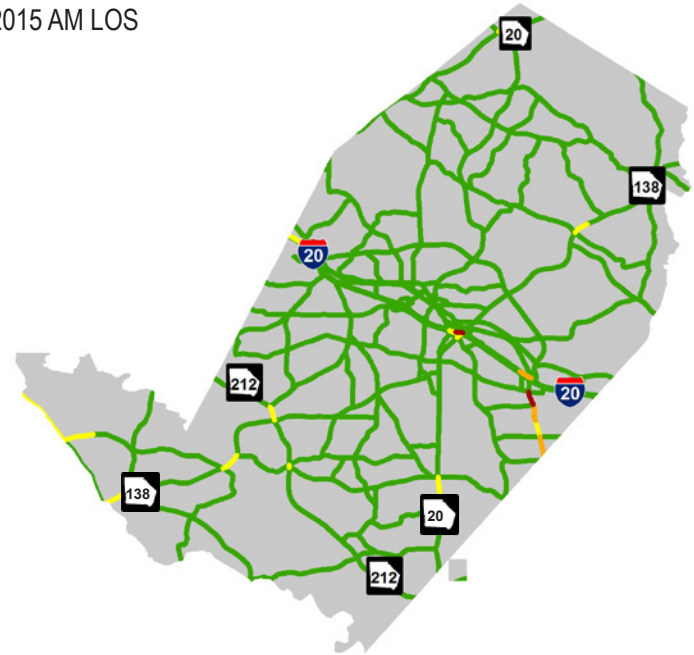
Figure 23
Roadways by Functional Classification



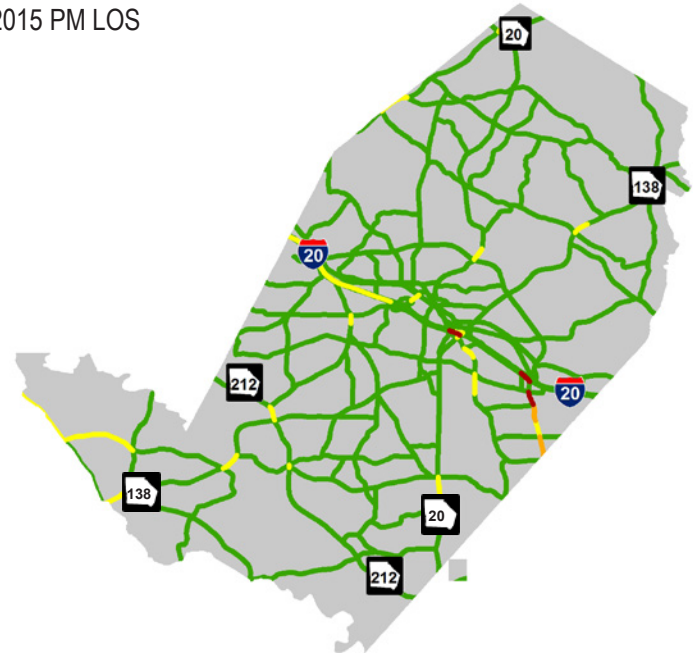
Source: ARC

Figure 24
Year 2015 and 2040 LOS in Rockdale County

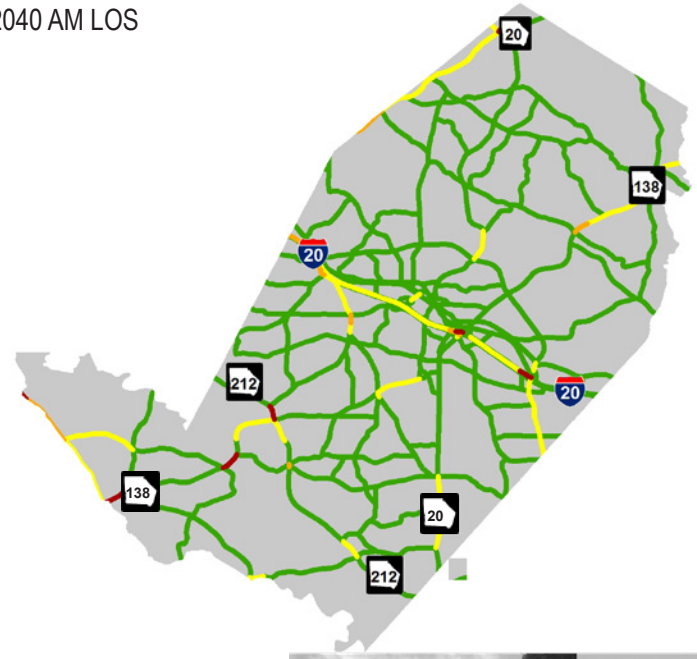
2015 AM LOS



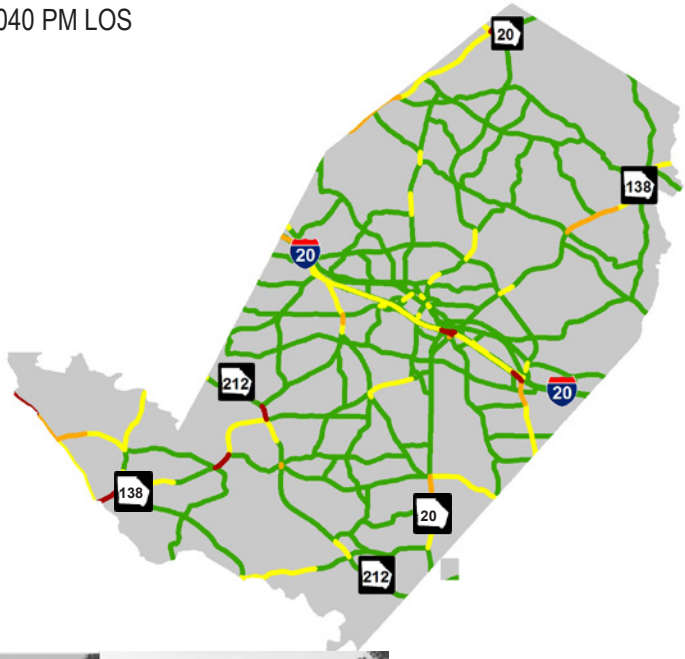
2015 PM LOS



2040 AM LOS



2040 PM LOS



CORRIDOR TRAVEL TIMES AND TRAVEL SHEDS

Another intuitive way to compare TDM results in 2015 and in 2040 is to compare the time the TDM predicts it will take to travel major roadway segments in the two timeframes. For this analysis, the following major roadways were broken into segments:

- SR 20
- SR 138
- Green Street-Old Covington Highway
- Flat Shoals Road
- Klondike Road
- SR 212
- SR 162/Salem Road - Sigman Road
- Smyrna Road-McDaniel Mill Road
- I-20

Travel times on these corridors are shown in **Table 11**. A more detailed table showing individual segment times is included in **Appendix B**. This analysis shows significant increases in travel time on east-west roads near Conyers; namely on Flat Shoals Road and Green Street/Old Covington Highway. SR 138 also sees a notable increase in travel times, especially in the northern and far southern parts of the county.

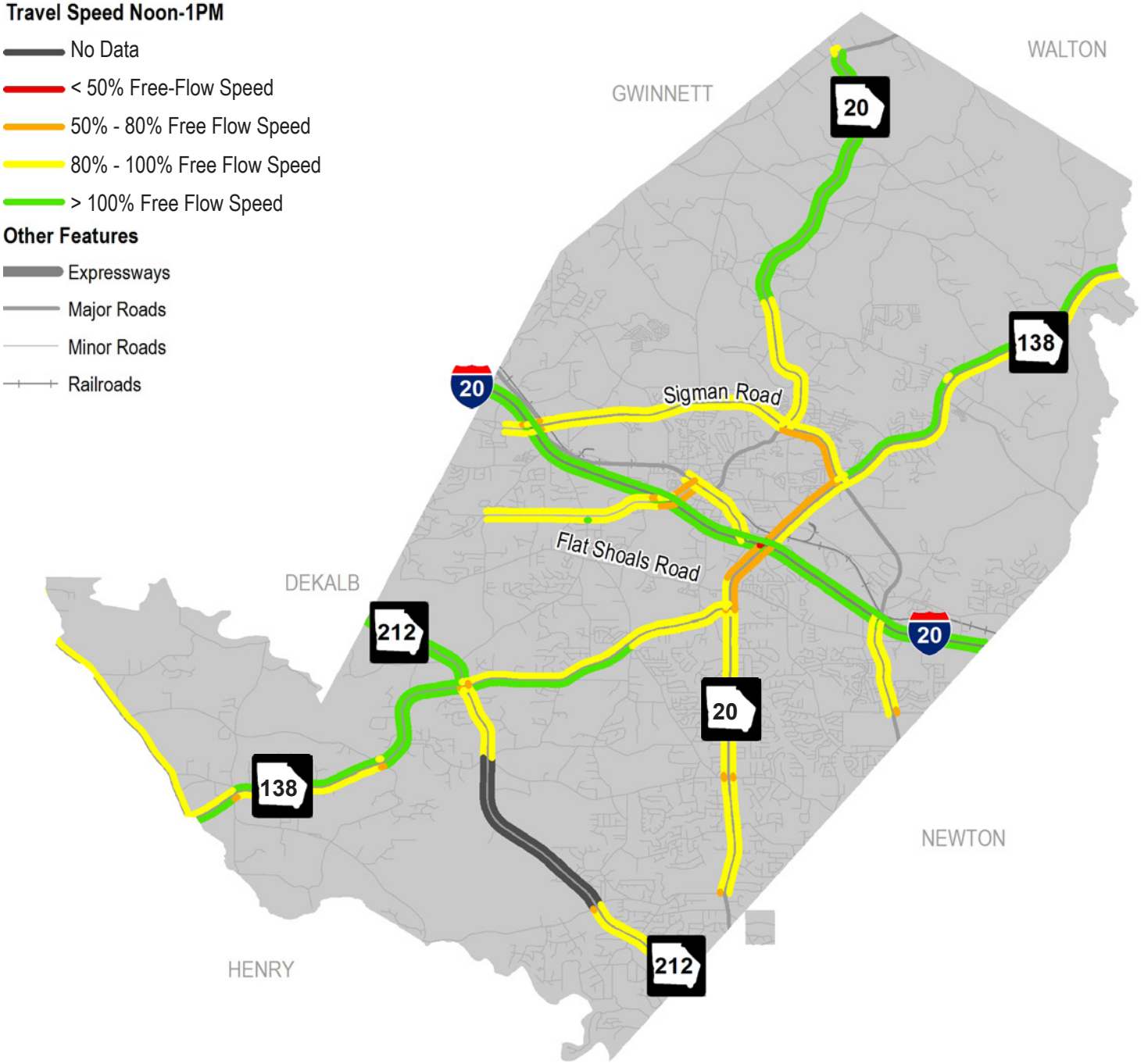
Table 11
Year 2015 Model Travel Times

Corridor	Extents	Direction	2015 Travel Time (mins)	2040 Travel Time (mins)	Travel Time Change
SR 20 (Irwin Bridge Road, Sigman Road, McDonough Highway)	Northern county boundary to southern county boundary	Southbound	29.5	31.2	5.8%
		Northbound	29.5	31.4	6.7%
SR 138	Northern county boundary to southern county boundary	Southbound	27.1	30.7	13.4%
		Northbound	27.2	31.4	15.3%
Sigman Road/SR 162/Salem Road	I-20 at exit 78 to eastern county boundary	Eastbound	18.0	18.3	1.3%
		Westbound	18.2	18.3	0.2%
Green Street/Old Covington Highway	Western county boundary to Dogwood Road	Eastbound	33.6	36.9	9.8%
		Westbound	28.4	28.9	2.0%
I-20	Western county boundary (mile 77) to eastern county boundary (mile 82)	Eastbound	9.0	10.0	11.9%
		Westbound	21.5	23.9	11.0%
Klondike Road	McDaniel Mill Road to Green Street	Eastbound	5.7	6.4	11.7%
		Westbound	5.4	6.3	17.1%
Flat Shoals Road	McDaniel Mill Road to SR 162/ Salem Road	Eastbound	9.3	11.5	23.7%
		Westbound	9.2	11.4	23.9%
Smyrna Road/McDaniel Mill Road	SR 212 to Iris Drive	Northbound	7.5	8.0	5.8%
		Southbound	7.4	8.0	6.0%
SR 212	Western county boundary to eastern county boundary	Northbound	6.8	6.8	9.6%
		Southbound	6.7	8.7	9.4%

