



# **2050 MTP**

## **Appendix C: Existing Conditions**





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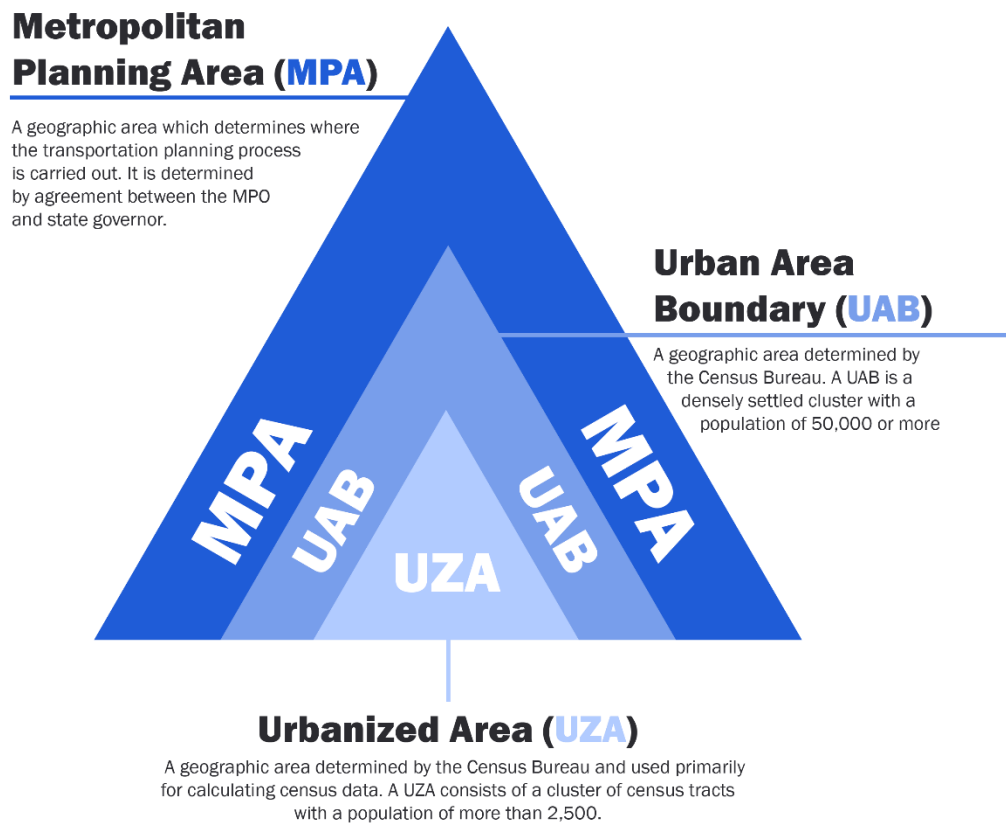
## 1.1 Introduction

A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is the policy board of an organization created and designated to carry out the metropolitan transportation planning process. MPOs are required to represent localities in all urbanized areas (UZAs) with populations over 50,000, as determined by the U.S. Census.

MPOs are designated by agreement between the governor and local governments that together represent at least 75 percent of the affected population (including the largest incorporated city, based on population) or in accordance with procedures established by applicable state or local law.

Federal transportation legislation requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to meet certain planning requirements for their designated planning area known as the Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA). One of the primary MPO functions is to maintain a financially constrained or financially feasible long-range transportation plan known as a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). This long-range plan has a minimum 20-year planning horizon and must be updated on a regular, recurring basis. The MTP serves as a prerequisite for the expenditure of federal funding on projects within the MPO region.

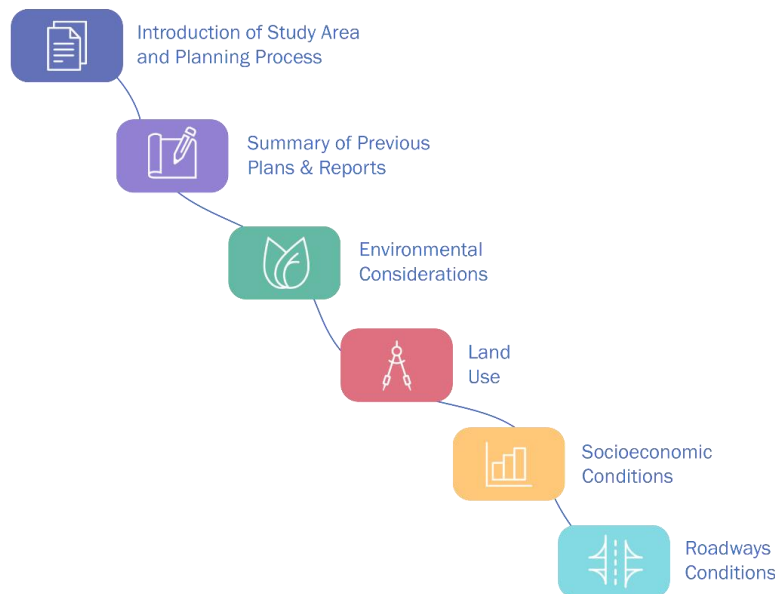
*Figure 1: UZA, UAB, MPA Boundary Relationships*





The Existing Conditions Report is a key element of the MTP which summarizes the characteristics of the study area including the built and natural environment, and community / demographic characteristics and behaviors. Current land use and socioeconomic conditions, commute times, and commute locations are analyzed to better understand the study area population. Countywide crash data and service characteristics of multimodal transportation systems and services are assessed. The Existing Conditions Report is arranged in the following sections:

*Figure 2: Report Outline*



## THE MPO

The Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Athens-Clarke County, the northern half of Oconee County, and the southernmost portion of Madison County. It was formed in 1969 to facilitate the transportation planning process in accordance with federal guidelines. The MACORTS boundary was amended three times, once in 1980 to include the northern half of Oconee County, in 2003 to include the southern portion of Madison County, and in 2013 to include small portions of Oglethorpe and Jackson Counties. Though part of the MPO, Jackson County, and Oglethorpe County opted to not participate in the planning process.

The MPO operates as the primary conduit through which federal transportation funds are allocated to the planning area. The Athens-Clarke County Planning Department is the designated administrative agency for the MPO.

## THE PLANNING AREA



The planning area includes the whole of Athens-Clarke County and portions of Oconee County and Madison County. As mentioned, the portions of Oglethorpe and Jackson County which are part of the MPO boundary are not within the planning area as they opted out of participating in the planning process. Municipalities which are within the planning area include Colbert, Hull, Winterville, Bogart, and Watkinsville. The planning area is shown in **Figure 3**.

## ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

The entirety of Athens-Clarke County is within the MACORTS area. Athens-Clarke County includes the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and the municipality of Winterville. Athens serves as a major economic and transportation hub within the MACORTS area. It is also home to the University of Georgia campus, which draws in a seasonal population of students from around the world.

## MADISON COUNTY

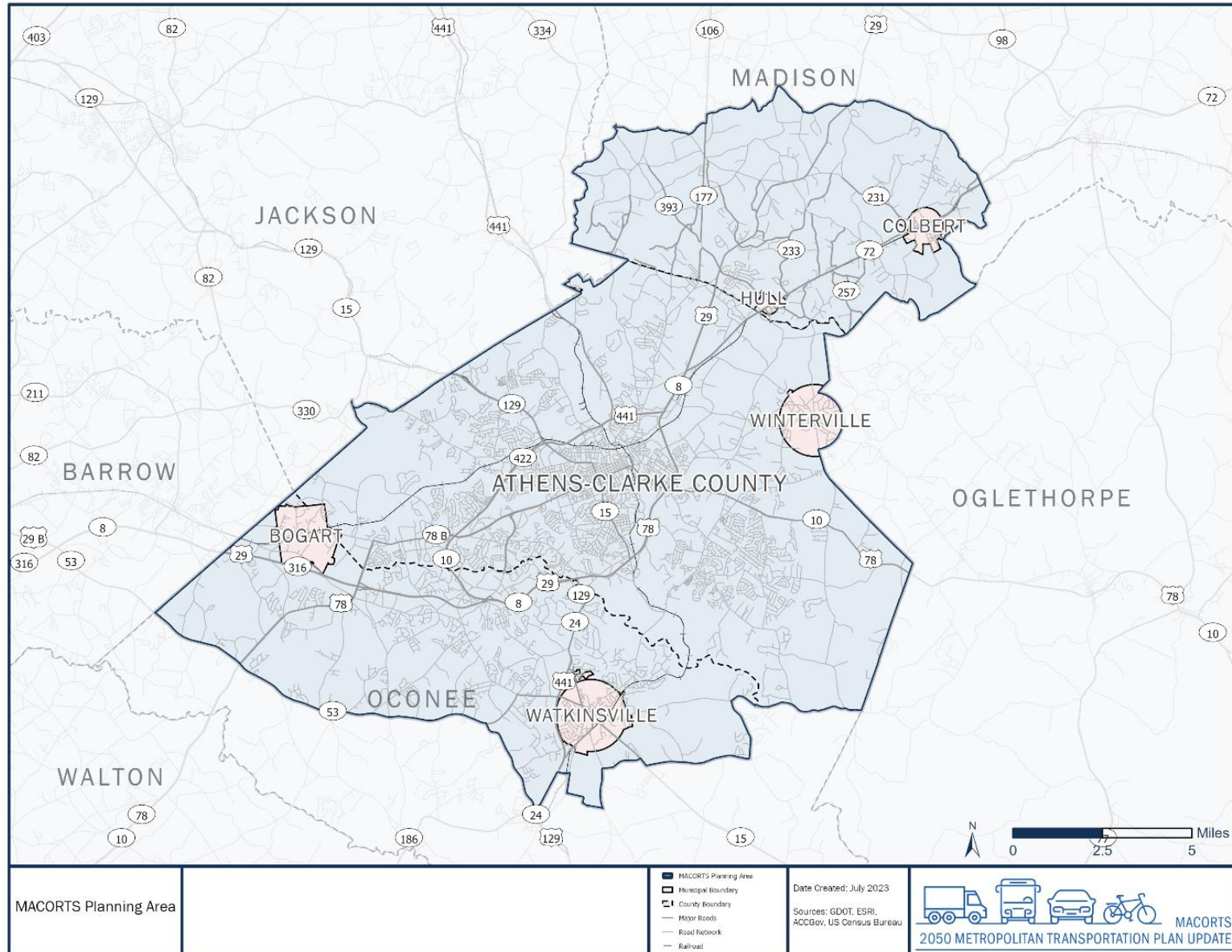
The southern portion of Madison County is within the MACORTS area. This area includes the municipalities of Colbert and Hull. This area includes important economic and transportation corridors, such as the Hull-Colbert Corridor.

## OCONEE COUNTY

The northern portion of Oconee County is within the MACORTS area. Municipalities included in this area include Bogart and Watkinsville. This area of Oconee County has several employment and regional centers, which include offices, industrial, research, and retail uses.



Figure 3: MACORTS Planning Area



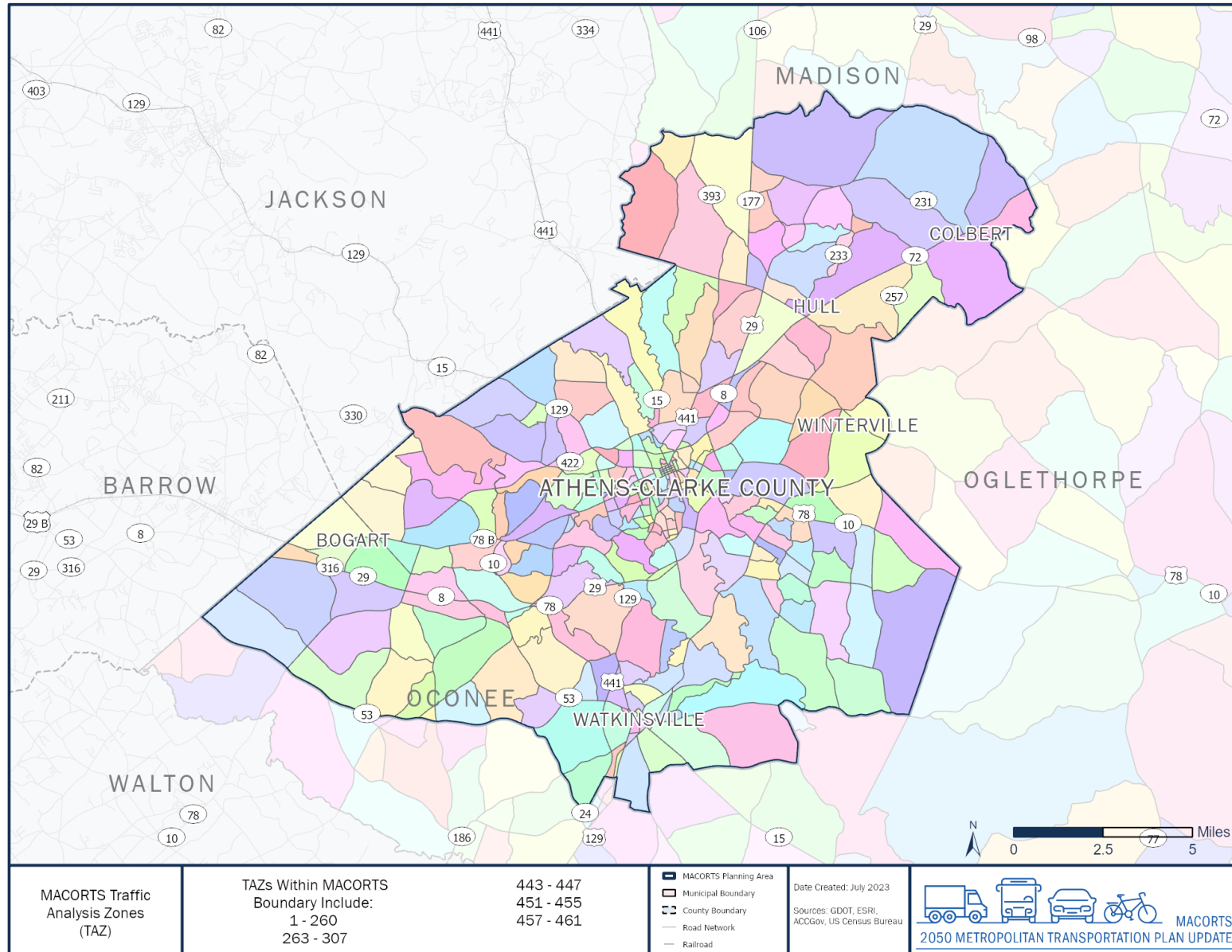


## TRAFFIC ANALYSIS ZONES (TAZ)

Traffic Analysis Zones (or TAZs) are geographical subdivisions which are used to analyze transportation data. These zones are based upon census-data and seek to provide information about the movements of goods, peoples, and services to and from areas within a planning boundary. This information is then included in the development of the travel demand model to determine existing and future trends. The TAZ network and subsequent model results include all of Athens-Clark, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe counties. **Figure 4** depicts the TAZ boundaries within the MACORTS planning area.



Figure 4: Traffic Analysis Zones Map







## 1.2 The Planning Process

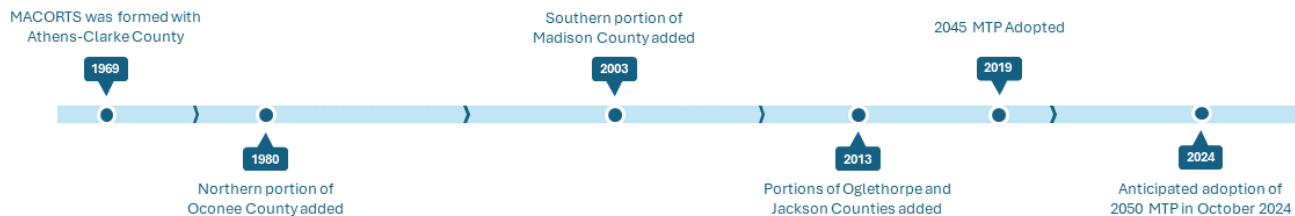
### THE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is a strategic document with a 20+ year planning horizon that sets the goals and objectives for a metropolitan area's transportation network. The MACORTS 2050 MTP will include data between 2020 to the year 2050. Each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) must prepare an MTP in accordance with federal requirements. This document enables the MPO to receive federal funding and assists in outlining funding and project priorities for the next 20 years.

The MTP focuses on all elements of transportation, including transit, highways, bicycle, pedestrian, freight, and rail. A comprehensive approach is taken to examine the transportation system and ensure that proposed goals and recommendations align with municipal, county, state, and federal priorities. Existing conditions are analyzed to determine the state of the transportation system at the time of the initiation of the MTP planning process. This includes an overview of demographic and socioeconomic data, transportation infrastructure, existing planning documents, and environmental conditions.

From existing data, projected data and goals, objectives, and recommendations are created. Throughout the planning process, there are opportunities for public and stakeholder input. This input is highly important, as it allows the MTP to forward goals that are identified by the community as being of high importance.

Figure 5: MACORTS Timeline





## 1.3 PAST STUDIES

Other plans and documents help inform the transportation planning process and ensure that prior findings are properly incorporated. These plans include both transportation plans on the local, state, and federal level and local comprehensive plans which cover transportation topics as well as intersecting areas such as land use and environmental planning. Considering these documents is important as it helps to gain a broader understanding of the goals, objectives, threats, and opportunities of the communities within the MACORTS area. This will help to ensure that any recommendations within this report are reflective of the identified needs and goals of the people living within the region.

### EXISTING PLANS

#### Athens Airport Master Plan<sup>1</sup>

The Athens Airport Master Plan, updated in 2019, is a comprehensive document that provides an analysis of existing inventory, aviation activity forecasts, demand and capacity, and facility requirements. The plan also provides an implementation plan to meet any identified needs and an airport plan. The Athens Ben-Epps Airport Master Plan provides additional information on the airport's strategic goals, priorities, and initiatives. The FAA Aerospace Market Forecast for 2023-2024 has identified market trends that demonstrate a rebound in post-pandemic air travel, particularly for leisure and recreational trips.<sup>2</sup>

#### Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan<sup>3</sup>

Updated in 2023, the Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that guides decisions on land use, transportation, and other public infrastructure services in Athens-Clarke County. The Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that adheres to standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and guides local government decision making and outlines community goals and objectives. In addition to providing a Community Work Plan through 2028, the plan mentions several relevant goals and projects such as initiatives focused on complete street, corridor enhancements, and connectivity. Additional emphasis is placed on land-use policy which complements transportation goals and vice-versa. The Athens-Clarke Comprehensive Plan will help to guide the development of the transportation plan.

#### Athens In Motion<sup>4</sup>

Created in 2018, this document serves to guide the future implementation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements in the city of Athens. This document provides an existing conditions analysis of active transportation and a summary of public perception of active travel in Athens. Pedestrian and active transportation needs were also identified, and design solutions and strategies were provided to respond to these identified needs. The plan identifies the goals of connectivity and user encouragement based on a multi-layered analysis which identifies user levels of comfort and public perception of active transportation. Both an implementation action plan with short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals and capital infrastructure improvement and policy recommendations were

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<sup>1</sup> [accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/951/Airport-Master-Plan-PDF](https://accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/951/Airport-Master-Plan-PDF)

<sup>2</sup> [faa-aerospace-forecast-fy-2024-2044](https://www.faa.gov/aerospace-forecast-fy-2024-2044)

<sup>3</sup> [2023 Comprehensive Plan | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website \(accgov.com\)](https://accgov.com/2023-Comprehensive-Plan-Athens-Clarke-County-GA-Official-Website)

<sup>4</sup> [Athens In Motion Bicycle / Pedestrian Master Plan | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website \(accgov.com\)](https://accgov.com/Athens-In-Motion-Bicycle-Pedestrian-Master-Plan-Athens-Clarke-County-GA-Official-Website)





provided in this document. Outlined success measures include first/last mile connectivity and facility access, safety initiatives, public outreach and educational programs, and capital improvements such as sidewalk improvements, trail network expansion, and pedestrian wayfinding signage. This document provides important data points and analyses that will help to inform the pedestrian and active transport portion of the MTP. Incorporating information from this report will ensure that recommendations are sensitive to the perceptions, needs, and goals of users of active transportation and pedestrians.

### **Athens Transit Feasibility Study<sup>5</sup>**

This study, completed in 2016, was completed with the goal of informing the Athens Transit Development Plan updates and future transportation decisions through a comprehensive analysis of existing conditions and operations, potential service expansion, feasibility, opportunities, and options for expansion and/or consolidation of services. The study also includes recommendations ordered on a timescale from short-term to long-term. Recommendations are also included for marketing, user enhancements, bike/ped facilities, and financial resources and funding opportunities. This study will provide data to understand the financial resources, constraints, and feasibility of recommendations and goals provided in the MTP.

### **Athens Transit Development Plan<sup>6</sup>**

The most recent update to this plan was in 2018, however the 2023 update is currently under development. This document provides a comprehensive overview of the operational performance and structure of transit within Athens-Clarke County. The plan also serves to guide the future development of the area's multimodal transportation system in addition to developing a systemic plan and monitoring system to measure transit performance. Alternative courses of action are provided alongside a fiscally constrained work program. Issues of importance to the public were identified in the plan and include desire for more direct service, route expansion, greater accommodation for disabled passengers, and service expansion in low-income minority neighborhoods. Based on this input, both operational and policy recommendations were provided. Operational recommendations are considered key to the Transit Development Plan and focus on the adjustment of routes to accommodate the identified issues and goals.

### **Athens-Clarke County Greenway Network Plan<sup>7</sup>**

The Athens-Clarke County Greenway Network Plan update was initially adopted in 2017 and provides guidance for the development of the greenway system in the area. It was created in collaboration with the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission and identified goals, management strategies, and objectives for the Greenway Network in addition to providing recommendations for future Greenway and multi-use trail development. A major focus of the plan is connectivity, including recommendations for the expansion of the greenway network to fill in gaps and connect residential neighborhoods and downtown areas. A map update was adopted in 2020 in response to public input. The update included simplified alignments, rerouted connections, potential new trail segments, and the removal of previously proposed trail segments deemed less feasible. This greenway plan will provide insights into the existing environmental conditions in the area, the

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<sup>5</sup> [Athens Transit Feasibility Study | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website \(accgov.com\)](https://www.accgov.com/transportation/athens-transit-feasibility-study)

<sup>6</sup> [Athens Transit Development Plan | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website \(accgov.com\)](https://www.accgov.com/transportation/athens-transit-development-plan)

<sup>7</sup> [Greenway Network Plan | Athens-Clarke County, GA - Official Website \(accgov.com\)](https://www.accgov.com/transportation/greenway-network-plan)



analysis of existing pedestrian infrastructure, and recommendations on active transportation going forward.

### **Oconee County Joint Comprehensive Plan<sup>8</sup>**

The Oconee County Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2023 and included unincorporated Oconee County and the municipalities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals, and Watkinsville. The Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that adheres to standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and guides local government decision making and outlines community goals and objectives. In addition, this document included specific sections addressing community profile, needs and opportunities, land use, transportation, and parks and greenspace. A five-year community work program and implementation program were also included in this document, to provide a timeline and guide for future projects which have been identified as important to achieving community goals. Emphasis is placed on enhancing the existing rural character of the area, with the most relevant goals to this study being trail network connectivity and examining traffic congestion. Similarly, to the other comprehensive plans mentioned, this document will assist in understanding the needs and goals of the communities of Oconee County within the MACORTS area. It will also provide insight into what priorities the Oconee County government has identified with regards to transportation and land use.

### **Oconee County Long Range Transportation Plan<sup>9</sup>**

The Oconee County Long Range Transportation Plan was updated in 2019 and was created with the goal of being a guide for transportation planning decisions through 2045. The strategic document included a detailed look at existing transportation and economic conditions to assist in the prioritization and identification of potential projects that could address existing and future transportation needs. The projects included in this document were categorized into near, mid, and long-term implantation. While comprehensive plans cover transportation, the long-range transportation plan provides more detailed insight into the state of and future goals of transportation in Oconee County. This will assist the MTP process in understanding the current and future needs and project priorities identified in Oconee County.

### **Madison County Comprehensive Plan<sup>10</sup>**

The Madison County Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2022 and included sections for Madison County and the municipalities of Carlton, Colbert, Danielsville, and Illa. The Comprehensive Plan is a strategic document that adheres to standards set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs guides local government decision making and outlines community goals and objectives. The plan includes sections that identify the vision, goals and strategies, and future character of unincorporated Madison County and the four municipalities. Each section also includes a Community Work Program which lists projects that are intended to be completed within a five-year time frame and includes roles, responsibilities, and cost for each item. The plan provides existing transportation conditions and highlights the community's objective of maintaining local character through the specified future character areas. The document recognizes that in the public engagement process, public transportation was a matter of concern to participants. Rural and small urban public transit programs are highlighted as options available for Madison County. This comprehensive plan, like

<sup>8</sup> [2023 Comprehensive Plan Update | Oconee County, GA](#)

<sup>9</sup> [oconeecounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/8465/Long-Range-Transportation-Plan?bidId=](#)

<sup>10</sup> [COMP Print Format Content.pmd \(madisonga.com\)](#)



those previously mentioned, helps to inform the MTP process on the existing conditions, goals and needs of Madison County. In particular, it provides insight into the character of the area and what capital improvement goals were identified by the Madison County government.

### **GDOT Statewide Freight Plan<sup>11</sup>**

The Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan was developed and is maintained by GDOT with the goal of identifying opportunities to improve the efficient movement of freight across the state of Georgia. It was updated in 2023 to be compliant with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL). This update included the identification of significant freight systems trends as well as a strategic assessment of the needs and issues of freight infrastructure. In addition, performance measures were provided to assess freight infrastructure and the progress toward accomplishing identified goals. The freight plan primarily focuses on major freight corridors, particularly those that connect the Atlanta metropolitan area with the Port of Savannah and Port of Brunswick. However, there are shortline railways that are utilized for first and last mile freight connections located within the MACORTS area. In addition, the plan highlights that truck freight traffic is planned to increase over the next few years. The insights provided in this document are important for understanding the general trends of freight in Georgia, which impact congestion and development across the state. This document, in addition to other cited GDOT documents, also assists in understanding what GDOT's overall goals and objectives are. These state-wide objectives will assist in forming the goals and objectives matrix in the MTP process.