INRIX DATA

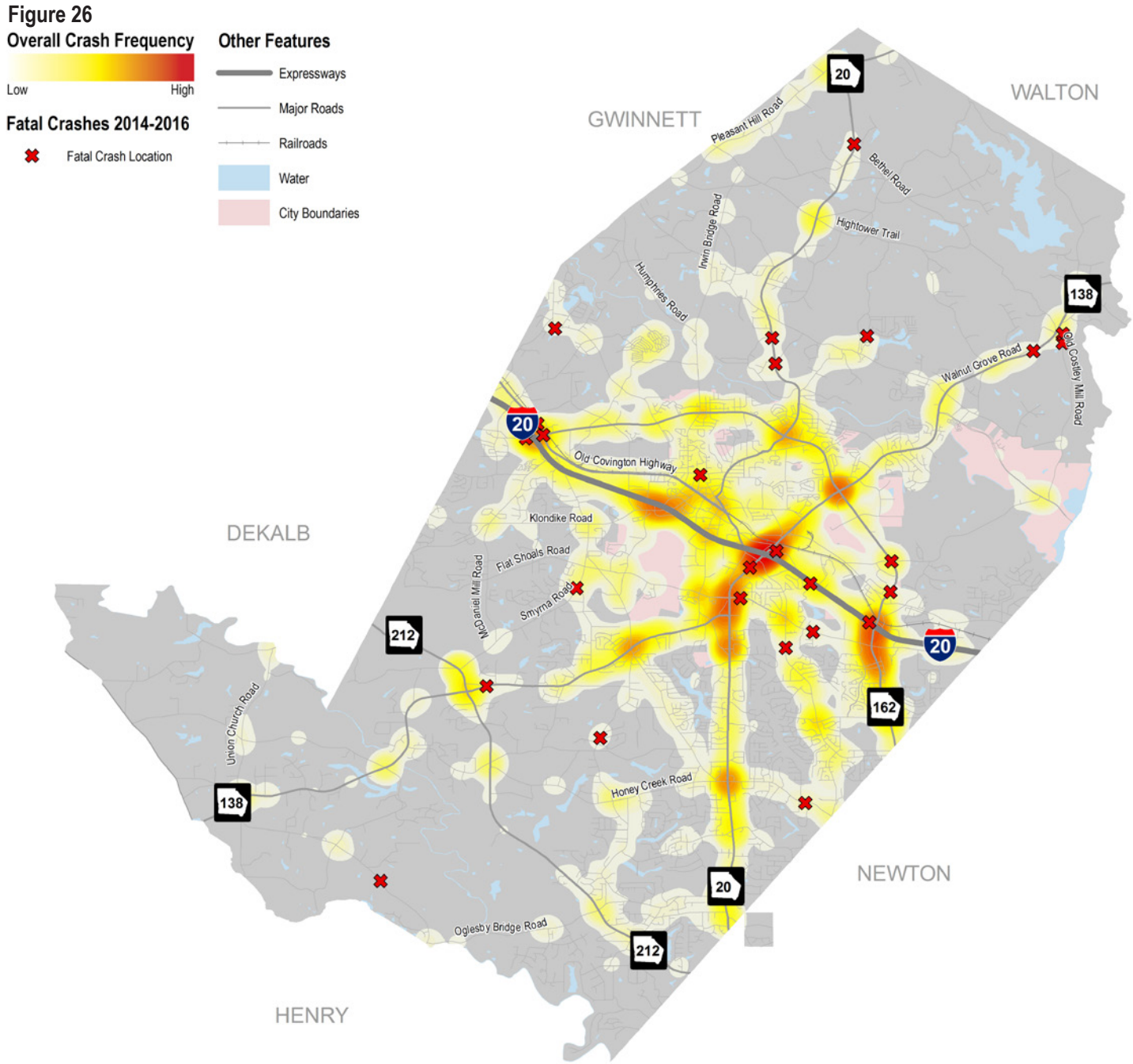
In addition to estimated information from the TDM, the county also has access to data from INRIX, provided by ARC INRIX is a global software and data service provider that aggregates real-time data points from thousands of sources ranging from individual cell phones and GPS-equipped automobiles, to entire hosts of fleet vehicles. **Figure 25** below shows congestion during the hour from noon to 1 pm (the busiest time period reported in the data). This data is based on actual travel speeds, with green lines being at or above free-flow (85th percentile) speeds, and yellow and orange lines being slower. The most congested area reported by this data is the section of SR 20/138 on either side of I-20, with more moderate congestion on almost all major roadways in the central part of the county.

Figure 25
Travel Speed Noon-1PM



CRASHES AND SAFETY

In order to review historic crash information, GDOT provided three years of crash data, from January 1, 2014 through December 31, 2016. An aggregation of that data is shown in **Figure 26** below. The colors on the map show where most crashes are most frequent. Uncolored areas had very few crashes, if any, while red areas had the most crashes. Crash frequency roughly follows the same pattern as overall traffic volume – more crashes occur where more people are driving. Interchanges with I-20 show the highest crash volumes, especially the interchange with SR 20/138. Also shown on this map are fatal crashes, denoted with a red "X". These generally follow a similar pattern as overall crashes and traffic volume throughout.



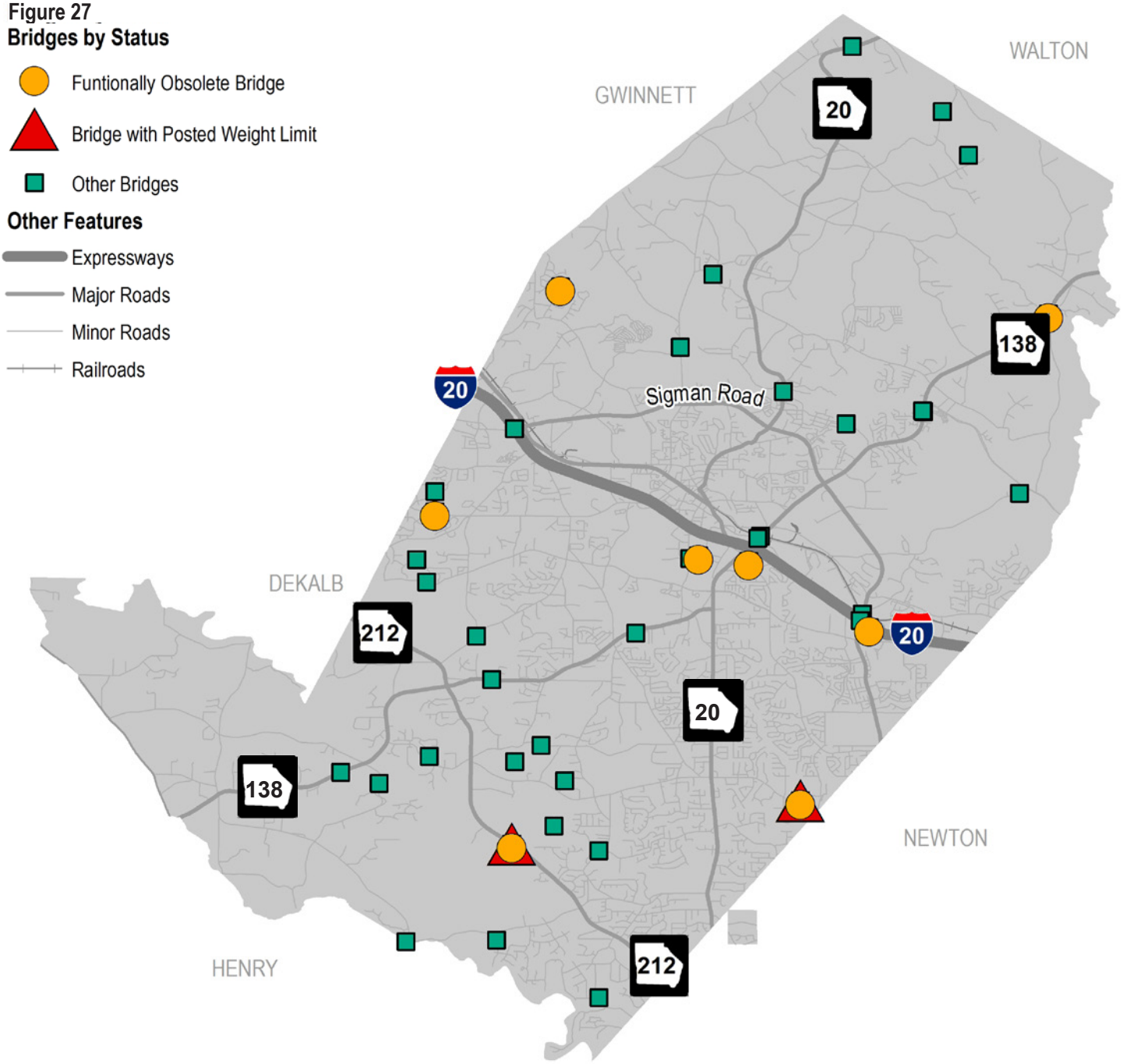
BRIDGES

FHWA requires routine inspection of the state and locally owned bridges through the National Bridge Inventory (NBI). In Georgia, GDOT must and has developed an inspection program that meets FHWA's bridge inspection's standards. Georgia DOT conducts inspections every two years and reports results to the inventory. The NBI bridge classifications groups bridges into three categories:

- Not deficient
- Structurally deficient (SD): Bridges that have deteriorating conditions which contribute directly to reductions in the load-carrying capacity. A bridge identified as structurally deficient does not necessarily imply that the bridge is unsafe.
- Functionally obsolete (FO): Bridges that do not meet the current design standards (such as lane width or vertical clearance) due to increases in traffic volume or standard revisions.

Figure 27 shows all bridges in Rockdale County by their FHWA rating. The American Association of State and Highway Transportation

Figure 27
Bridges by Status



Officials (AASHTO) developed a bridge sufficiency rating system adopted by FHWA. This 0-100 rating system is based on lane width, vertical clearance, and necessity.

The Georgia DOT last conducted bridge inspections in Rockdale County in 2016 and 2017. Rockdale County currently has a total of 45 bridges, all of which are state or locally owned and maintained. Four of these 45 bridges are located on county lines: one on the Henry County line, and three on the Newton County line. Of all these bridges, zero are currently classified as structurally deficient, and 11 (24 percent) are classified as functionally obsolete. Fifteen (15) bridges currently have a sufficiency rating of 80 or less, and three (3) fall into the poor sufficiency range (0-50).

This AASHTO rating system is used to determine which bridges are eligible to receive federal funding for rehabilitation or replacement. For a bridge to be eligible for rehabilitation funding, it must be classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and have a sufficiency rating of less than 80 but greater than 50. Bridges that have a sufficiency rating less than 50 are eligible for replacement funding.

TRANSIT

Rockdale County is serviced by GRTA Express routes that provide access to and from employment centers in Atlanta. There are three routes (described below and shown in **Figure 28**) that are available from two park and ride lots (also described below).

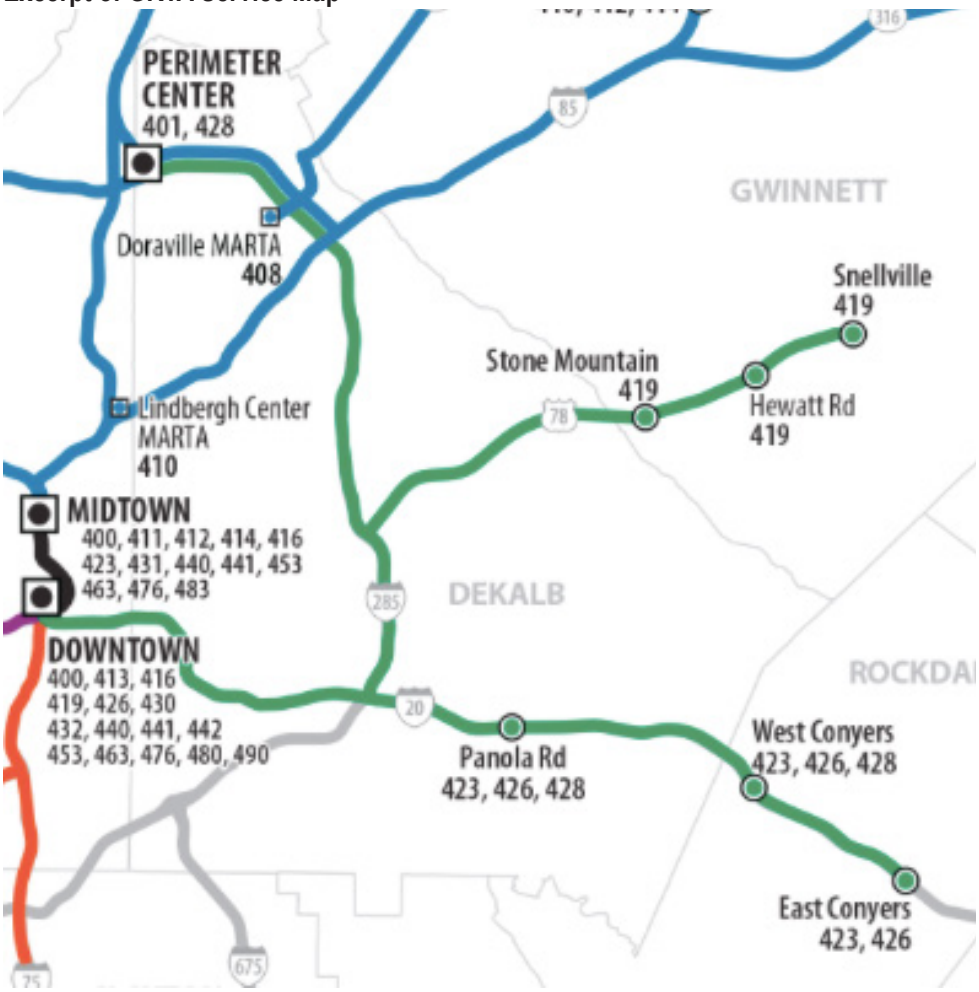
GRTA XPRESS ROUTES:

423 – Monday – Friday (approx.. 5:00 am – 8:00 am and 3:45 pm – 6:30 pm), connecting West Conyers and East Conyers to midtown Atlanta (with multiple stops between MARTA Civic Center station and Arts Center MARTA station)

426 – Monday – Friday (approx. 5:00 am – 7:30 am and 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm), connecting West Conyers and East Conyers to Downtown Atlanta (with multiple stops between MARTA Civic Center and Federal Center)

428 – Monday – Friday (approx. 5:00 am – 7:15 am and 3:40 pm – 6:20 pm), connecting West Conyers to Perimeter Center (with multiple stops including MARTA Dunwoody and MARTA Medical Center)

Figure 28
Excerpt of GRTA Service Map



PARK-AND-RIDE LOTS:

GRTA's East Conyers location – at Springfield Baptist Church, 1877 Iris Drive, includes one shelter. Serves carpooling and Xpress routes 423 and 426.

GRTA's West Conyers location – located at 911 Chambers Drive (just off Sigman Road), four bus bays, and four shelters. Serves carpooling and Xpress routes 423, 426 and 428.

BLUE BUS

A private transit service, known as The Blue Bus, began local operations in late 2017. Services include:

- Demand Response Rides, provided in partnership with Going a2b LLC that can be scheduled via a mobile app.
- A fixed route system consisting of three routes for $3.00 each way, with possible future connections to Newton County.
    - SR 138/Salem Road
    - Downtown Rockdale/City of Conyers
    - Stonecrest Connection
- A human services transportation component for pre-scheduled trips that are based on availability

Currently, hours of service are from 5:30 AM to 8:30 PM Monday through Friday and 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday.

HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION

Human Services Transportation (HST) refers to mobility services that provide transportation for disadvantaged populations such as people with disabilities, people with lower incomes, and senior citizens. In many cases these individuals are dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social outings, and other life-sustaining activities. HST services can be provided by public transit agencies, human services agencies, private for-profit operators, and/or private non-profit agencies. In Rockdale County, HST services are provided to senior citizens and disabled citizens through the Rockdale County Senior Services Department. Transportation services are also provided by numerous private providers.

Rockdale County Senior Services currently offers a few transportation programs to qualified Rockdale County residents ages 60 and over. These services include:

- Fixed-Route Transportation Services
- Demand Response Services
- Group Shopping
- Transportation Voucher Program

Rockdale County Senior Services currently offers one transportation program to disabled Rockdale County residents. This service includes a Transportation Voucher Program.

Each of the four programs is described below.

Fixed-Route Transportation Services: Rockdale County Senior Services currently operates a fixed-route service for pre-registered clients. Clients must be members of the Senior Center and age 60+ to be eligible for this service. The service provides registered clients with door to door service to the Rockdale Senior Services Center. Two buses operate along two different routes within the County. A northern route operates north of Interstate 20, and a southern route operates south of I-20, picking up seniors and driving them to the Senior Center and back. Qualified residents may request service through the County and are added as space allows. There is currently a waiting list.

Demand Response Services: The County provides a demand response service available to qualified senior residents age 60+ for trips within the county to the doctor and other need-based trips. Service may be requested three days ahead of time and trips must take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. Monday through Friday. Users are also required to pay a share of the costs at $5 per roundtrip. The fixed-route and demand response programs are both funded through a combination of federal, state, and county sources.

Group Shopping: The Senior Services Center also provides transportation services through group shopping excursions to places such as the grocery store and the farmers market. This service is for Senior Center members age 60+ only. The trips depart and return to the Senior Center.

Transportation Voucher Program: The County maintains a transportation voucher program for qualified seniors and disabled Rockdale residents. The program provides a book of ten vouchers to participating members. The users pay $10 for $100 worth of transportation vouchers. The program currently serves over 70 people, and maintains a waiting list. Vouchers can be applied to any trip that serves a basic need, and up to two can be used per day. In addition to funding the rides, the program provides a list of providers. The participants then use the vouchers to pay for trips that they schedule themselves through one of the vendors. The voucher program is funded through a Social Services Block Grant and Rockdale County.

There are multiple studies concerning HST that have been completed at the state and regional levels. The following reports have been reviewed:

- Managing Mobility in the Atlanta Region, ARC, 2016
- Coordinating Rural and Human Services Transportation in Georgia, Governor's Development Council and Georgia Coordinating Council for Rural and Human Services Transportation, 2015

Key findings and recommendations from these studies as they apply to Rockdale County along with assessment of the location and size of HST populations in Rockdale County will be used to determine HST needs for the future. This CTP will develop recommendations to create a plan that will meet the needs of its citizens as well as be in line with state and regional HST goals.

ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

This section outlines the current condition of active and alternative modes of transportation within Rockdale County, followed by a Bicycle and Pedestrian Suitability Evaluation which is intended to help identify areas that are in need of infrastructure as well as areas where there is a higher potential to capture active transportation trips.

Active transportation refers to biking and walking for day-to-day activities and for recreation. This can also be related to the connections that are present, or that are needed, to enhance last-mile connectivity with commuter transit routes, such as the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress routes connecting Conyers with Midtown/Downtown Atlanta and the Perimeter Center.

The active transportation network should be planned strategically and should build upon existing facilities to maximize the benefits that come with a more connected system. Resources for new active transportation elements should be concentrated around areas where there is a latent demand for biking, walking, and transit infrastructure. This demand is driven by many factors, which are discussed in greater detail in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Suitability Evaluation section.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In general, when population density is low, the distance between origins and destinations is typically larger than in areas of higher population density. This can make trips by foot or by bike less appealing, and it can also lead to a scarcity of alternative-mode facilities since travel is much more likely to be made in motorized vehicles. In addition to this, the cost of constructing facilities (i.e., sidewalks or multi-use paths) can be much higher due to the total length necessary to make meaningful connections. This condition is apparent in Rockdale County, since a large portion of the county's existing biking and walking infrastructure is located exclusively within Conyers, GA and the area of unincorporated Rockdale County immediately surrounding the city, where both population and

employment density is high relative to the rest of the county.

EXISTING AND PROGRAMMED SIDEWALKS

Sidewalk is found on many of the state routes, including SR 138, SR 20/McDonough Highway, and SR 162/Salem Road. Other roads where sidewalk is currently in place include, but is not limited to, Irwin Bridge Road, North Main Street, Railroad Street, Green Street, Pine Log Road, Milstead Avenue and Milstead Road near the Rockdale Medical Center, Old Covington Highway, Flat Shoals Road, and Parker Road. Connectivity in Rockdale County is limited to the more densely populated areas.

The County has several programmed sidewalk projects that are documented in the Atlanta Regional Commission's short-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This document is part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which was originally adopted in February 2016. The tables shown on pages 18 and 19 document those eight projects programmed into the regional TIP that have a sidewalk component. These projects are largely located within the urban unincorporated part of Rockdale County or within the Conyers city limits.

EXISTING AND PROGRAMMED MULTI-USE TRAILS AND BIKE LANES

One of the largest attractions in the county, with respect to its draw for recreational activity, is the Panola Mountain State Park, located in southwest Rockdale County. This State Park, along with the nearby Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and surrounding area, is home to nearly 28 miles of bike-able and walkable multi-use trails. Within Rockdale County, the Rockdale River PATH Foundation Trail and the Panola Mountain State Park trail system make up an approximately 12-mile network of paved multi-use trails connecting between the Monastery of the Holy Spirit, the South Rockdale Community Park, Panola Mountain State Park, and the Arabia Mountain PATH Foundation trail. This continuous, off-road system is an attraction for recreational walkers and cyclists from all over the metro-Atlanta region. Ultimately, the PATH Foundation, Atlanta Beltline, DeKalb County, the City of Atlanta, and the Atlanta Regional Commission envision a continuous connection between the Beltline and the Arabia Mountain Preserve which would allow a cyclist to bike from Downtown or Midtown Atlanta to Rockdale County.

Conyers has its own multi-use trail system, known as the Conyers Olde Town Trail. This trail system is approximately 3.4 miles long and runs between Johnson Park on Ebenezer Road and downtown Conyers. An extension of this trail, along the Boar Tusk Branch stream has also been developed which extends between Rowland Road and Pine Street and extends into downtown Conyers from the north.

Programmed multi-use trails and bike lanes are represented in the tables on pages 18 and 19 along with programmed sidewalk projects. Specifically, improvements to Hardin/O'Kelly Street will add bike lanes, and improvements to Sigman Road between Lester Road and Dogwood Drive will add a 10' wide multi-use trail on the north side of Sigman Road.

The 2009 *Master Plan for Multi-Use Trails Connecting Conyers and Covington* presents several other planned trails which are important to take note of, including the South Rockdale Trail, connecting the Olde Town Trail to the Rockdale River Trail, the South Conyers Trail, primarily located along Old Covington Highway, the East and West Conyers Trails, which circumvent the city north along the Yellow River and through the Georgia International Horse park. The plan's vision is a continuous system that connects Conyers and unincorporated Rockdale County with Covington and Porterdale in Newton County.

INTERFACING WITH TRANSIT IN ROCKDALE COUNTY

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is an important part of last mile connectivity. Last mile connectivity refers to the connections between transit stops/stations and residences, activity centers, offices, recreational and retail areas; specifically the beginning and ending legs of any journey (i.e., to one's doorstep from a bus stop, or to a retail site from a transit station). Last mile connectivity most often refers to trips made by modes of transportation other than standard single-occupancy vehicles. Transit service within Rockdale County is largely limited to the GRTA Xpress routes that serve two Park and Ride lots (known as the East Conyers and West Conyers lots). The East Conyers Lot is only accessible by Iris Drive, which lacks continuous sidewalk and bike lanes. The West Conyers Lot is primarily accessed by Sigman Road, which also lacks biking and pedestrian facilities.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASHES

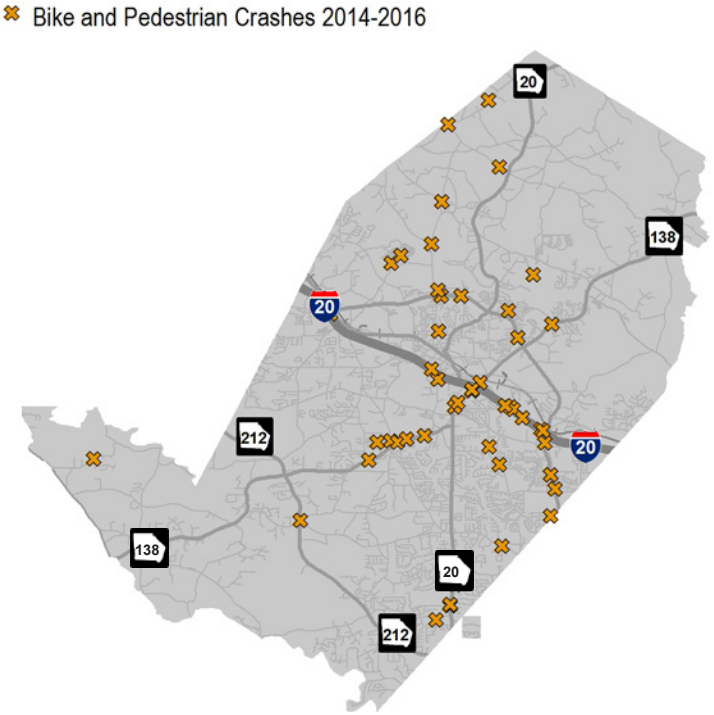
Transportation safety for all users is always a goal for decision makers, County staff, and policy makers. Crashes between bicycles, pedestrians, and motor vehicles occur for various reasons, but typically involve insufficient sight distance, inadequate pedestrian crossing features (beacons, warning signs, etc.), limited lateral clearance and buffers, and inattention. Crashes involving a pedestrian or a cyclist are displayed in **Figure 29** to the right. These 49 crashes took place over a 3-year period of time between 2014 and 2016. These crashes resulted in 43 injuries and four fatalities. The four fatalities were pedestrians, of which two were walking along a road with no sidewalk.

Certain corridors can be identified as having more than one pedestrian or bicycle crash occurring on them.

- SR 138 between Flat Shoals Road and Old Covington Highway
- Iris Drive and Dogwood Drive frontage roads
- Salem Road between the southern County line and I-20
- Sigman Road west of Irwin Bridge Road
- SR 138 between Parker Road and Granade Road

These routes are specified in this existing conditions document for the purpose of highlighting those roads where pedestrian and bicycle activity is higher, and where circumstances could be improved to reduce crash risk. Improvements could include, but are not limited to, additional bike lanes/multi-use side paths, wider lateral buffers, more frequent controlled mid-block pedestrian crossings, better lighting, and new sidewalk. The County should continue to consider these alternative modes of transportation as important user groups in all future projects.

Figure 29
Crashes Involving Bikes and Pedestrians



BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SUITABILITY

By making infrastructure improvements to the biking and walking networks, Rockdale County can create more livable communities that serve those residents who rely on alternative modes of travel to reach every-day destinations as well as those who make use of the infrastructure for recreational purposes. Facility improvements could include the development of specific bike routes that are enhanced with signage and buffered bike lanes or wide shoulders on rural routes, increasing physical protection or separation between motor vehicles and bike lanes, enhancing mid-block pedestrian crossings with beacons and refuge islands, and building upon the existing bicycle and pedestrian network. As with roadway projects, a need should be identified for a particular segment of sidewalk, multi-use trail, or bike lane before a concept is developed and funding is allocated. When planning a bicycle and pedestrian network, tradeoffs and priorities must be considered in order to determine the most feasible route and type of project that will best serve the user groups expected on the facility once it is completed.

In Rockdale County, demographic characteristics, destination locations, and other roadway conditions can vary dramatically. Portions of Rockdale County are rural, population density is low, and destinations are located further from trip origin sites (residences, places of employment, etc.) than typically accepted as a reasonable distance to travel by walking or biking for purely transportation purposes. These locations are therefore less suitable for new infrastructure. Conversely, there are portions of the county, specifically around Conyers, that have medium to high population density, and spacing between origins and destinations is much more favorable for trips by walking or biking. To determine the best locations for potential bicycle and pedestrian projects, a suitability analysis was prepared to help understand where there is a strong need for these new connections.

This analysis used the County's transportation network to analyze four broad categories:

- **Demand***:* proximity to places that likely users live
- **Attractions***:* proximity to destinations where people want to travel
- **Character***:* general character of the facility and/or adjacent roadway
- **Future Needs:** how areas are anticipated to change in the future

DEMAND

This component of the bike and pedestrian suitability analysis considers populations more likely to walk or bike. Data used in this portion of the analysis is taken from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS). This most recent survey release aggregates responses over a five-year period between 2011 and 2015 and provides demographic data related to

households, auto ownership, commuting patterns, and other population-based figures. This information is used to determine how the block groups compare to the overall distribution across the county. This process assumes that block groups within a half-standard deviation of the mean receive 0.5 points out of a possible one. Areas above or below the average, using standard deviations to determine distance from the mean, receive points on a range between 0.25 and 1.0. For Demand Analysis, each block group is assigned a relative score for each criteria, out of a possible total of 1 point, and then a cumulative score is derived by summing those individual criteria scores. The criteria from which the Demand for biking and walking facilities is based on is outlined below.

- Population Density
- Concentrations of Households with No Automobile
- Concentrations of People Age 18 or Less
- Concentrations of People Age 55 or More
- Concentrations of Commuters Who Use an Alternative to a Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) to Travel to Work

The process for the Demand Analysis uses the U.S. Census Bureau's block group boundaries to define the individual analysis areas. As expected, this analysis reveals that the highest levels of population density occur in along the I-20 freeway corridor, and south of Conyers along the SR 138 corridor. Parts of Rockdale County are characterized as having low population density, specifically in the northernmost parts of the county, and in the southwest, near Panola Mountain State Park. These scores are shown in **Figure 30**.

Auto ownership in the county is fairly high with almost 96% of households owning at least one car. There are some block groups in the county where automobile ownership rate is lower, and these areas were given higher suitability scores as shown in **Figure 31**, because of the likelihood that residents in these areas may rely on other modes of transportation. It should be noted that the areas where the auto-ownership rate is low, relative to the mean, are typically areas where population density is higher. This implies that citizens in the more rural areas of the County do have access to a personal vehicle, while residents living in more urbanized settings may have a greater need alternative mode facilities.