### **GDOT Statewide Rail Plan<sup>12</sup>**

GDOT has developed and maintained a State Rail Plan which was updated in 2021 and is currently awaiting approval by the Federal Rail Administration. The updated plan reflects the State's significant investments in rail infrastructure since 2015 and highlights important statewide trends such as the increasing demand for both passenger and rail service. Modernizing shortline infrastructure, extending the reach of the Port of Savannah, and promoting passenger rail projects are all goals that are highlighted in this document. The plan identifies the historic Athens Branch of rail, which is currently planned to be converted to the Firefly Trail, and the CSX railyard and rail line which runs through the MACORTS area. The Atlanta-Athens Passenger Rail Study is listed as part of the long-range investment program. While the MACORTS area may not be considered a major rail hub, it is important to consider this plan as future rail improvement and development will have an impact on other aspects of the transportation system.

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<sup>11</sup> [Freight - Georgia DOT \(ga.gov\)](https://www.gdot.ga.gov/freight)

<sup>12</sup> [State Rail Plan - Georgia DOT \(ga.gov\)](https://www.gdot.ga.gov/rail)



## **GDOT Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan (SSTP)/Statewide Transportation Plan (SWTP)<sup>13</sup>**

This combined strategic joint document was updated in 2021 and serves as a comprehensive long-range plan for transportation in Georgia as well as providing a business case for investment in transportation across the state. This document examines trends across the state and provides sections focusing on metro Atlanta, emerging metros (such as Athens), and rural Georgia. An analysis of trends that impact the movement of people and goods is included in this document. In addition, a list of fiscally constrained priorities for investment through the year 2050 is provided in this document. Connectivity, capacity improvements, corridor investment, and autonomous technology support are all highlighted goals and strategies within this document which are targeted at emerging metro and rural areas such as the MACORTS area. This document assists the MTP process by understanding what statewide improvements and investment priorities are projected through the year 2050. This information is useful in understanding the future development of the statewide transportation system and how it may impact communities within the MACORTS area.

## **GDOT Transportation Assessment Management<sup>14</sup>**

This document was updated in 2022 to provide an assessment of the condition of the state's pavement and bridge structures on the National Highway System in accordance with requirements set by the Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations. Priorities and strategies to cost-effectively manage and preserve assets on the NHS are also provided in this document. Condition rating systems and metrics for the rating of pavement and bridges are also included. Infrastructure resilience, especially with regard to catastrophic weather events, is highlighted as a major objective. This document is useful for the MTP process as it provides an inventory and assessment of the condition of infrastructure across the state.

## **Georgia Strategic Highway Safety Plan (2022-2024)<sup>15</sup>**

Updated in 2022, this document provides a data-driven and multidisciplinary approach to achieving statewide safety performance goals. The document provides guidance on strategies, programs, and countermeasures that work towards the goal of Vision Zero. The plan incorporates the safe system approach and the 4 Safety Es (Engineering, Education, Enforcement, and Emergency Medical Services) as frameworks for guiding safety improvement opportunities. The plan delineates specific emphasis areas including pedestrian safety, motorcycle safety, older drivers, impaired driving, occupant protection, distracted driving, young adult drivers, bicycle safety, intersection & roadway departure, and commercial motor vehicle. Each emphasis area provides strategies for local governments to achieve statewide vehicle safety goals. As safety is a major area of focus in the current planning landscape, taking these strategies and state-wide goals into consideration during the MTP process is important.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/SSTP.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> [Transportation Asset Management \(TAM\) - Georgia DOT \(ga.gov\)](#)

<sup>15</sup> [SHSP-2022-24.pdf \(gahighwaysafety.org\)](#)



## 1.5 Land Use

Land use is an important factor to consider, as land use policy guides the decision-making process for future development within the planning area. Development can impact the demand and the mode of the movement of goods and people. All counties within the planning area have made updates to their comprehensive plans as of the following dates:

- Madison County: 2022
- Oconee County: 2023
- Athens-Clarke County: 2023

### ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

Athens-Clarke County is the most urbanized and the densest populated of the three counties within the planning area. Downtown Athens is identified as having a mixed-used character, being a major commercial hub as well as home to a variety of residential densities. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan also highlights the desire for Downtown Athens to have strict design requirements to ensure new development conforms to the existing pattern of development and does not jeopardize the historical integrity of the area. Auto-oriented uses are specified as not being part of the Downtown designation.

Due to the presence of the University of Georgia, a sizeable portion of the central and southern areas of the county are classified as government use. The northeast and western areas of the county are designated as business and employment areas, which include office and research parks, manufacturing and industrial areas, and small and large-scale auto-orientated retail uses. Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road, and US 29 North are identified as specific commercial corridors in the Comprehensive Plan.

#### **Madison County**

A Character Area is a method of land-use planning where areas are designated based on the existing development and future visions for how an area will be planned. The two largest character areas within the planning boundary are the Rural Conservation Character Area and the South Madison County Character Area. The South Madison County Character Area is identified as being primarily constituted of suburban residential subdivisions, with highway-related businesses located on the SR 29 corridor. SR 29 continues into the Hull Colbert Corridor character Area and the Colber-Comer Corridor Area, both of which are planned to be economic development corridors aimed towards encouraging industrial and commercial office-related uses. Error! Reference source not found.7 below is a map of future character areas within Madison County.

### OCONEE COUNTY

The portion of Oconee County within the planning area is primarily designated as being within the workplace center, regional center, and suburban neighborhood character areas. The regional center character area is listed as encompassing the eastern portion of SR 316 and includes uses such as office complexes, hotels, shopping centers and big box retail stores, high-density residential, and single-family residential. Workplace center character areas are listed as incorporating higher traffic uses (both employee and freight) such as light and heavy industrial, heavy commercial, office complexes, and business and research parks. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan states that transportation infrastructure within workplace center character areas are scaled adequately for



employee and business traffic and feature access to arterial or major collector roads. Error!  
Reference source not found.8 is a map of future character areas within Oconee County.



*Figure 6: Athens-Clarke County Future Land Use Map*

SOURCE: ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



*Figure 7: Madison County 2043 Future Character Area Map*

SOURCE: MADISON COUNTY 2022-2042 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





*Figure 8: Oconee County Future Character Area Map*

SOURCE: OCONEE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023



## 1.4 Environmental Considerations

The identification of environmental features was included within this analysis to consider historic resources, wetlands, and federally endangered/threatened species. An inventory was taken of each of the three categories to identify which resources were within the planning area and could potentially be impacted.

### STORMWATER & RESILIENCY

The MACORTS study area is located within the Altamaha River watershed, with the middle portion of the Oconee River running through Athens-Clarke County. The Oconee River is a tributary of the Altamaha River, which is a major waterway in the state of Georgia. Due to the presence of major watersheds and wetlands, flooding and stormwater management are considered in each county's planning processes.

Athens-Clarke County maintains a tiered system of buffers and 100 Year Flood zones to preserve the watershed and ensure that development does not occur within these flood zones. Jurisdictional wetlands, which are administered by the Federal government, are also present throughout the study area.

Each county identified a strong need to preserve the natural environment of the area in their respective comprehensive plans. Madison County and Oconee County highlighted the desire to preserve the existing rural character in the region.

### WETLANDS

The National Wetland Inventory, maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was utilized to identify designated wetlands within the MACORTS area.

The majority of designated wetlands are located in Athens-Clarke County, concentrated around the North Oconee River and Middle Oconee River. There is a high concentration of designated wetlands east and west of Highway 441.

Within the planning area, there are two major habitat classifications that are identified, Freshwater Emergent Wetland/Freshwater and Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland. The National Wetlands Inventory provides additional detail on Wetland habitat classification through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetland Classification Codes.

### HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Department's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) was utilized to determine historic resources within the study area.

Athens-Clarke County has the highest quantity of historic resources. Over 2,000 historic resource locations were identified within Athens-Clarke County, where the majority are located within the downtown area. This represents the most significant cluster of historic resources, with the following features: 16 local historic districts, 44 individual local historic landmarks, and 1 National Historic Landmark. The National Historic Landmark designation is the highest level of recognition for a historic resource by the Federal government. National Historic Landmarks constitute 3% (or 2,500 total) of all resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The southern portion of Madison County contains the Colbert Historic District, located in the City of Colbert. The majority of historic resources within the planning boundary in Madison County are concentrated in the city of Colbert. There are no local historic preservation bodies within Colbert, meaning there are no locally designated districts or landmarks.

In Oconee County the majority of historic resources located within the planning boundary are found in Watkinsville. Watkinsville has one National Register Historic District, South Main Street Historic District, and five historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places



*Figure 9: Historic Resources Map*



*Figure 10: Wetland and Waterbodies*



6 depicts future land use map for Athens-Clarke County.

## MADISON COUNTY

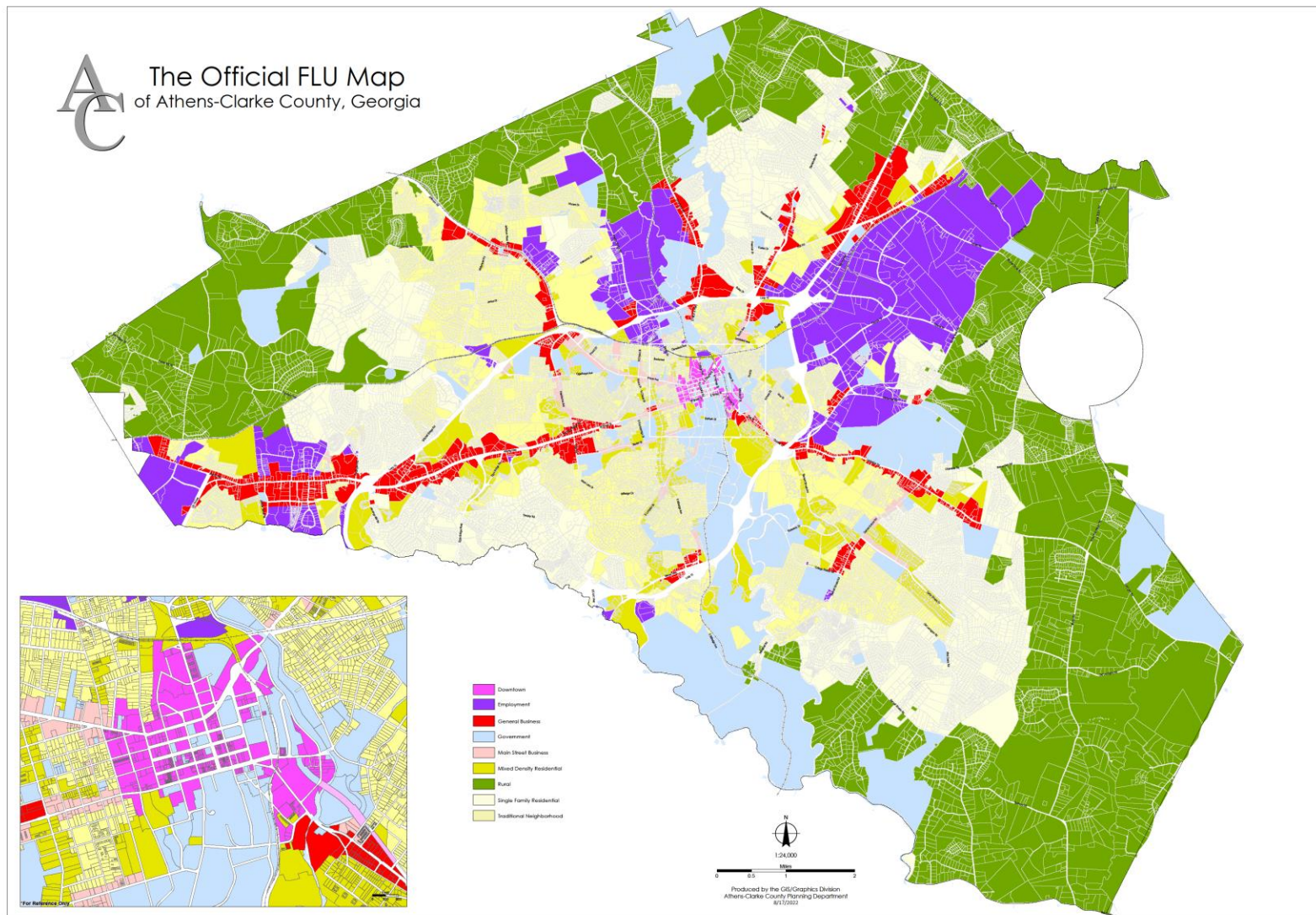
A Character Area is a method of land-use planning where areas are designated based on the existing development and future visions for how an area will be planned. The two largest character areas within the planning boundary are the Rural Conservation Character Area and the South Madison County Character Area. The South Madison County Character Area is identified as being primarily constituted of suburban residential subdivisions, with highway-related businesses located on the SR 29 corridor. SR 29 continues into the Hull Colbert Corridor character Area and the Colber-Comer Corridor Area, both of which are planned to be economic development corridors aimed towards encouraging industrial and commercial office-related uses. Error! Reference source not found.7 below is a map of future character areas within Madison County.