Figure 30
Total Population Density Score

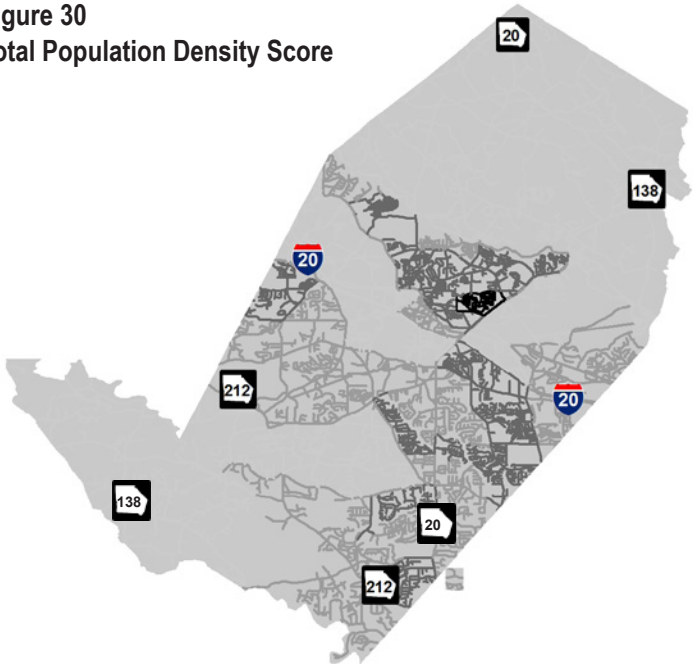
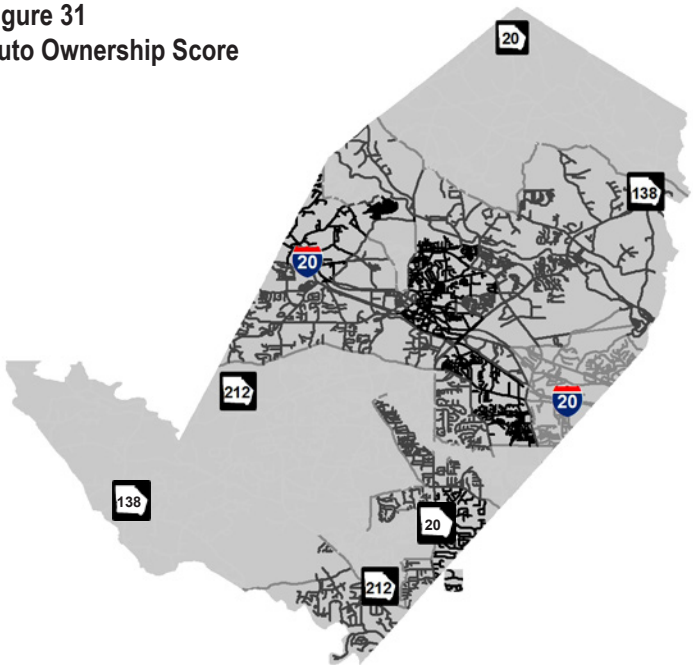


Figure 31
Auto Ownership Score



28.9% of the population of Rockdale County is age 19 or less. Young residents can be active users of both biking and walking facilities, and areas where higher concentrations are found can indicate an underlying need for better connectivity. Children often will walk or bike to school, parks, and other community facilities. Concentrations of households with children are generally located in the more suburban areas of Rockdale County. Notably, higher concentrations of households with children also can be found in rural parts of the county near public schools. Scores based on this metric are shown in **Figure 32**.

25% of Rockdale residents are age 55 or older. Residents falling into this age bracket can be active and have more free time after retirement. Providing facilities like sidewalks for short-distance local trips in concentrated areas of residents 55 and older can also be important to support aging in place. This term refers to the potential for a person to continue living in a familiar place as needs change with age; this is dependent upon many factors of which transportation infrastructure is one critical component. Residents who are above the age of 55 tend to live in parts of Conyers, along the SR 138 corridor south of Conyers, and in the rural, low-density parts of the unincorporated county in the north and south, as shown in the scores presented in **Figure 33**.

Single Occupancy Vehicles are the primary mode of transportation within Rockdale County. However the Census data shows a trend of people walking or taking transit to work. This trend emerges primarily along the I-20 corridor, which is to be expected given the location of the two GRTA Xpress Bus stops that serve the county. Pedestrian trips to work also are generally located in Conyers and the surrounding unincorporated Rockdale County that has a suburban character. Scores based on the prevalence of alternative commutes are shown in **Figure 34.**

Figure 32
Youth Density Score

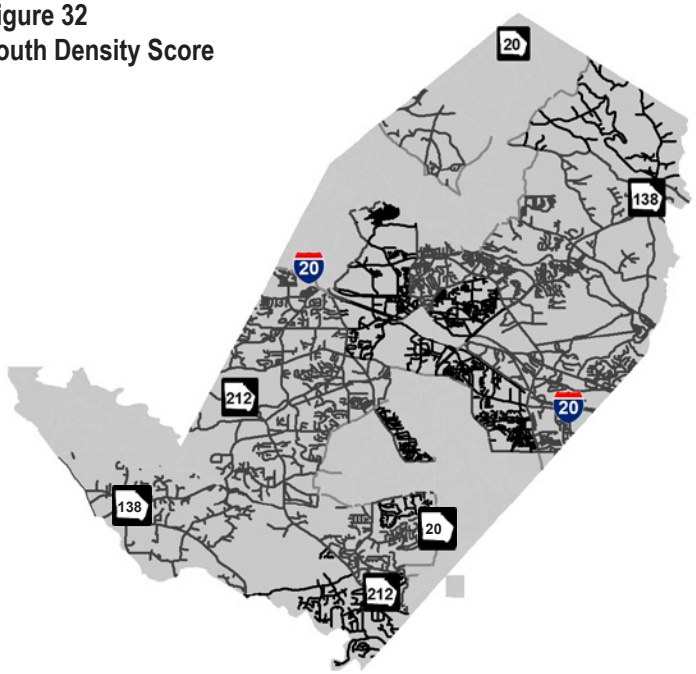


Figure 33
Aging Density Score

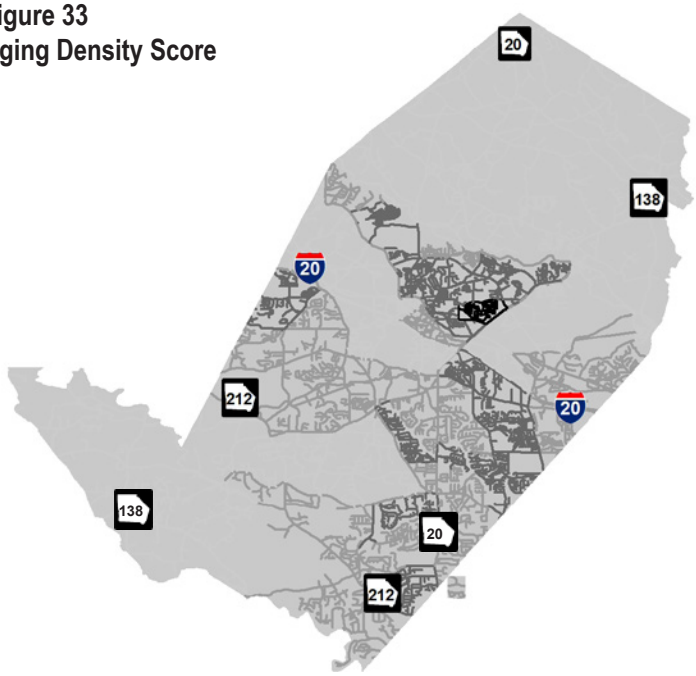
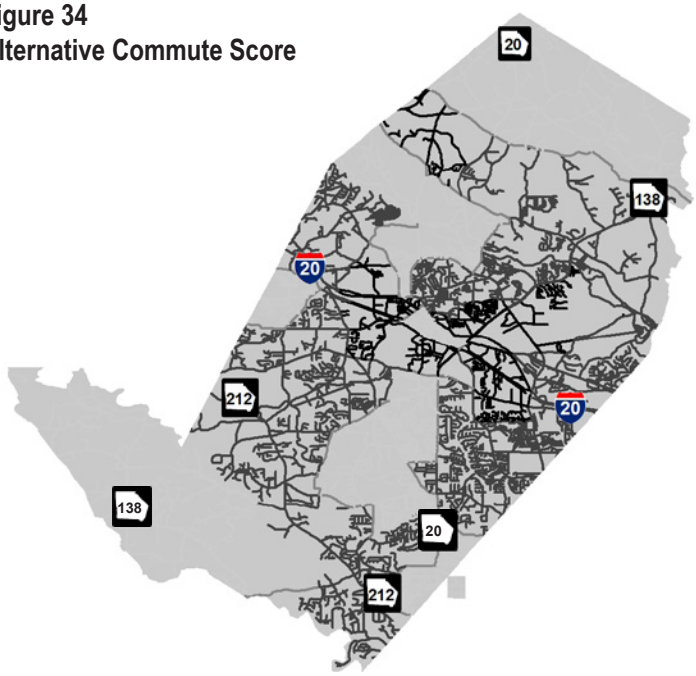
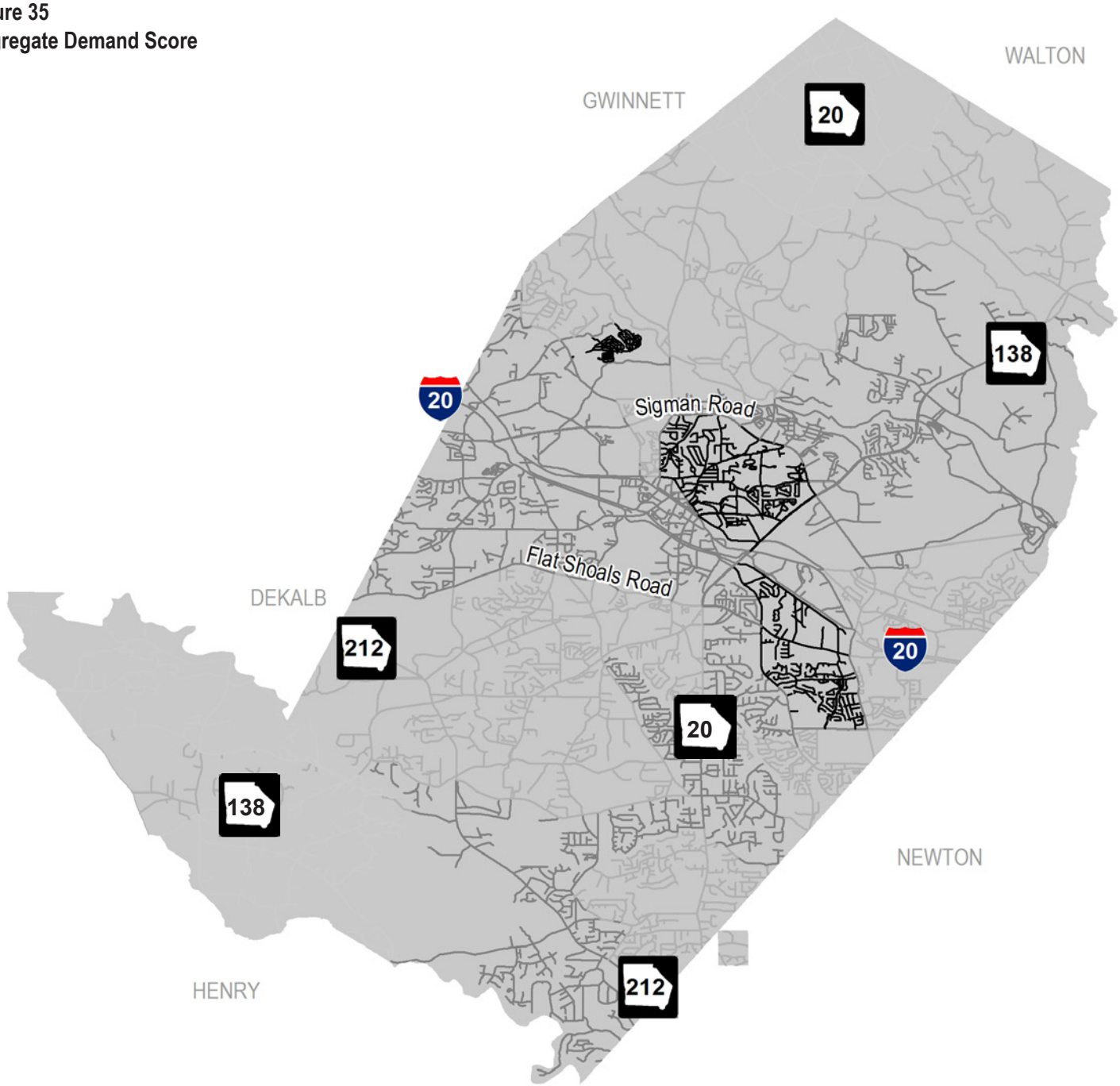


Figure 34
Alternative Commute Score



The total Aggregate Demand Score from this analysis is displayed in **Figure 35**. Clearly the more urbanized area along the I-20 and SR 138 corridors are where anticipated demand for biking and walking infrastructure is highest.

Figure 35
Aggregate Demand Score



ATTRACTIONS

The Attraction Analysis component of the bicycle and pedestrian suitability process relies largely on location based data to identify roads and trails in the existing and potential network that fall within a specific distance from an attraction point – activity centers that are the most likely to draw in pedestrian and bicycle commuters, or pedestrians and cyclists on recreational trips. Attractions in this analysis are outlined below.

- Parks and Recreation Centers (Source: Rockdale County, Field Verified), **Figure 36**
- Schools (Source: Rockdale County, Field Verified), **Figure 37**
- Transit Stops/Park and Ride Lots (Source: ARC, Field Verified), **Figure 38**
- Retail Centers (Source: Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics, Rockdale County, Field Verified), **Figure 39**
- Civic Sites, such as Places of Worship, City Hall(s), Health Service Centers, Universities, Libraries (Source: Rockdale County, ARC, Field Verified), **Figure 40**
- Concentrations of Employment (Source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics), **Figure 41**

Points are given to road segments based on relative distance within the road and trail network from a point of attraction. Geographic Information System (GIS) functions were used to develop service areas within one mile and within three miles of each attraction. Road segments falling within the 1-mile service area received 5 points and road segments falling within the 3-mile service area received 3 points. Road segments also receive more points if they could be used by pedestrians and/or cyclists to reach multiple destinations.