## OCONEE COUNTY

The portion of Oconee County within the planning area is primarily designated as being within the workplace center, regional center, and suburban neighborhood character areas. The regional center character area is listed as encompassing the eastern portion of SR 316 and includes uses such as office complexes, hotels, shopping centers and big box retail stores, high-density residential, and single-family residential. Workplace center character areas are listed as incorporating higher traffic uses (both employee and freight) such as light and heavy industrial, heavy commercial, office complexes, and business and research parks. The 2023 Comprehensive Plan states that transportation infrastructure within workplace center character areas are scaled adequately for employee and business traffic and feature access to arterial or major collector roads. Error! Reference source not found.8 is a map of future character areas within Oconee County.



Figure 6: Athens-Clarke County Future Land Use Map

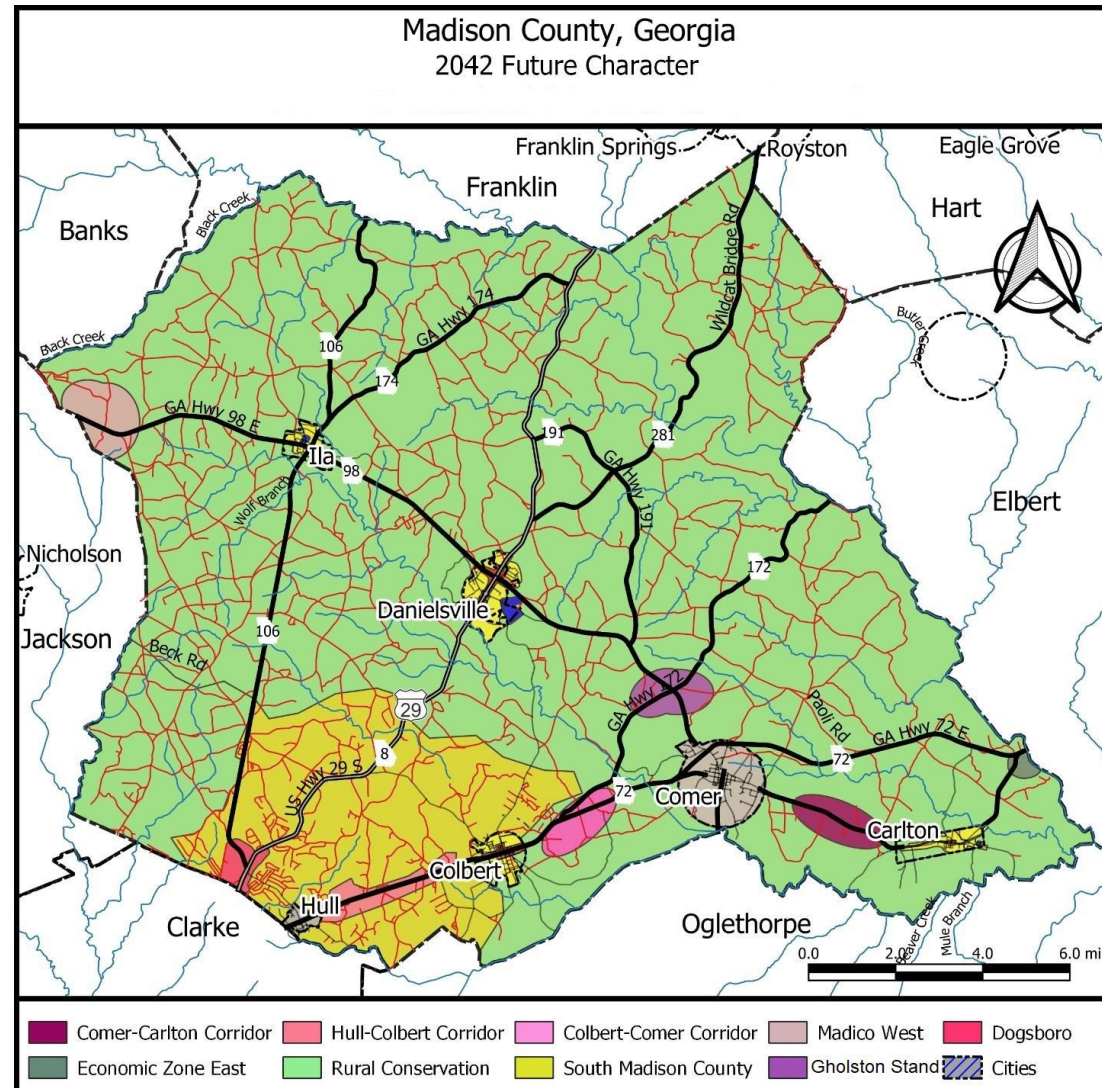


SOURCE: ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





Figure 7: Madison County 2043 Future Character Area Map

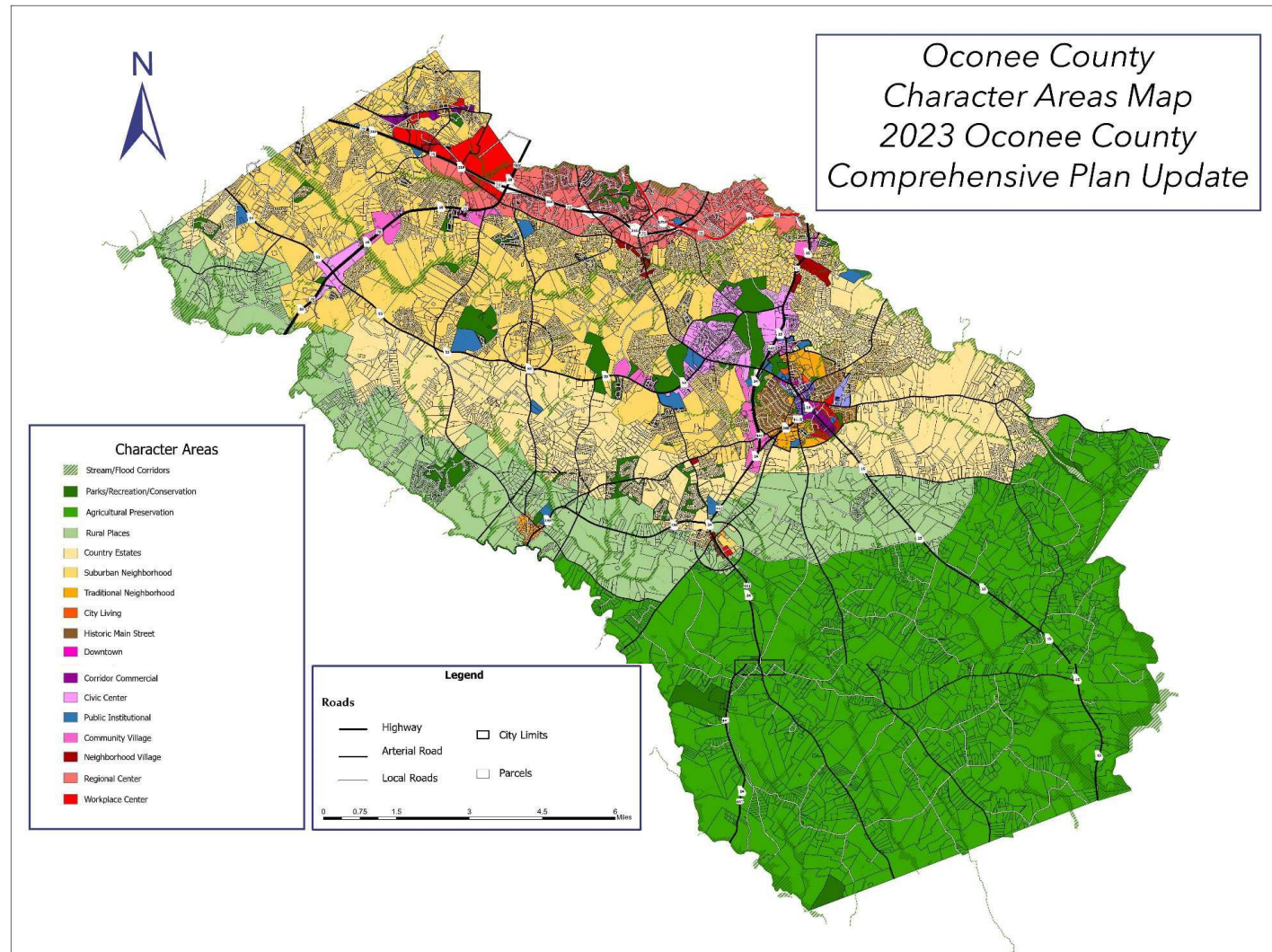


SOURCE: MADISON COUNTY 2022-2042 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN





Figure 8: Oconee County Future Character Area Map



SOURCE:

OCONEE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2023



## 1.4 Environmental Considerations

The identification of environmental features was included within this analysis to consider historic resources, wetlands, and federally endangered/threatened species. An inventory was taken of each of the three categories to identify which resources were within the planning area and could potentially be impacted.

### STORMWATER & RESILIENCY

The MACORTS study area is located within the Altamaha River watershed, with the middle portion of the Oconee River running through Athens-Clarke County. The Oconee River is a tributary of the Altamaha River, which is a major waterway in the state of Georgia. Due to the presence of major watersheds and wetlands, flooding and stormwater management are considered in each county's planning processes.

Athens-Clarke County maintains a tiered system of buffers and 100 Year Flood zones to preserve the watershed and ensure that development does not occur within these flood zones. Jurisdictional wetlands, which are administered by the Federal government, are also present throughout the study area.

Each county identified a strong need to preserve the natural environment of the area in their respective comprehensive plans. Madison County and Oconee County highlighted the desire to preserve the existing rural character in the region.

### WETLANDS

The National Wetland Inventory, maintained by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, was utilized to identify designated wetlands within the MACORTS area.

The majority of designated wetlands are located in Athens-Clarke County, concentrated around the North Oconee River and Middle Oconee River. There is a high concentration of designated wetlands east and west of Highway 441.

Within the planning area, there are two major habitat classifications that are identified, Freshwater Emergent Wetland/Freshwater and Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland. The National Wetlands Inventory provides additional detail on Wetland habitat classification through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Wetland Classification Codes.

### HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Department's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) was utilized to determine historic resources within the study area.

Athens-Clarke County has the highest quantity of historic resources. Over 2,000 historic resource locations were identified within Athens-Clarke County, where the majority are located within the downtown area. This represents the most significant cluster of historic resources, with the following features: 16 local historic districts, 44 individual local historic landmarks, and 1 National Historic Landmark. The National Historic Landmark designation is the highest level of recognition for a historic resource by the Federal government. National Historic Landmarks constitute 3% (or 2,500 total) of all resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



The southern portion of Madison County contains the Colbert Historic District, located in the City of Colbert. The majority of historic resources within the planning boundary in Madison County are concentrated in the city of Colbert. There are no local historic preservation bodies within Colbert, meaning there are no locally designated districts or landmarks.

In Oconee County the majority of historic resources located within the planning boundary are found in Watkinsville. Watkinsville has one National Register Historic District, South Main Street Historic District, and five historic resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places





Figure 9: Historic Resources Map

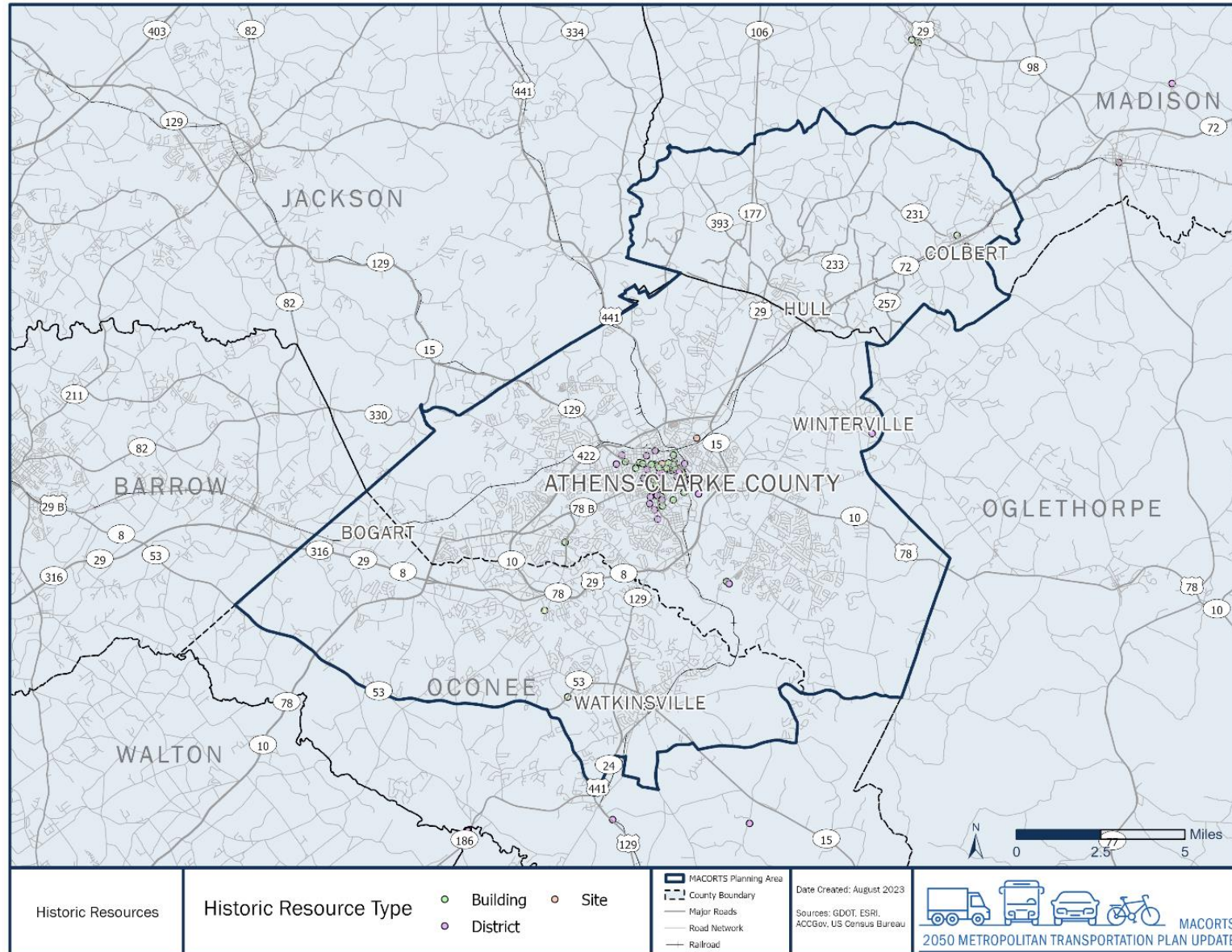
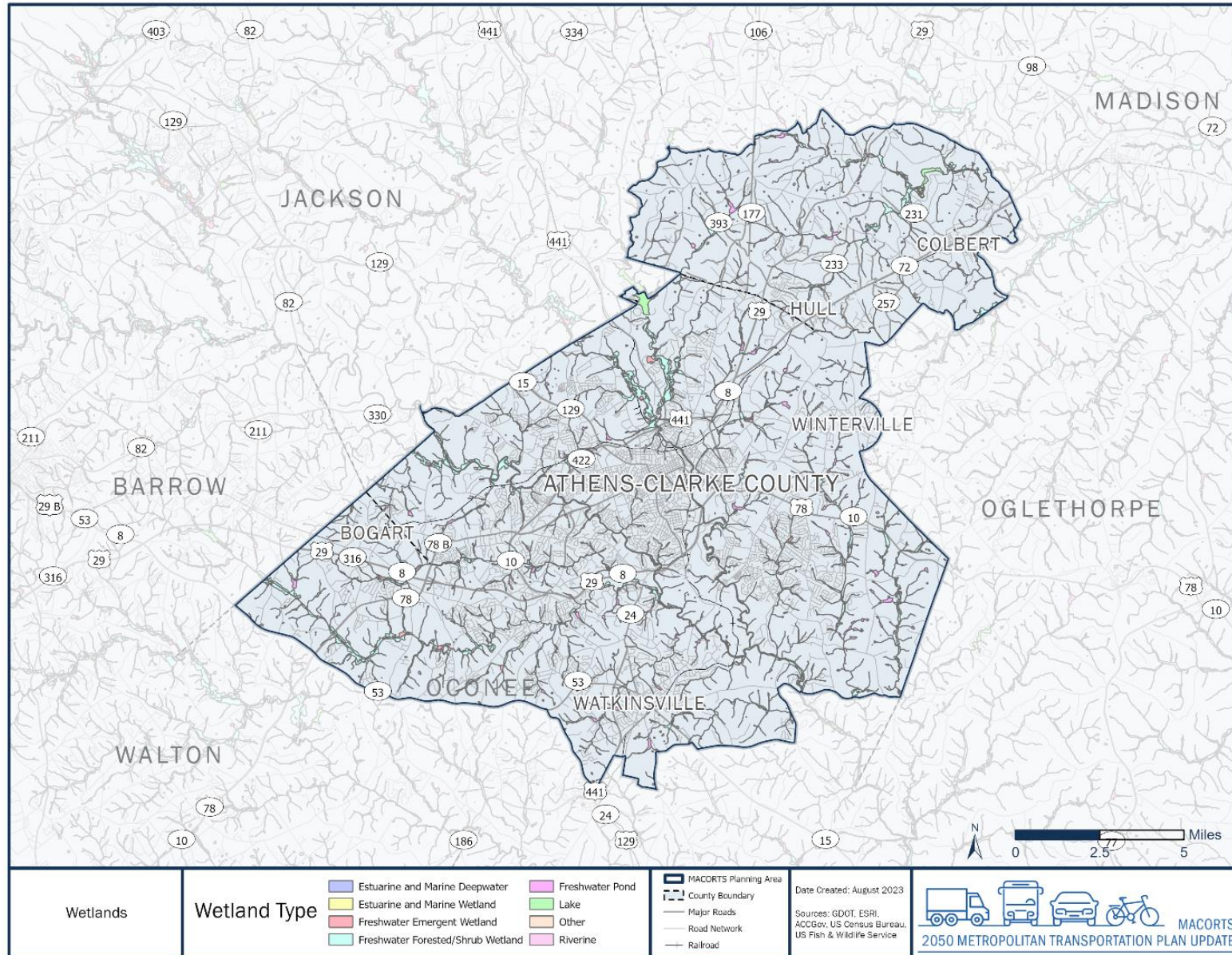






Figure 10: Wetland and Waterbodies





## 1.6 Socio-economic Conditions

Socio-economic conditions represent the demographic landscape of the study area. Data is collected from sources such as the United States Decennial Census and the Census American Community Survey to create a high-level picture of the demographic profile of communities in Athens-Clarke County, Madison County, and Oconee County. This includes information such as overall population, employment, income, race, and gender.

Understanding the makeup of these communities is important when initiating long-range planning projects such as the MTP update. They help to answer important questions such as: Where do people work? Where are communities underserved by transportation? How many people live in the study area, and where do they live? Having a strong understanding of these existing conditions is fundamental to establishing future recommendations and transportation initiatives further along in the planning process.

In addition, Title VI and Environmental Justice populations are considered to ensure that no group is left out of the planning process. These include minority populations, low-income populations, populations with disabilities, and populations without a personal vehicle.

### POPULATION

Demographic data was acquired from the 2021 Census American Community Survey estimates as well as the 2020 Decennial Census. The planning area has a total population of 208,504 with the highest density areas being found in Athens-Clarke County and Oconee County.

Figure 11: Total Population Data

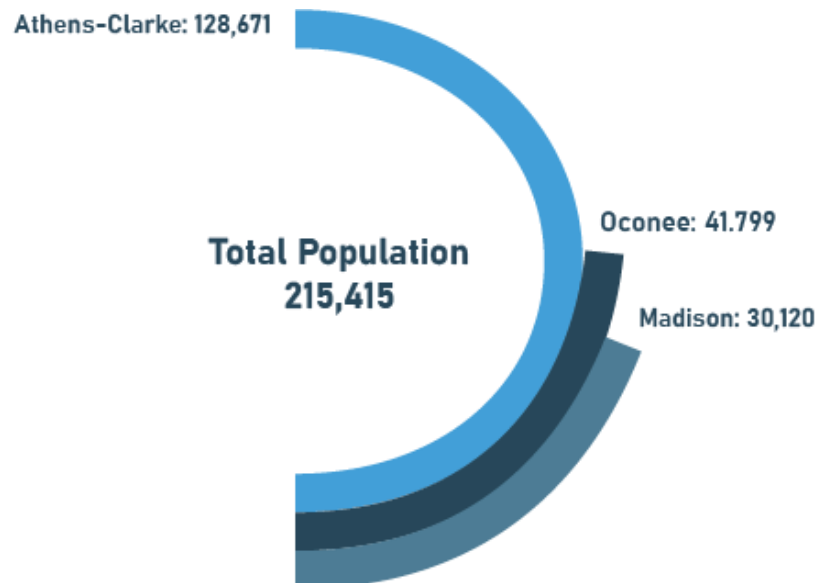
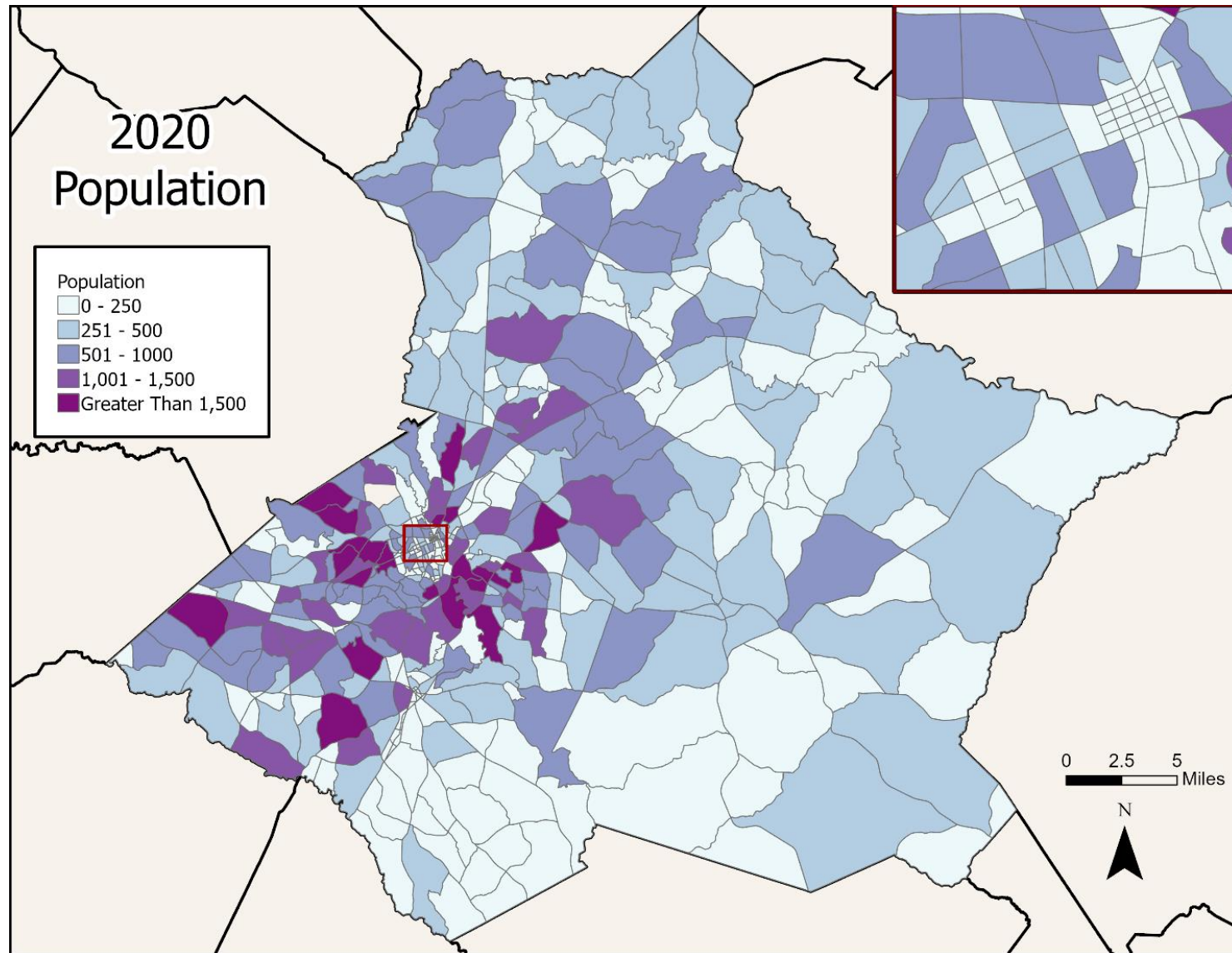






Figure 12: Population Map





## EMPLOYMENT

Data from the 2020 Decennial Census and the 2019 Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) was utilized to produce data for employment figures within the planning area. Employment data is mapped to its respective traffic analysis zone (TAZ), demonstrating which areas within the planning area have the highest concentration of places of employment.

The Athens-Clarke County metropolitan area is a major center of educational and healthcare employment, particularly due to the presence of the University of Georgia's campus in Athens. The top three industries by share of employment within the metropolitan area are demonstrated **Figure 13**.

*Figure 13: Top Three Industries by Employment Shares*



The top industries by share of employment are shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 14** displays the map of employment within the planning area.

As mentioned in Section 1.5 Land Use, the portions of Madison and Oconee County within the MACORTS area feature large retail centers. These retail centers include big-box stores and highway-orientated retail centers. Northern Oconee County is identified as having several “workplace centers” which include office parks and office campuses for a range of professional, scientific, and management industries.

Understanding the types of employment centers and industries within the MACORTS area provides insight into how residents in the region commute to work and what types of transportation infrastructure are available to them in these area.