Figure 36
Parks and Recreation Score

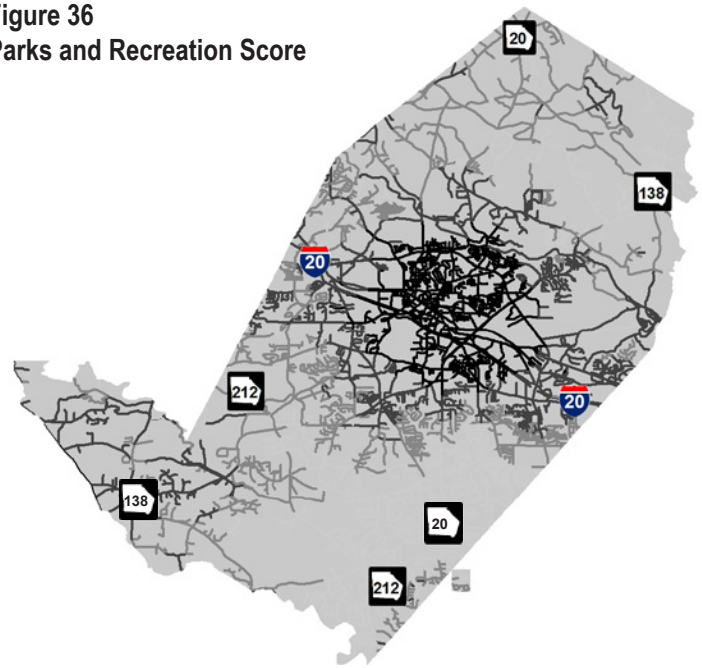


Figure 37
School Score

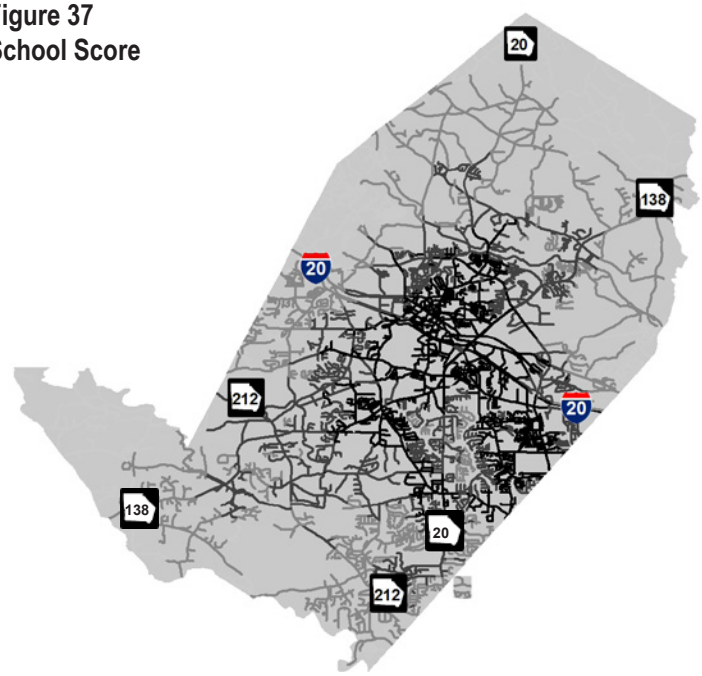
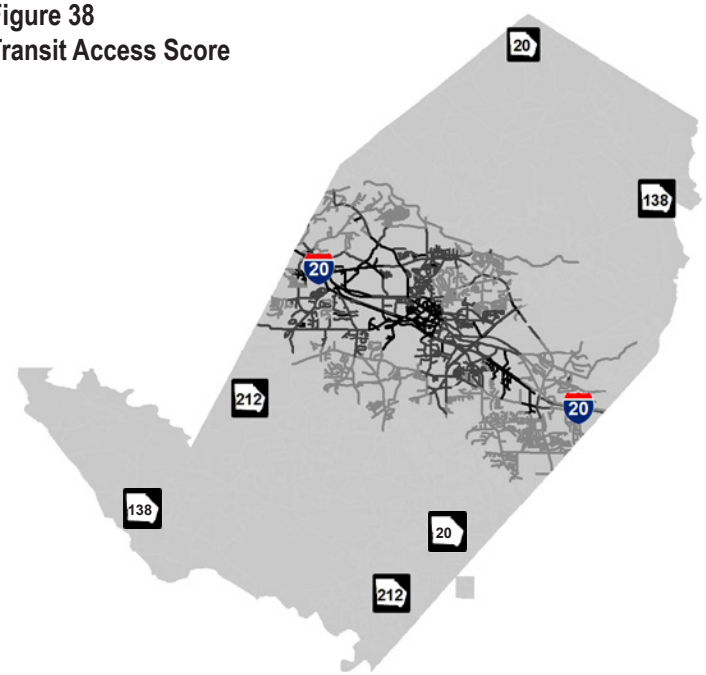


Figure 38
Transit Access Score



The cumulative Attractions score from this analysis is displayed in **Figure 42**. The area that demonstrates the most need, based on proximity to established attractors, begins in the west at approximately the Conyers city limit, and extends to the eastern edge of the county. There is also an inherent need for improved biking and walking amenities near the schools in the southern part of the county.

Figure 39
Retail Centers Score

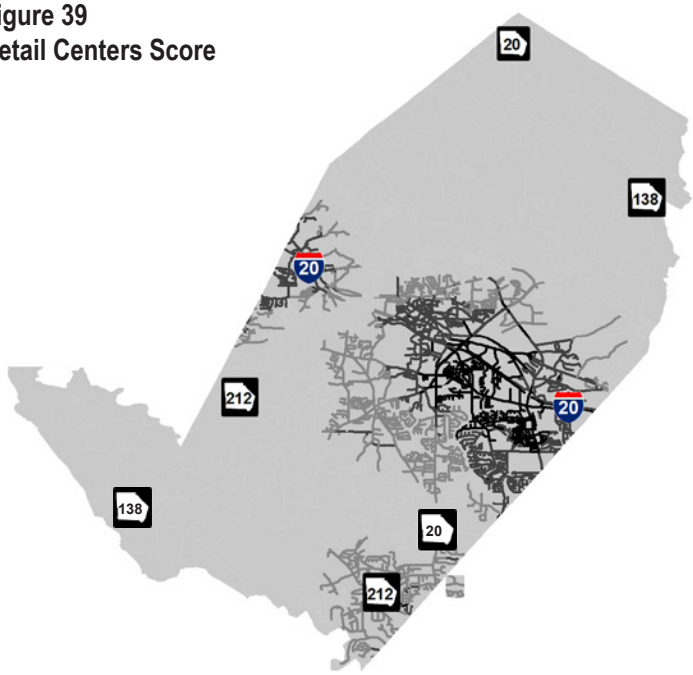


Figure 40
Civic Site Score

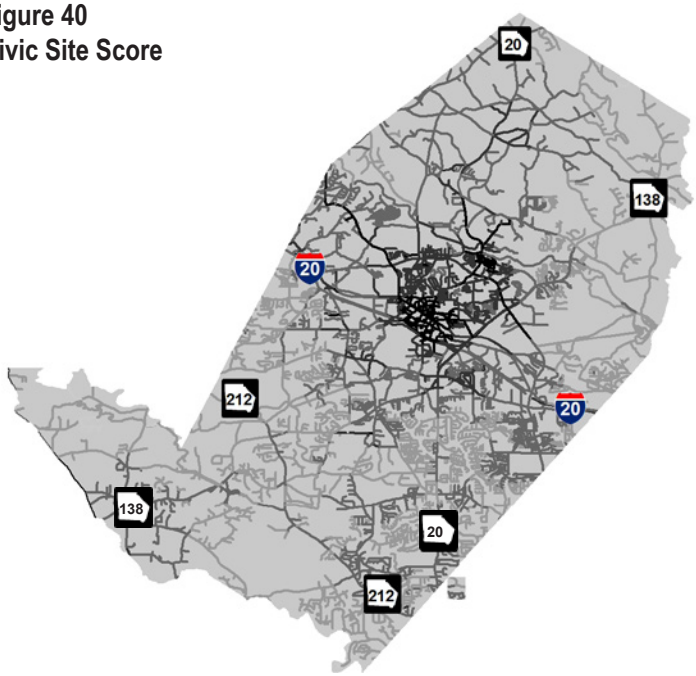


Figure 41
Employment Score

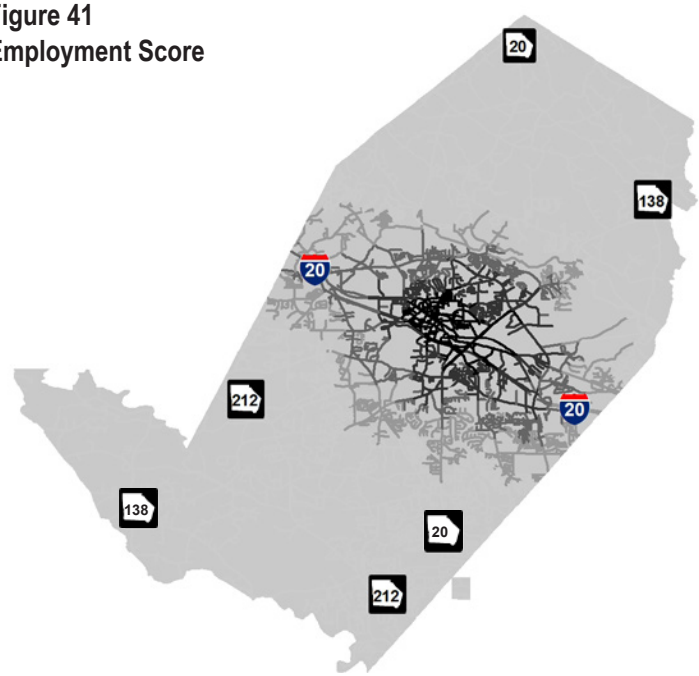


Figure 42
Aggregate Attractions Score

ROADWAY CHARACTERISTICS

The Roadway Character Analysis component of the suitability assessment is intended to highlight specific routes or corridors that are more favorable for biking and walking trips. This component also looks at locations where crashes involving pedestrians or cyclists have occurred to try to pinpoint where improvements can possibly be made that increase safety for all users. The four criteria that make up the Character Analysis process are outlined below.

- Proximity to Existing and Planned Sidewalks and Bike Facilities (Source: Rockdale County)
- Average Corridor Slope (Source: Rockdale County Topography)
- Pedestrian and Cyclist Crash Frequency and Severity (Source: GEARS)
- Block Size (Source: US Census)

Gaps in sidewalk and biking networks can often be identified by determining roads that are within a certain distance of an existing facility, but that don't currently have facilities in place. From a project priority perspective, it also is generally a best practice to expand and/or provide links between existing networks, rather than begin work in another area, from a network-building perspective. The Rockdale River Trail system and the existing and planned facilities outlined in the *Master Plan for Multi-Use Trails Connecting Conyers and Covington* were used as a basis for establishing where future trail connections may be important to get people to these trunk trails of these two systems. Scores based on proximity to these facilities are shown in **Figure 43**.

Roadway slope plays an important role in the Character Analysis because slope often is the deciding factor in whether or not a pedestrian or bicycle route is comfortable to the average user. The comfort and appeal of the surrounding space and of the facility itself are some of the most important factors that contribute to whether people choose to travel on a particular route or not. Much of the existing road system in Rockdale county lies on the natural ridge lines of the terrain, making most of the arterials and collectors in the county relatively flat. The median average slope of the network is 3%, which is a comfortable incline for the average cyclist. Road slopes greater than 6% were given zero points, but this does not preclude a road segment from having biking or walking facilities. Rather, this is a way to identify which routes are more or less ideal when determining facility alignments. Between 0% and 6%, road segments were scored on a scale that awarded more points to flatter roads. The range of possible points was between 0 and 1. A map of scores for this metric is shown in **Figure 44**.