**Table 2** displays data collected from the American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates for means of transportation to work in Athens-Clarke County, Madison County, and Oconee County.





Table 1: Top Industries by Share of Employment

Top Industries by Share of Employment	Athens-Clarke	Oconee	Madison
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	1.19%	3.46%	1.24%
Construction	4.89%	9.11%	6.11%
Manufacturing	8.57%	13.07%	9.03%
Wholesale trade	2.39%	3.55%	2.38%
Retail trade	11.21%	9.89%	10.08%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	4.15%	6.08%	3.90%
Information	1.18%	0.59%	1.82%
Finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing	4.63%	4.13%	8.55%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative, and waste management services	10.62%	10.91%	10.50%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	<b>31.69%</b>	<b>24.62%</b>	<b>32.30%</b>
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	11.21%	3.79%	3.60%
Other services, except public administration	4.59%	4.82%	4.38%
Public administration	3.69%	5.98%	6.12%

Table 2: Employee Commuting Modes of Travel

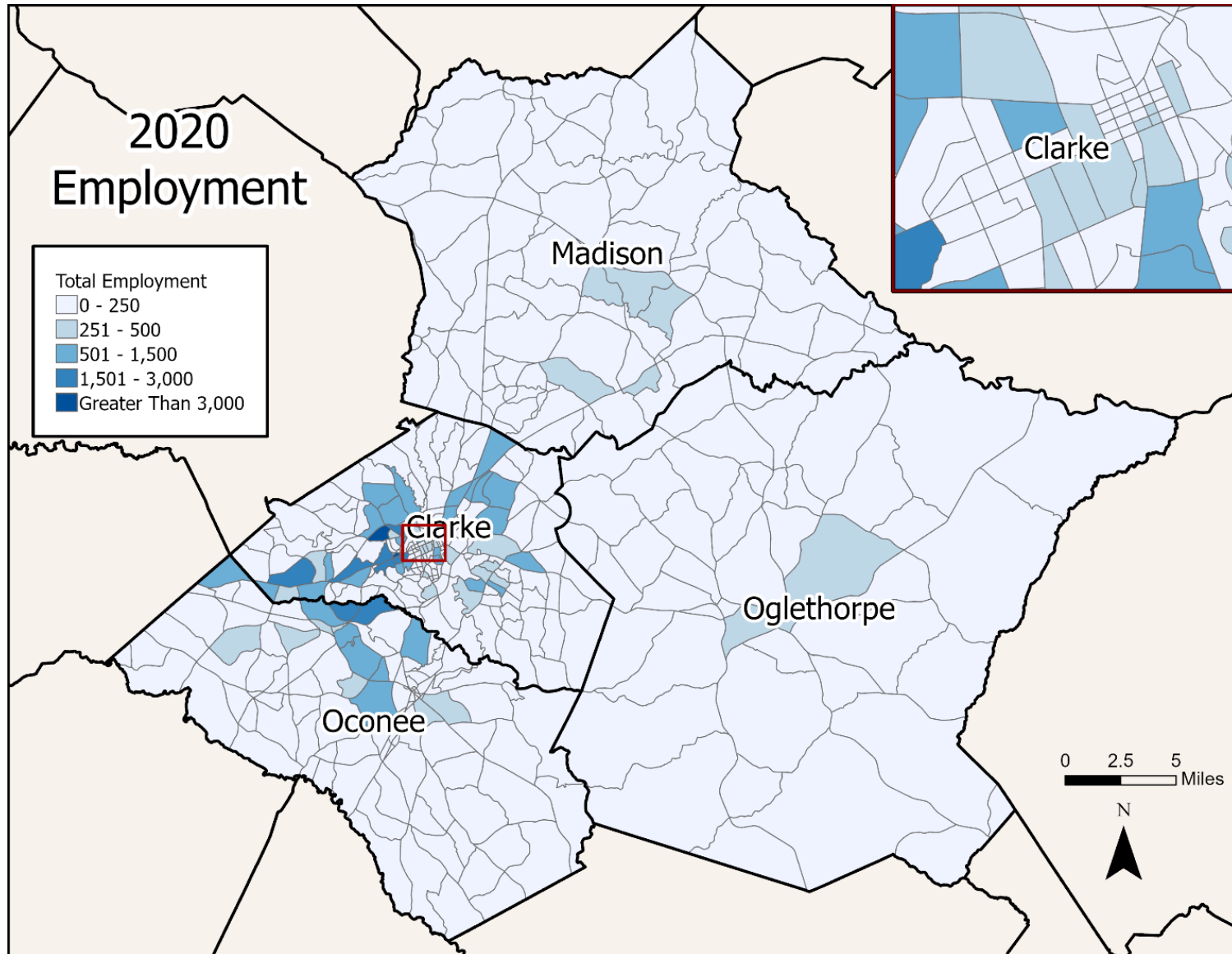
How Employees Commute to Work	Athens-Clarke	Madison	Oconee
Car, truck, van - drove alone	76.11%	82.18%	78.78%
Car, truck, van -carpooled	8.55%	10.23%	7.79%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	2.06%	0.12%	0.11%



Walked	3.62%	2.87%	0.38%
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	1.84%	1.10%	1.22%
Worked from home	7.83%	3.49%	11.72%



Figure 14: Employment Map





## TITLE VI AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act states “No person in the United States Shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.” (42 U.S.C. 200d). Meaning, that the planning process must be equitable and open to people of all backgrounds and consider the needs of all populations within the MACORTS area.

Environmental Justice refers to the process of identifying impacts, primarily public health impacts, on minority populations as well as low-income populations and persons with disabilities. Title VI and environmental justice policies ensure that no one group of people is left out of the planning process.

## AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION

African American populations above the regional average of 20.4% are located in block groups around US 441 and northern Athens-Clarke County, as well as Downtown Athens.

## ASIAN POPULATION

Asian populations above the regional average of 4.0% are located in block groups around US 78 B and the western portion of the SR 10 Loop. The areas around Overlook Village and the University of Georgia campus have the highest percentages out of the highlighted block groups.

## HISPANIC/LATINO POPULATION

Hispanic/Latino populations above the regional average of 10.2% are located in block groups around US 29 and the area outside of Hull. The majority of these block groups are located in northern Athens-Clarke County and southern Madison County.

## POPULATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Populations of persons with disabilities above the regional average of 6.2% are located in block groups in Madison County and Northern Athens-Clarke County. The areas around Winterville and the western and central portions of Madison County have the highest percentages of these populations per block group.

## ELDERLY POPULATION

Elderly populations (65+) above the regional average of 12.1% are located in block groups which are dispersed throughout the planning area. The highest percentage block groups are located in northeastern Madison County, northern Oconee County, and north of Winterville.

## IMPOVERISHED POPULATION

Populations in poverty above the regional average of 20.8% are located in block groups which are concentrated around Downtown Athens and south-central Athens-Clarke County.

## ZERO CAR POPULATION

Populations of persons in zero-vehicle households above the regional average of 6.2% are dispersed throughout central Athens-Clarke County along US 78 B, specifically concentrated around Downtown Athens and western Athens-Clarke County.



Figure 15: African American Population Map

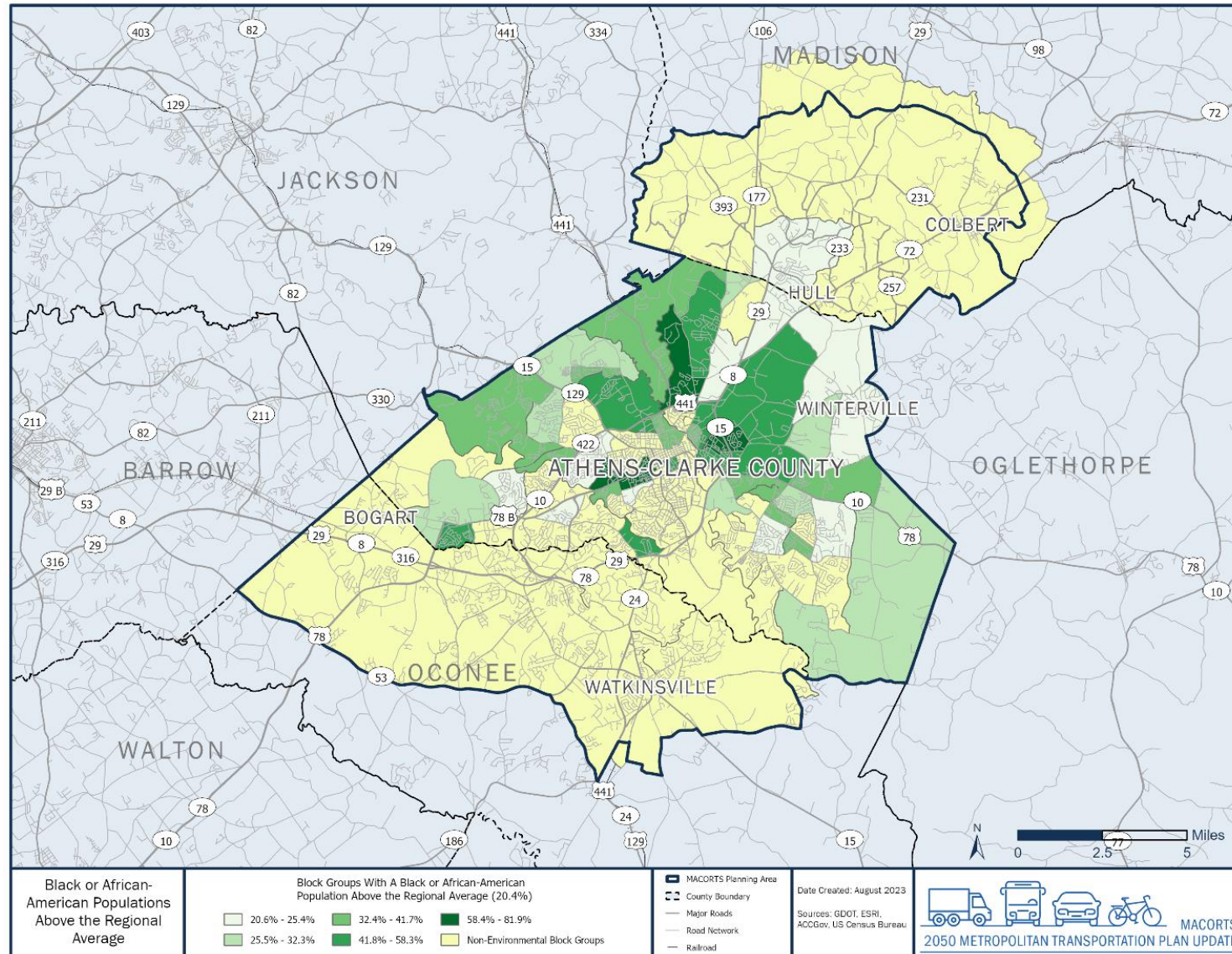






Figure 16: Asian Population Map

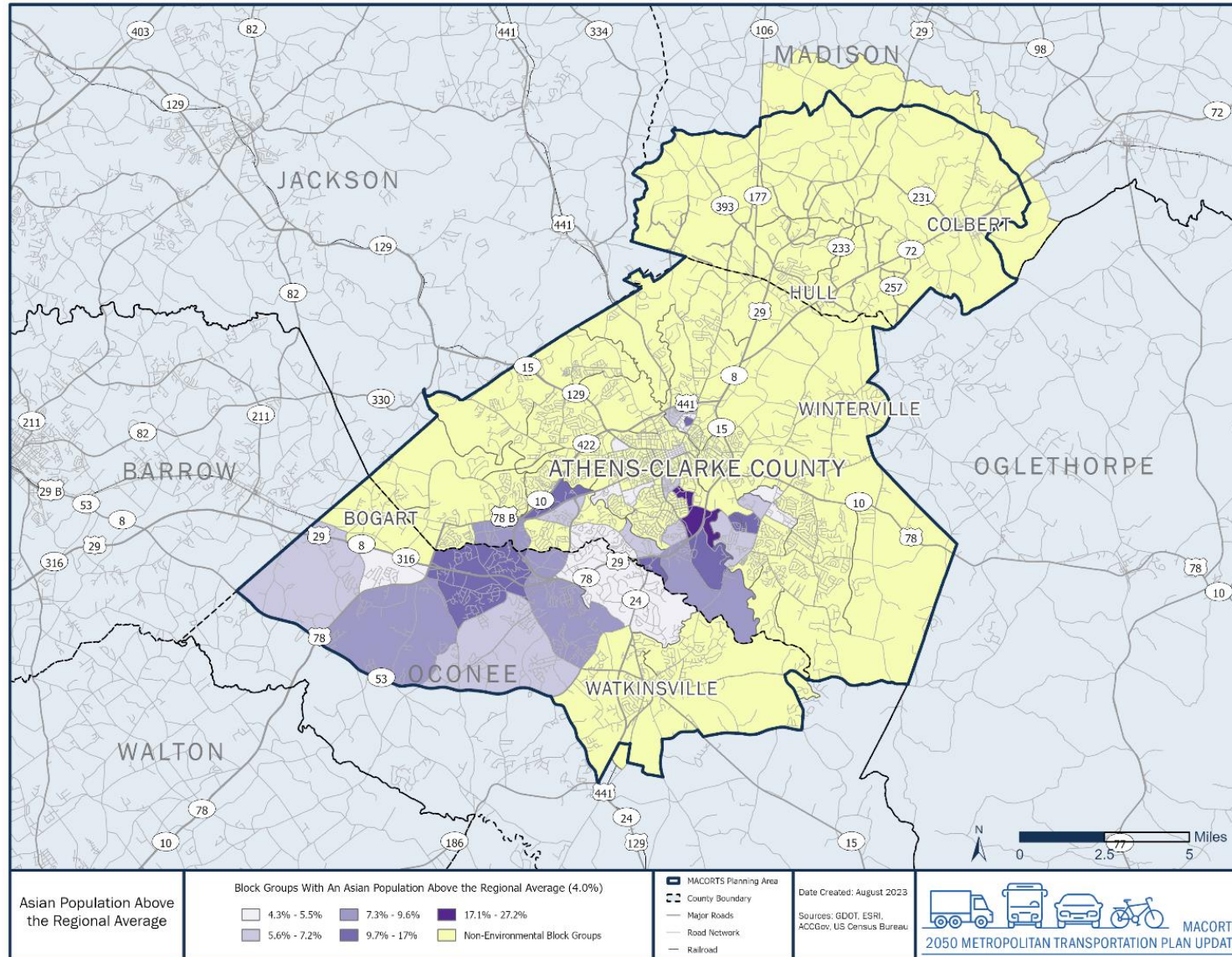




Figure 17: Hispanic/Latino Population Map

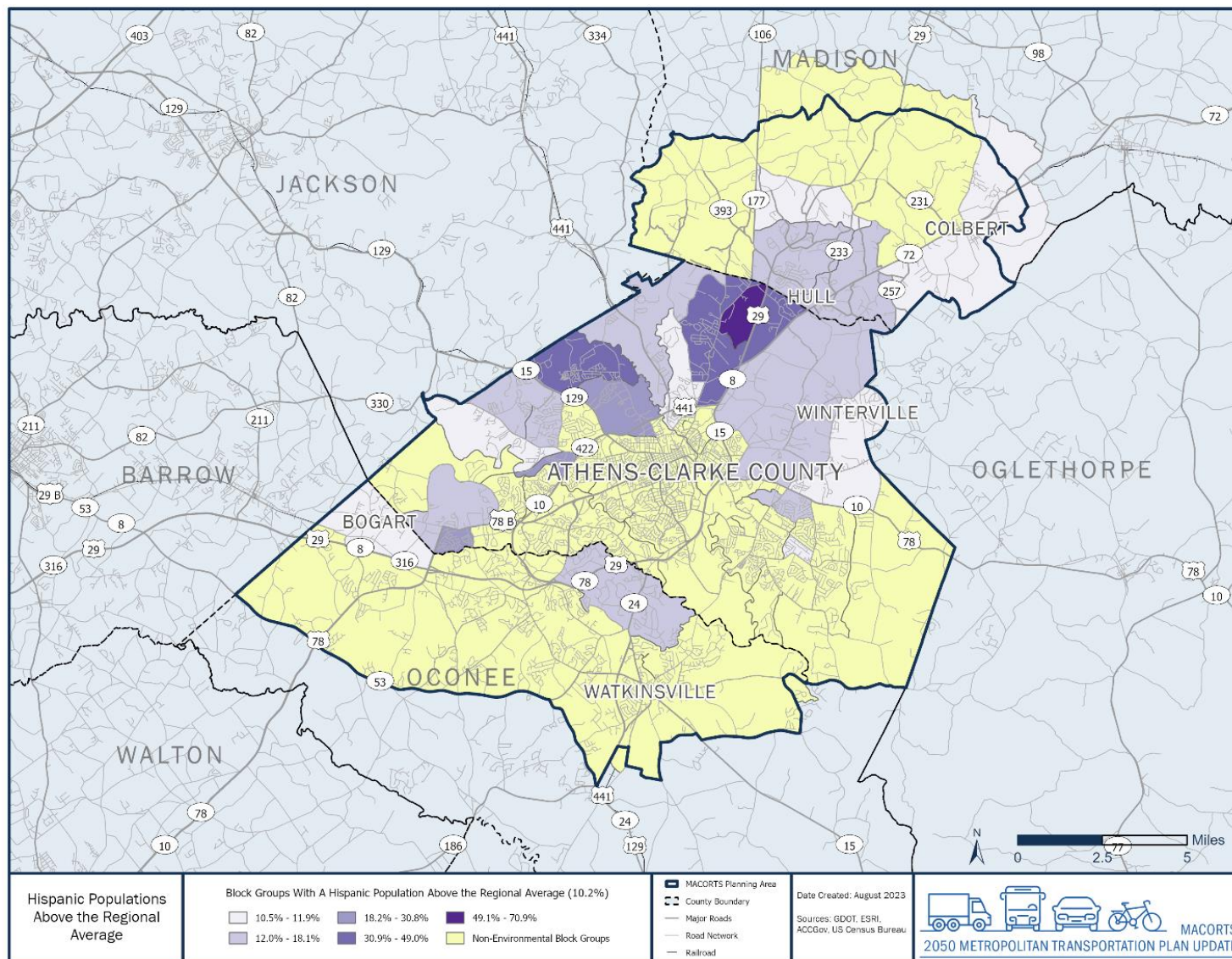






Figure 18: Persons with Disabilities Map

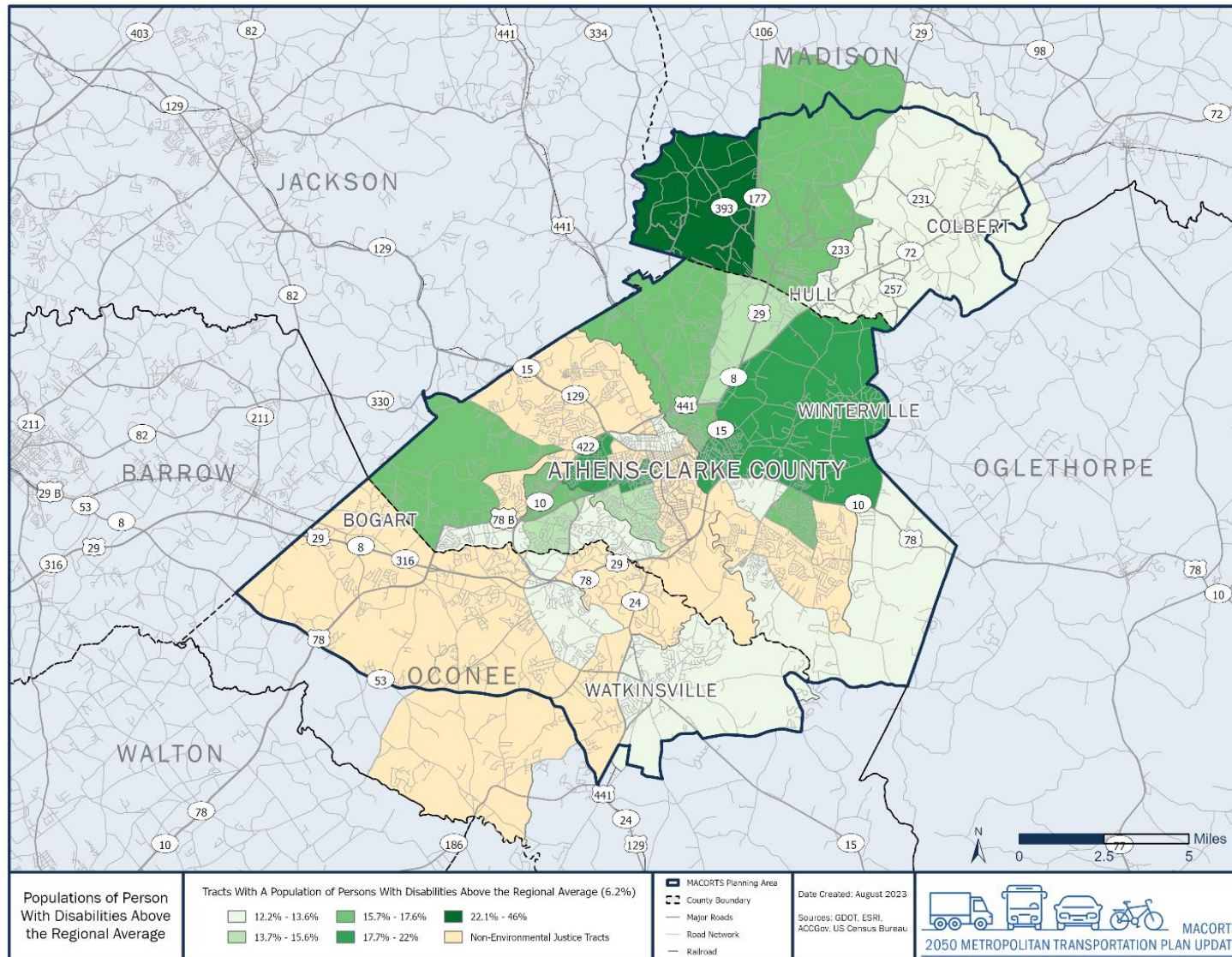






Figure 19: Elderly (65+) Population Map

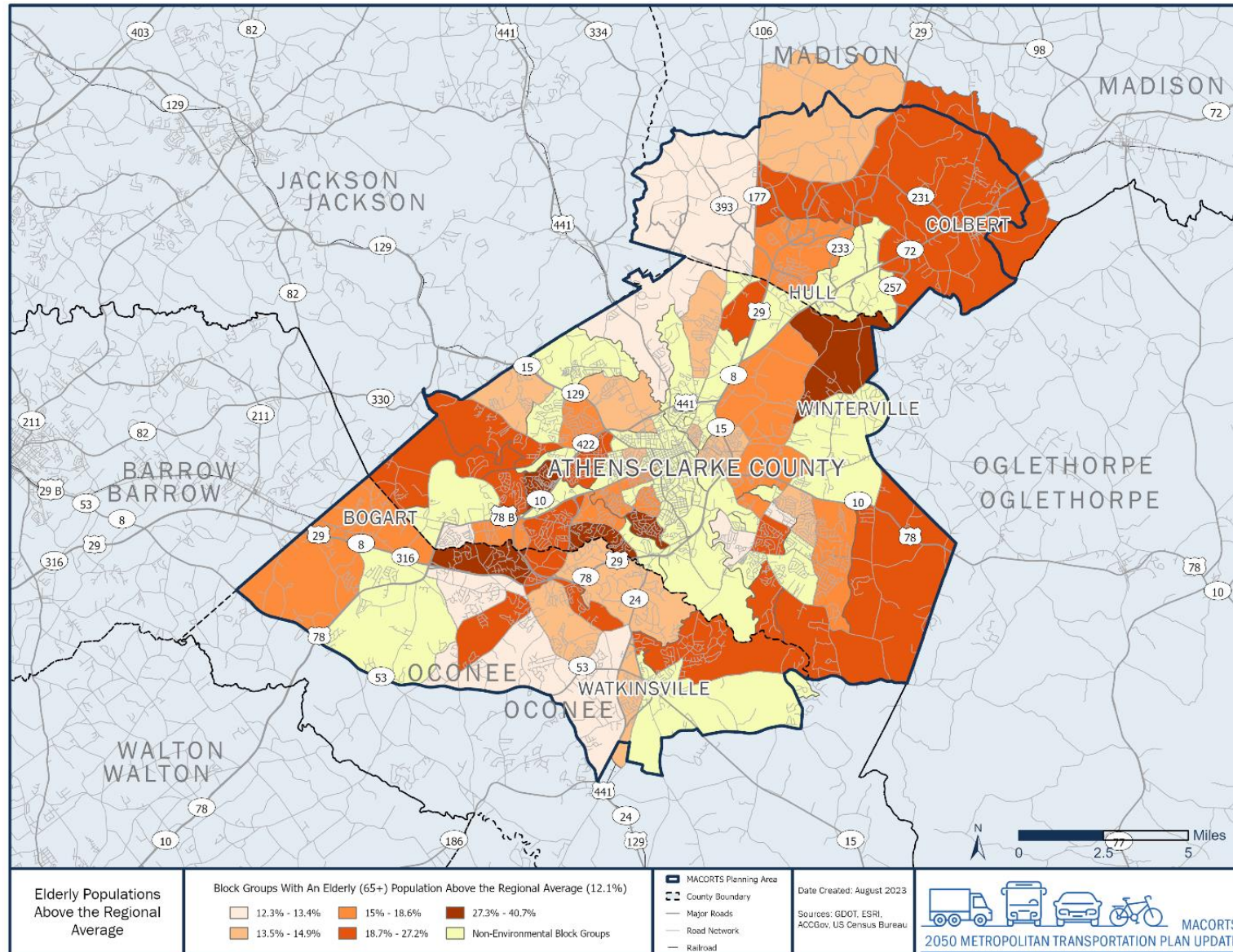






Figure 20: Populations in Poverty Map

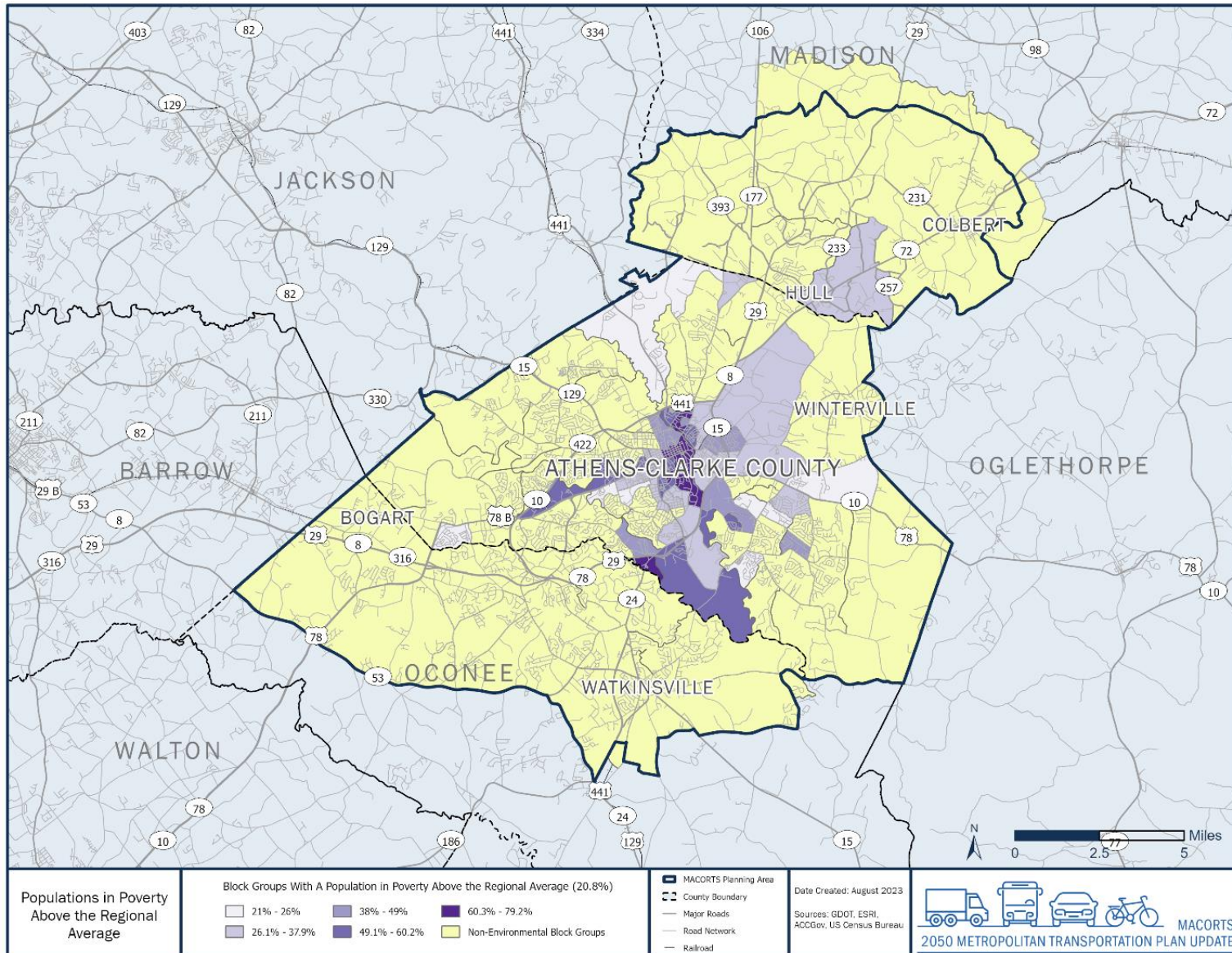
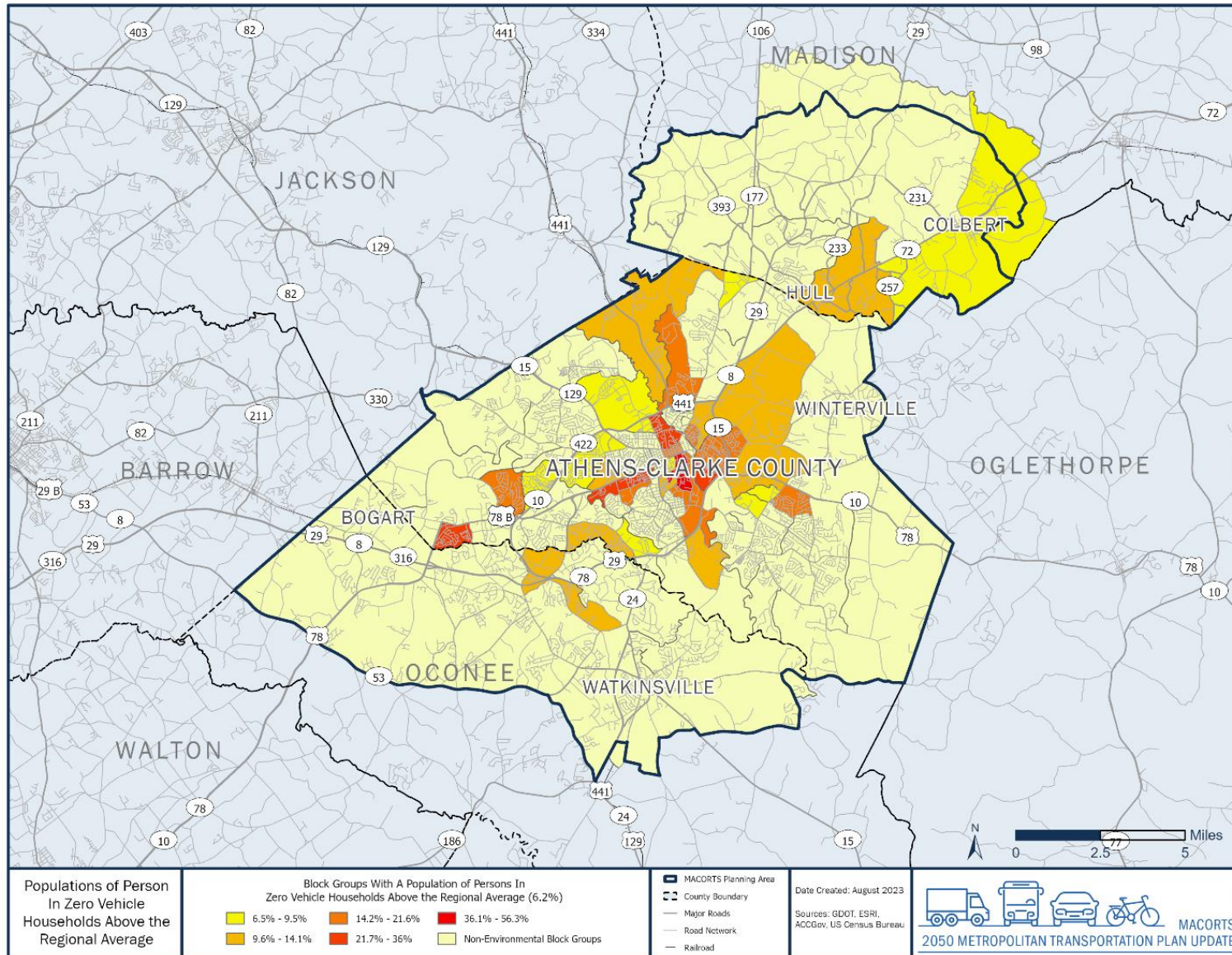






Figure 21: Zero Vehicle Household Map





## 1.5 MODES AND TRAVEL PATTERNS

### ROADWAY NETWORK

The road network within the planning area facilitates the movement of people and goods through and between Athens-Clarke County, Madison County, and Oconee County. The State Route 10 Loop, which forms a beltway around Downtown Athens, is the only freeway which is within the planning area. Other high-capacity roads include State Route 72, State Route 441, and State Route 78.

### Functional Classification

Functional Classification is a method utilized by GDOT to classify roadways into specific typologies. Roadways are classified into one of seven categories which reflect their characteristics and use. These classifications enable agencies and individuals to understand the high-level hierarchy of roadways within a given area. The following are the categories utilized arranged from highest classification to lowest classification in **Table 3** and