Figure 43
Proximity to Existing Facilities Score

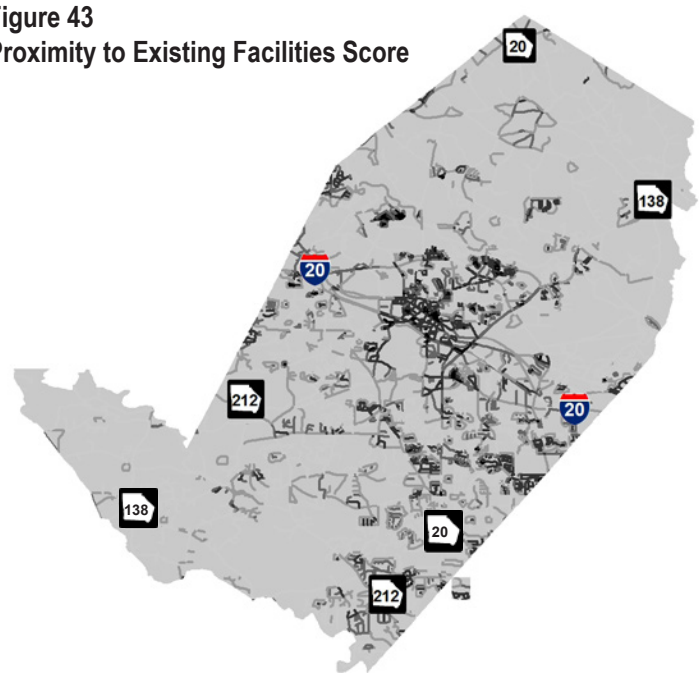


Figure 44
Average Corridor Slope Score

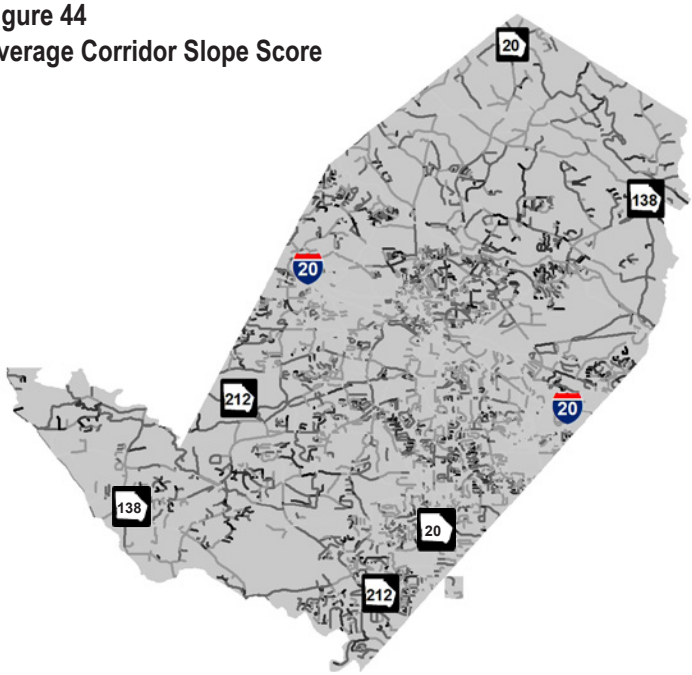


Figure 45
Bike and Pedestrian Crash Score

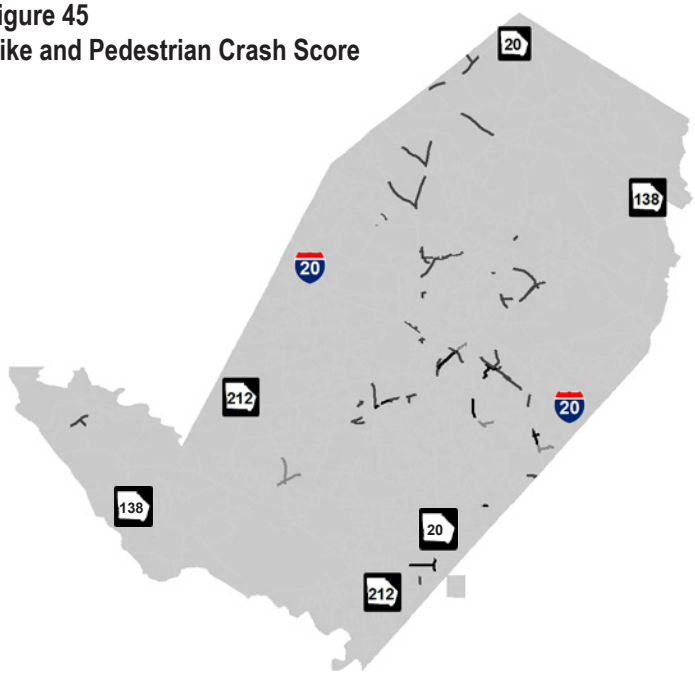
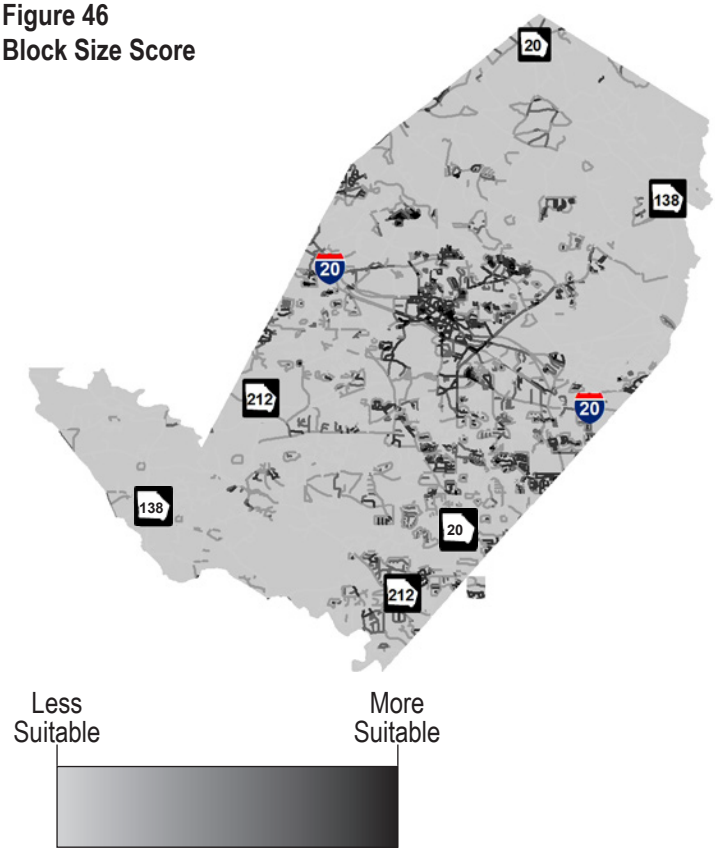


Figure 46
Block Size Score



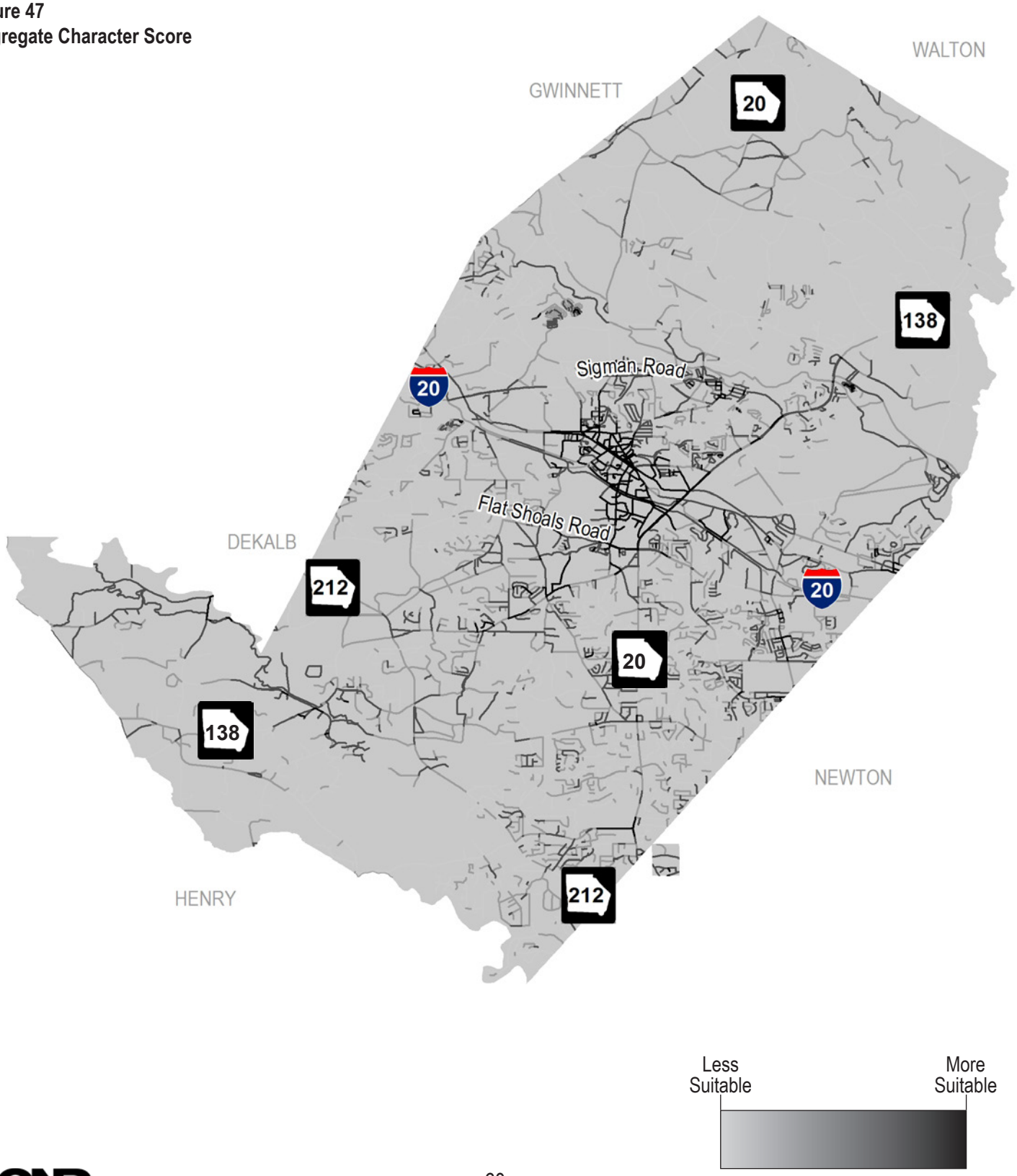
River and stream beds can also present opportunities to develop off-road multi-use trails that can be community amenities. Rivers and streams are natural low points in the terrain and can be used to develop accessible trail routes that can run continuously for several miles. Several rivers and streams cross Rockdale County. The Yellow River crosses from east to west, north of Conyers. Master planning efforts have already identified the Yellow River as a potential trail alignment, and efforts to complete this vision are recommended. To the south, the Almand Creek flows southeast from Conyers into Newton County, and the South River flows into Henry County. Much of the Rockdale River Trail follows the South River, making it an ideal location for future expansions of this trail system into neighboring Henry County.

As previously discussed, pedestrian and bicyclist crashes in Rockdale County have been reported from the Georgia Electronic Accident Reporting System (GEARS) for use in this CTP update. From 2014-2016, 49 crashes have occurred involving a pedestrian or a cyclist. Roads that exhibit a trend towards a heightened crash risk between motor vehicles and bikes and pedestrians tend to be located on high-volume roads in more densely populated areas. Sigman Road, SR 138, Iris Drive and Dogwood Road, and Salem Road all had segments where multiple crashes took place. Additionally, two fatalities occurred on segments of road where sidewalk is not present. Those segments were Iris Drive, west of the East Conyers Park and Ride lot, and Honey Creek Road east of SR 20. A map of scores based on these crashes is shown in **Figure 45**.

The fourth component of the Character Analysis process uses U.S. census blocks, which are the smallest areas used for recording the 10-year Census data. The perimeter of each block is calculated, and areas where smaller block sizes appear suggest that these areas are denser, and have the capability of supporting multiple route alternatives. Primarily, this component identified the smaller block sizes in Conyers and parts of unincorporated Rockdale County south of the city, as shown in **Figure 46**.

Figure 47 shows the cumulative Character Analysis score map. As shown in the figure, the road segments that have some characteristics that are either favorable for biking and walking, or that exhibit a greater than average need for improvements to safety, are identified. This includes the area in and around Conyers, the major river beds, the I-20 frontage roads, and the arterial State Routes.

Figure 47
Aggregate Character Score



FUTURE GROWTH

This final section of the analysis considers where growth is projected within Rockdale County, based on projections of employment and population density from the Atlanta Regional Commission for the year 2040. The quantifiable measures that are used in the Future Needs Analysis are the overall change in population and employment density, as outlined below.

- Increase in Population Density, (Source: Atlanta Regional Commission), **Figure 48**
- Increase in Employment Density, (Source: Atlanta Regional Commission), **Figure 49**

These measures identify areas where stronger than average growth is anticipated, based on forecast estimates. This component of the suitability process is intended to define areas where future needs may support additional biking and walking infrastructure. This component is useful in identifying where future, long-term infrastructure should be considered.

Figure 48
Population Density Change Score

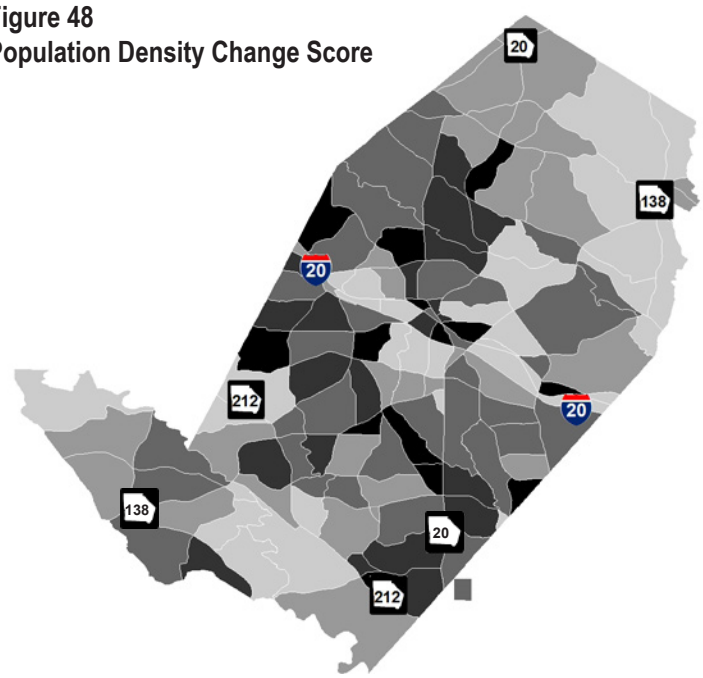
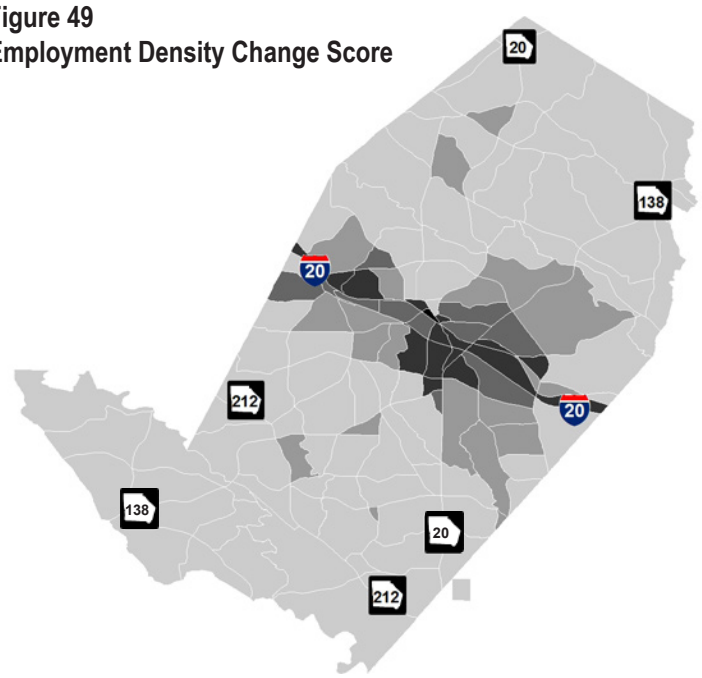
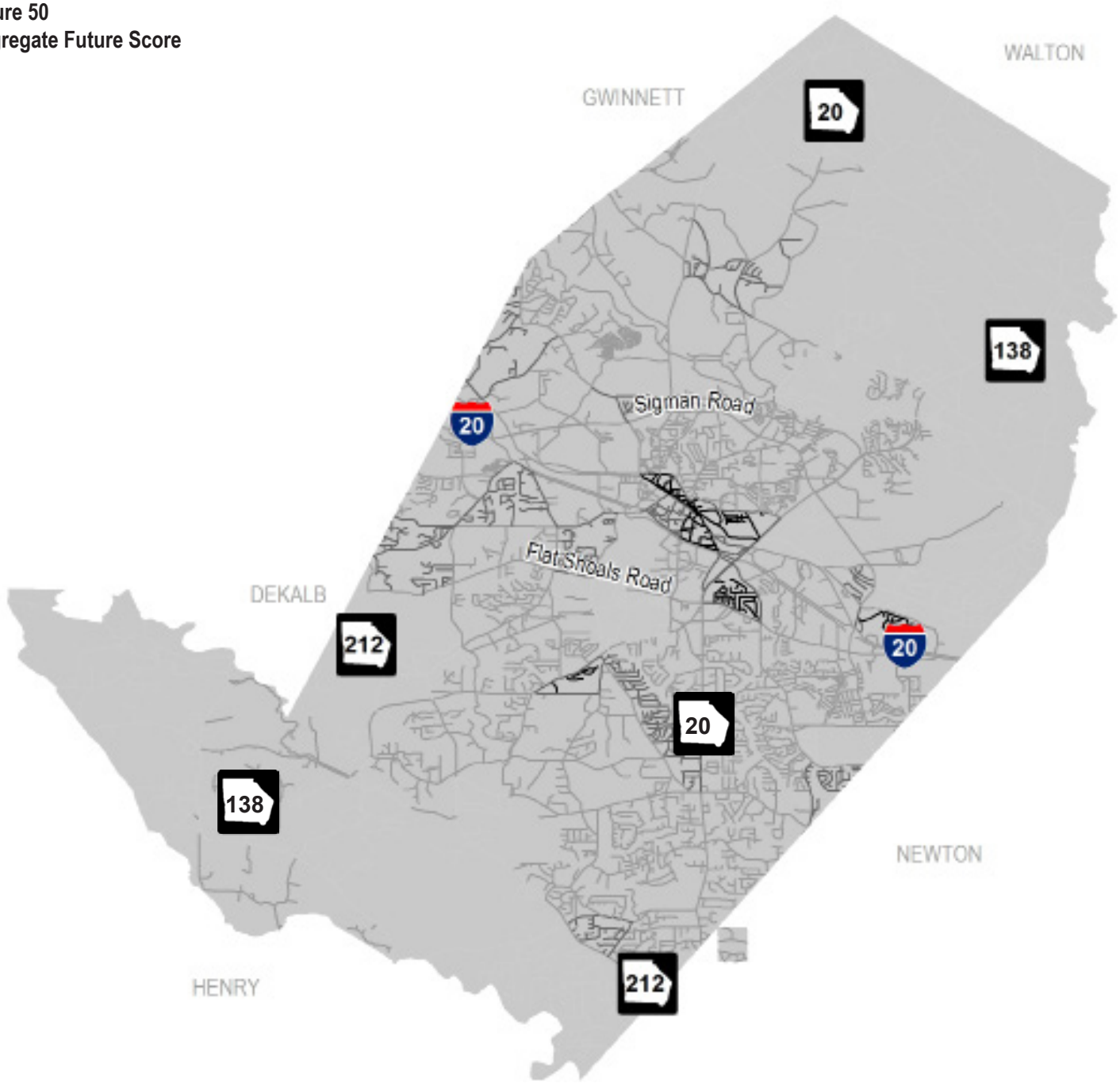


Figure 49
Employment Density Change Score



The map shown in **Figure 50** indicates the cumulative Future Needs Analysis scores applied to individual corridors. The band of development that follows the I-20 corridor is targeted as being the area where much of the growth in Rockdale County will take place. The area of expanding density of population and employment is expected to extend further north and south of the freeway, with parts of the county in the northeast and southwest retaining the low-density character.

Figure 50
Aggregate Future Score



CUMULATIVE SUITABILITY SCORES

The map in **Figure 51** shows a cumulative score from the four categories outlined above; each category is weighted equally. Segments with higher scores are considered "more suitable", making them stronger candidates for pedestrian- or bicyclist-focused improvements than segments with lower scores. This scoring system does not preclude the construction of other segments outside of the more suitable areas; this map is intended to be used as a tool to inform decision-makers where capital improvement projects would be of benefit.

Figure 51
Cumulative Suitability Score

FREIGHT AND GOODS MOVEMENT

Freight Mobility

Freight movement and delivery in Rockdale County is primarily via truck and/or railroad. This CTP does not specifically address rail freight, except to address highway/rail crossings which is discussed on page 68. Therefore, this section presents an overview of truck freight movement, issues and opportunities in the County.

Several prior studies and data sources provide a state and regional context to truck freight. The Atlanta Regional Commission's *Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan Update, 2016* provides a regional look at the importance of freight to Atlanta's (and Georgia's) economy, assessment of trends, and opportunities. While we commonly associate truck freight with manufacturing and wholesale industries, this report also highlight its' importance to retail and deliveries to the general consumer. **Table 12**, from this report, reinforces how significant Atlanta's manufacturing centers are to our region and the nation as a whole.

In the Atlanta area, trucks move about 83% of the freight. And, the I-20 corridor in Rockdale and Newton Counties contains one of the clusters of intensive freight demand. This, and other freight intenseive clusters, can be seen in **Figure 52**. Freight traffic on I-20 east of Atlanta is among the highest in the regional freight system, as shown in **Figure 53**. This report also identifies programmed and planned transportation improvements (i.e. contained in the TIP or long-range regional transportation plan) which are related to key freight clusters or corridors, including the planned improvements to Sigman Road, shown in **Figure 54**.

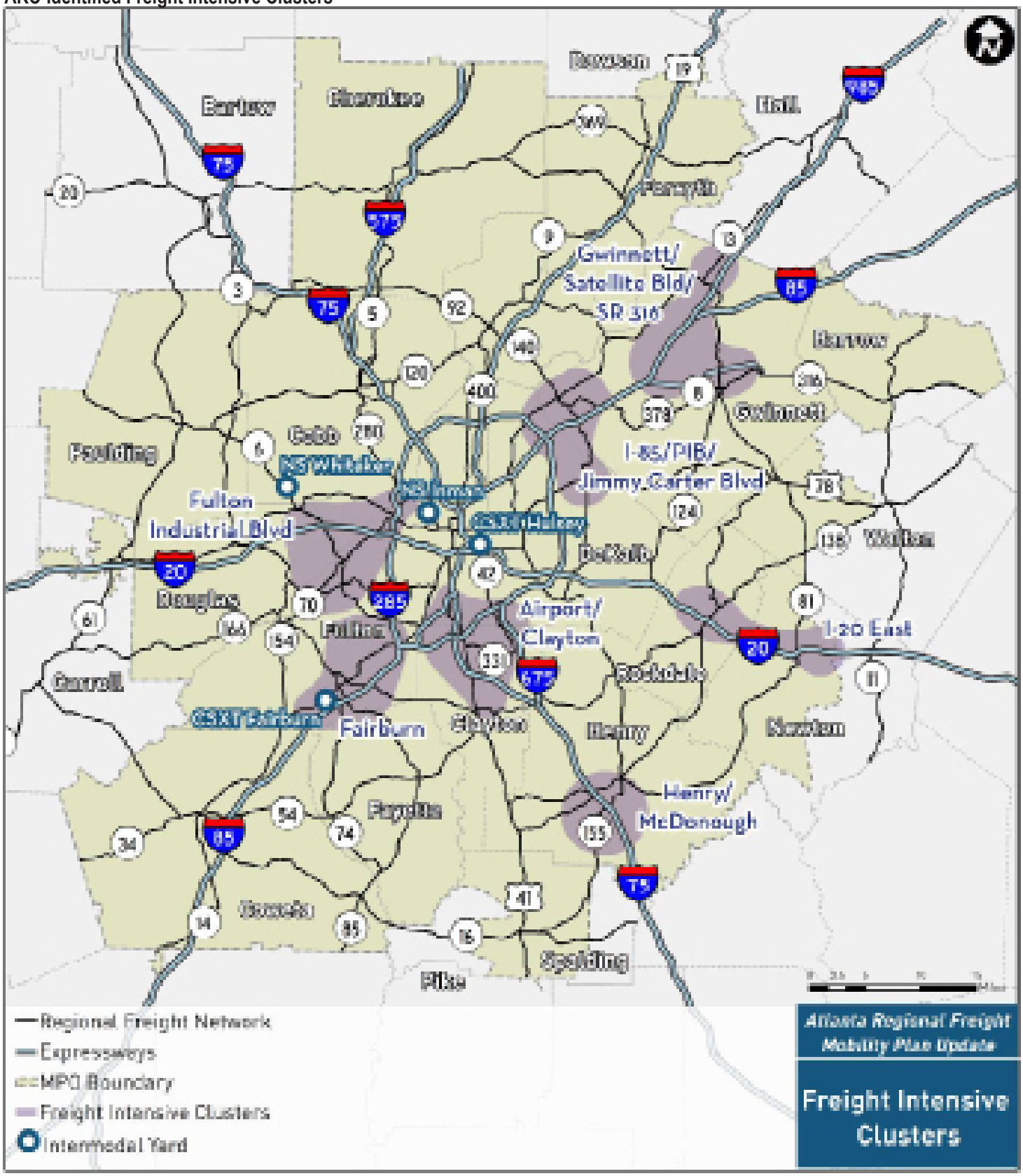
The Georgia DOT's *Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan, 2010-2050* was last updated in February 2016. This plan provides a thorough look at statewide freight movements, key corridors, and priority investments. Due to the statewide geography of this study, its' application to the Rockdale CTP is limited just to I-20, as it does not get to the level of detail of the arterial streets in the County.

Table 12
Top 15 US Manufacturing Centers by Employment

Rank	Metropolitan Statistical Area	Manufacturing Employment
1	Los Angeles	508,526
2	Chicago	386,575
3	New York	338,127
4	Dallas	231,789
5	Houston	223,777
6	Detroit	207,036
7	Minneapolis	176,604
8	Philadelphia	168,032
9	Boston	152,822
10	Seattle	152,339
11	Atlanta	133,107
12	Cleveland	121,442
13	Milwaukee	113,926
14	San Francisco	105,958
15	San Diego	100,475

Source: ARC

Figure 52
ARC-Identified Freight Intensive Clusters

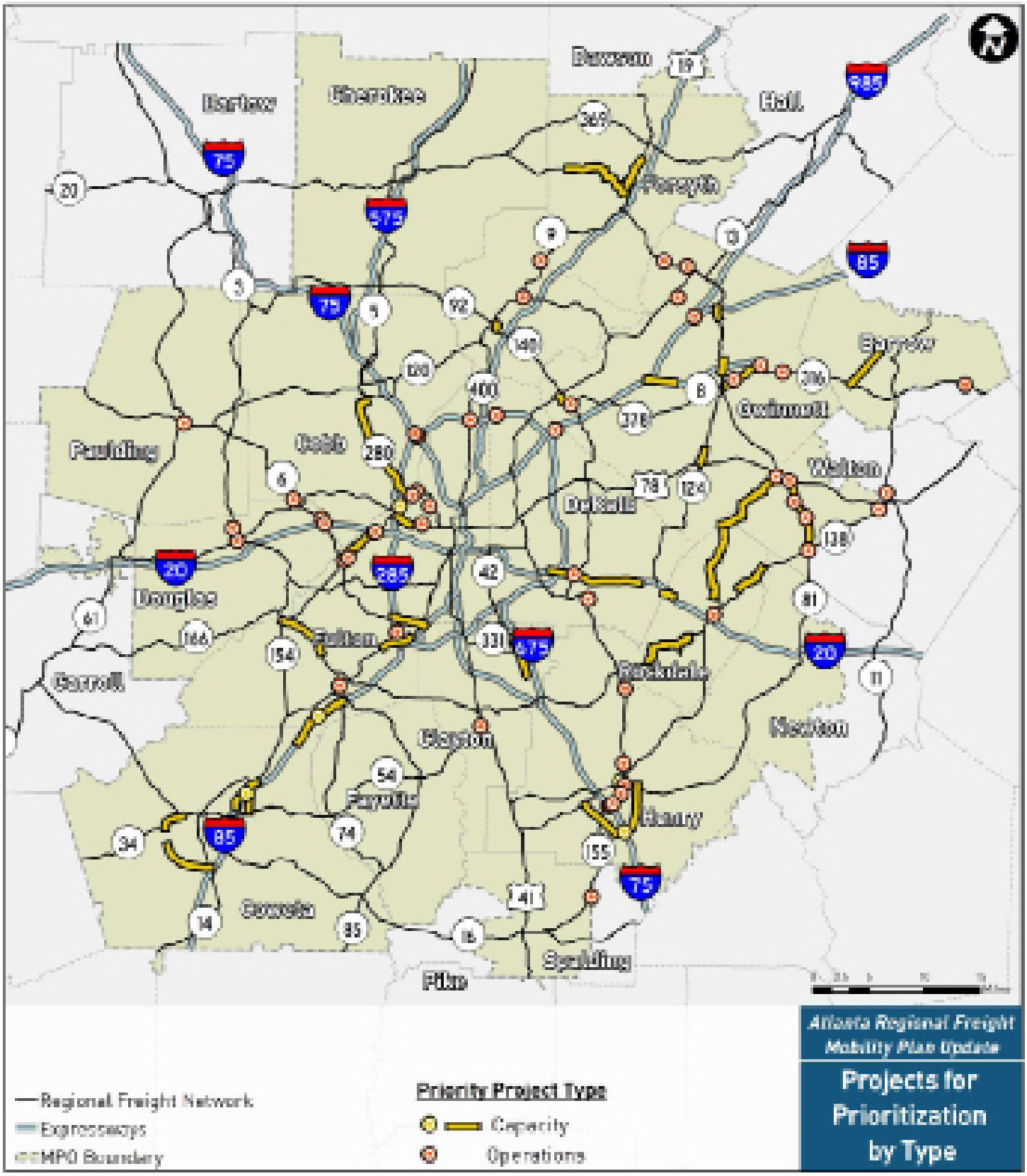


Source: Georgia Power Company. Consultant analysis.

Figure 53
ASTRoMaP Truck Counts

Source: Truck Counts: Georgia DOT Geocounts Database

Figure 54
ARC-Identified Freight Projects



Source: ARC, Consultant Analysis

Railroad Crossings

Rockdale County is served by one Class I railroad line, operated by CSX Transportation (CSXT). This line was originally part of the Georgia Railroad, which was constructed long before Rockdale County was incorporated. Conyers was literally built up around what began as a watering post for steam locomotives. This east-west line connects Atlanta to Augusta, with numerous connections to customers along this distance, as shown in **Figure 55**. Within Rockdale County, this line serves many businesses who depend on freight rail access including Pactiv, Solo Cup, Corrugated Supply, Pratt Industries and others. Access to this railroad is important to attracting and keeping certain industries in the community.

There are 15 public street crossings (public streets crossing the mainline) of the CSXT railroad in Rockdale County. These include 12 at-grade crossings and 3 grade-separated crossings. These are listed in Table 1 and located in Figure 2. All of the at-grade crossings reviewed are equipped with gates and flashing lights.

Table 13 includes the average daily traffic volume of those streets where they cross the railroad, as available. Count data was not available for many of the streets – however, based on visual observation, those are likely low volume roads. From the available data, one can see that the highest volume street crossing the railroad at grade is Sigman Road. The busier cross streets such as SR 138 and Salem Road are grade-separated over the railroad.

Figure 55
CSX Railroads in Georgia

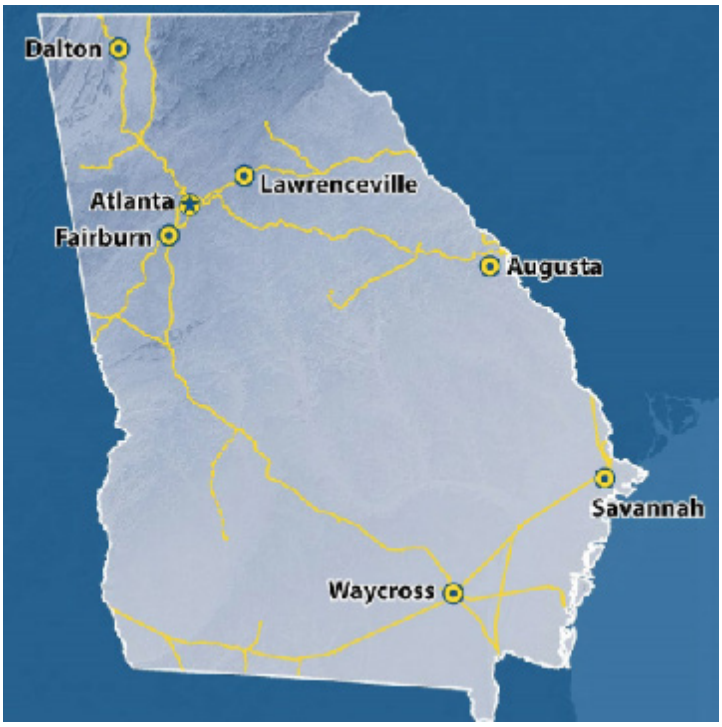


Table 13
Public Street Railroad Crossings in Rockdale County

Crossing Street	Street Configuration	Crossing Type	Average Daily Traffic*
Lake Capri Road	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	not available
Lake Rockaway Road	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	1,360
Plunkett Road	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
Sigman Road	5 lanes (2 EB, 3 WB), blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	13,700
Industrial Boulevard	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	830 (estimate from nearby count)
Unnamed connector to Industrial Blvd (at Sealy Mattress)	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
Rockbridge Road	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
Ellington Drive	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
West Avenue / Almand Street	3 lanes (1 NB, 2 SB), blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
Center Street	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
Scott Street	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
SR 138	6-lane, concrete	Grade-separated over RR	38,200
Gees Mill Road	2-lane, blacktop	At-grade w/ gates	Not available
N Salem Road	4-lane, concrete	Grade-separated over RR	17,900
Dogwood Connector	2-lane, concrete	Grade-separated over RR	Not available

Source: Inventory of Crossings from visual survey; traffic counts from Georgia DOT

The presence of the railroad line creates some challenges to mobility, as it presents a potential barrier for crossing by automobiles, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. As the County is about 8.5 miles wide, 15 crossings represents a generous number of crossings as compared to other communities. However, when these crossings are viewed spatially, as in **Figure 56**, one can quickly see that the grade-separated crossings are all on the east side of the County. So, if there is a slow or stopped train, it will have a greater impact to surface street mobility near downtown Conyers and on the western half of the County, where crossings are relatively close together but are all at-grade. This suggests that at least one crossing on the western side of the County needs to be grade-separated to ensure some reliable mobility when a train is slow or stopped. Considering the street network connectivity and traffic volumes on these streets, it is most desirable to separate Sigman Road over the railroad. **Table 14** shows Truck Traffic on Select Major Roadways in Rockdale County. Areas of notable truck traffic include the portion of Salem Road north of I-20, Sigman Road east of I-20, as well as SR 138 north of Sigman Road.

Figure 56
Public Streets Crossing CSXT Railroad

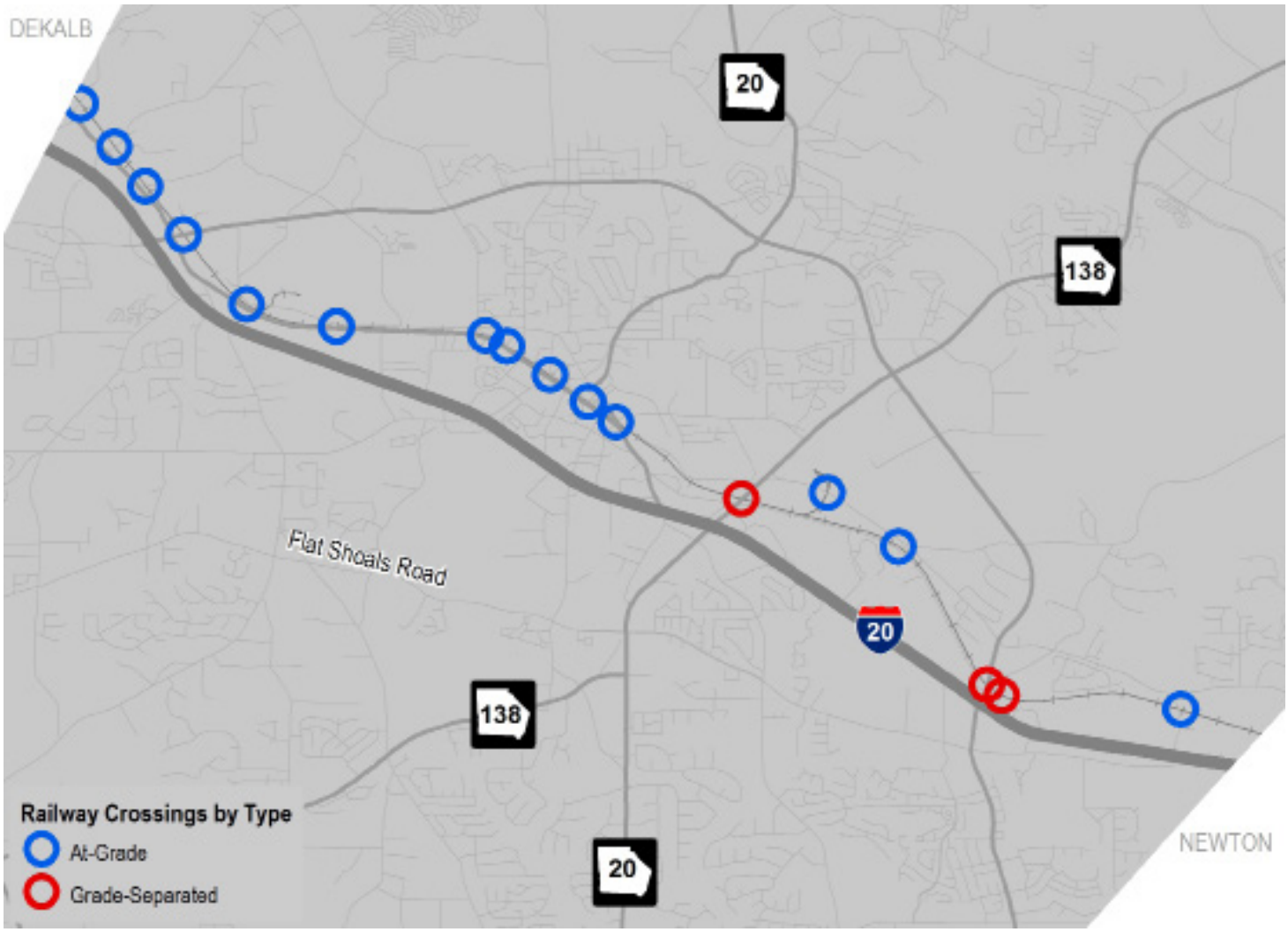


Table 14. Truck Traffic on Select Major Roadways

Roadway	Location	Average Daily Traffic*		
		Total	Trucks	% Trucks
Salem Road	south of I-20	36,600	950	2.6%
Salem Road	north of I-20	17,900	1,600	8.9%
SR 138 (north)	south of Walton Co. line	15,500	1,630	10.5%
SR 138 (north)	north of Sigman Road	24,400	1,810	7.4%
SR 138/SR 20	north of I-20	38,200	2,420	6.3%
SR 138/SR 20	south of I-20	66,100	3,030	4.6%
SR 138 (south)	southwest of SR 20	16,600	450	2.7%
SR 138 (south)	north of SR 155	10,000	580	5.8%
Sigman Road (east)	west of SR 138	20,800	760	3.7%
Sigman Road (central)	between Irwin Bridge Rd and Milstead Ave.	15,000	750	5.0%
Sigman Road (west)	east of I-20	13,700	1,360	9.9%
Old Covington Hwy.	east of Sigman Road	6,100	410	6.7%
SR 155	north of SR 138	9,540	420	4.4%
SR 212 (Browns Mill Rd)	northeast of SR 138	11,500	350	3.0%
SR 212 (Browns Mill Rd)	near Oglesby Bridge Rd	6,840	270	3.9%
SR 20	south of SR 138	32,400	1,150	3.5%
SR 20	south of Honey Creek Rd	28,100	3,360	12.0%

Source: Georgia DOT (years 2015 or 2016 as available; rounded to nearest 10)

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CONCLUSIONS

Through the existing conditions and needs assessment analyses, the study team was able to articulate specific locational transportation needs as well as broader needs as indicated below:

- Address north-south travel within Rockdale
- Address east-west travel within Rockdale
- Improve connectivity to surrounding communities
- Develop parallel alternatives to major routes
- Address bottleneck locations
- Identify opportunities for active transportation
- Enhance connections to I-20
- Inveest in principal routes to maximize system efficiency
- Facilitate safe and efficient freight movement

Additionally through proactive community and stakeholder engagement, the study team understands the overall priority to the community related to these needs, as shown in **Table 14**.

Finally, these needs will be utilized along with technical analsis and additional community feedback to help prioritize specific transportation investments and programs that will be documented in the forthcoming CTP Recomendations Report.

Table 15
Project Need Ranking from Community Engagement

Project Goal	Stakeholder Dots	Community Workshop Dots
Address bottleneck locations	17	26
Address north-south travel within Rockdale	17	22
Enhance connections to I-20	12	25
Address east-west travel within Rockdale	17	18
Facilitate safe and efficient freight movement	19	7
Invest in principal routes to maximize system efficiency	9	20
Identify opportunities for active transportation	10	12
Improve connectivity to surrounding communities	9	11
Develop parallel alternatives to major routes	5	15

CONCLUSIONS

ADDRESS NORTH-SOUTH TRAVEL WITHIN ROCKDALE

An analysis of trip patterns within the County shows a significant amount of trips between the northern and southern parts of the County. Due to the barriers created by I-20 and the railroad, there are only a limited number of crossings connecting both parts of the County.

ADDRESS EAST-WEST TRAVEL WITHIN ROCKDALE

While there is less east-west travel than north-south travel, the CTP analysis also clearly shows a lack of east-west connectivity. Currently, the only consistent east-west facility traversing the length of the county is I-20. Developing a stronger surface street system of east-west opportunities can reduce the reliance on I-20 for local trips.

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY TO SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

A review of travel patterns to and from Rockdale County show a unique bias to communities immediately to the west and the east of the County along the I-20 corridor. While improvements to the I-20 corridor can help facilitate better connectivity with neighboring communities, opportunities to develop redundant connections should also be explored.

FACILITATE SAFE AND EFFICIENT FREIGHT MOVEMENT

Between the various at-grade railroad crossings in the County and the concentrations of freight oriented employment along the I-20, the County should prioritize transportation improvements that allow for the safe and efficient movement of goods and services.

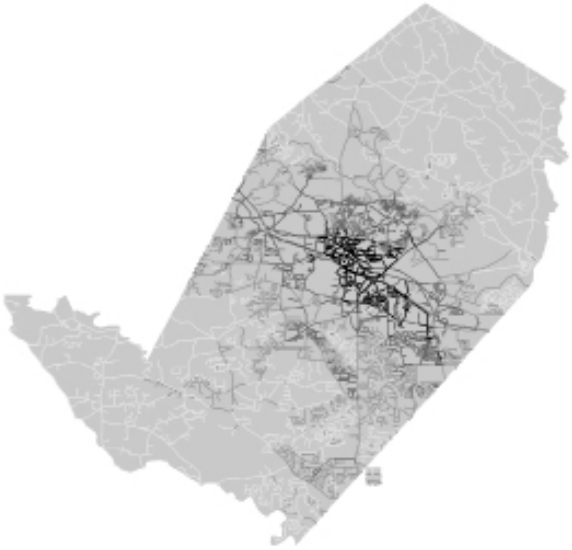
ADDRESS BOTTLENECK LOCATIONS

There are a variety of intersections and localized locations within the County where smaller scale operational improvements may be able to improve and mitigate transportation congestion significantly. The County should prioritize improvements that can reduce congestion at such bottleneck locations.

ENHANCE CONNECTIONS TO I-20

Quite simply, I-20 connects Rockdale County to the world. Transportation patterns show that a significant amount of our daily traffic demands include simply accessing I-20. Therefore, let's investigate how we can maximize our connections to I-20 and therefore, to the world.

CONCLUSIONS



IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION

Our citizens should not have to own a vehicle to get around our community – especially when small localized trips can be made by foot or bicycle. We should prioritize investing pedestrian and bicycle enhancements in those parts of the County where there is a propensity for this type of travel!

INVEST IN PRINCIPAL ROUTES TO MAXIMIZE SYSTEM EFFICIENCY

Our principal routes are what allow us to make long distance trips within the County. Let's make sure we prioritize investment on these corridors.

DEVELOP PARALLEL ALTERNATIVES TO MAJOR ROUTES

However, let's also explore opportunities to improve our principal routes by developing parallel facilities. Providing travel options so that we don't always have to rely on our major corridors will help lessen the stress we put on our major routes.