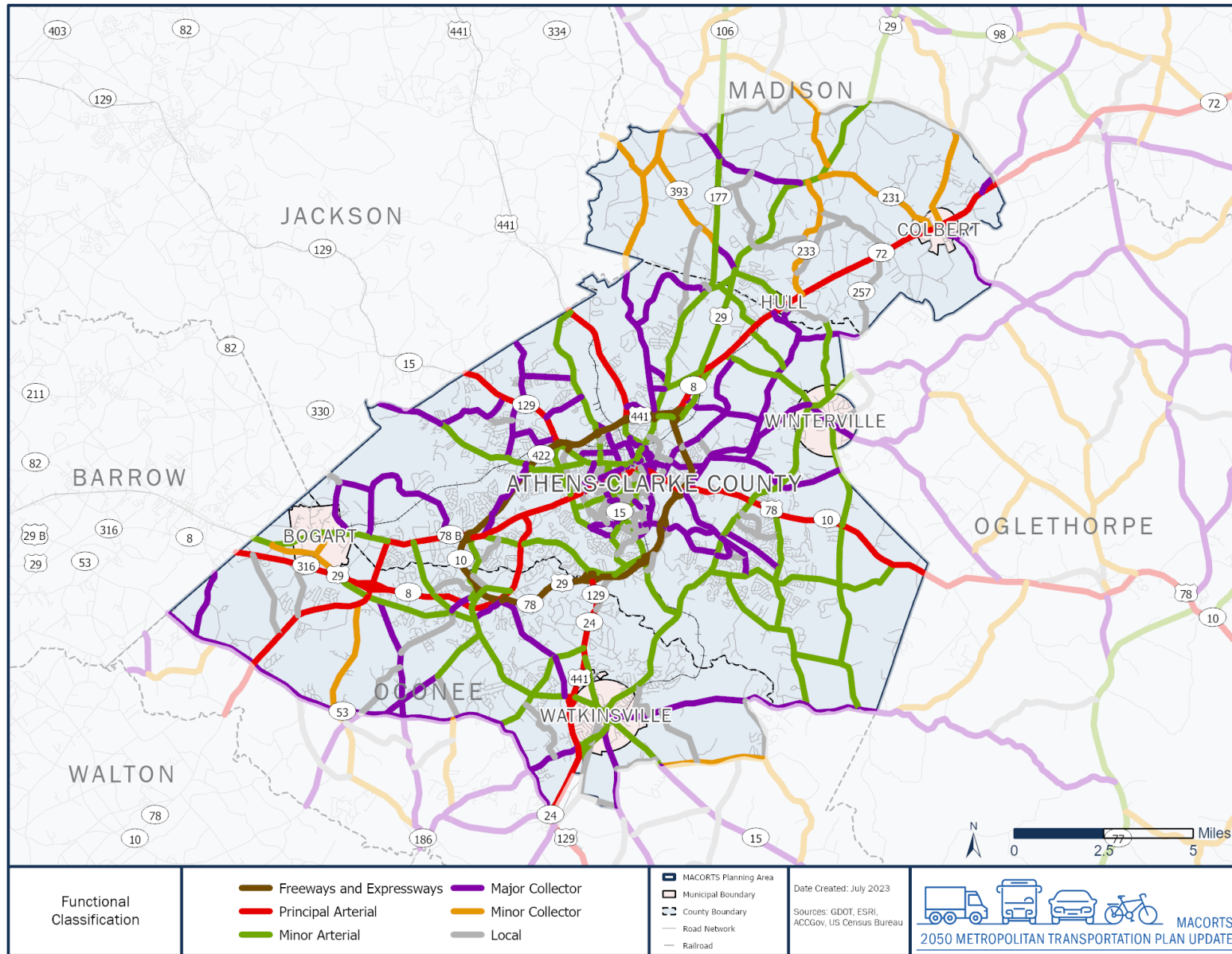
22 shows the functional classification of roadways in the planning area.

*Table 3: Functional Classification designations.*

Classification	Description
Interstate	A high-speed, controlled access roadway that travels across state lines and is part of the National Interstate Highway system.
Freeway/Expressway	A high-speed, controlled access roadway for traveling long distances.
Principal Arterial	A roadway for traveling long distances, that may support abutting land uses and more frequent access points than a Freeway/Expressway
Minor Arterial	A roadway for moderate trip lengths that can connect to a principal arterial generally supports abutting land uses and has many access points.
Major and Minor Collector	Roadways that connect local roads to larger arterial roads
Local Roads	A roadway that is designed for short, local trips.



Figure 22: Functional Classification







## Level of Service

Level of Service (LOS) is a designation system that evaluates roadway performance. This evaluation is primarily based on current vehicle volume and speeds. This system uses A-F to classify a roadway, with A being a roadway capable of handling additional demand and F being a roadway unable to effectively handle additional vehicle volumes. **Table 4** lists each designation and a description of characteristics for each rating.

*Table 4: Level of Service Designations*

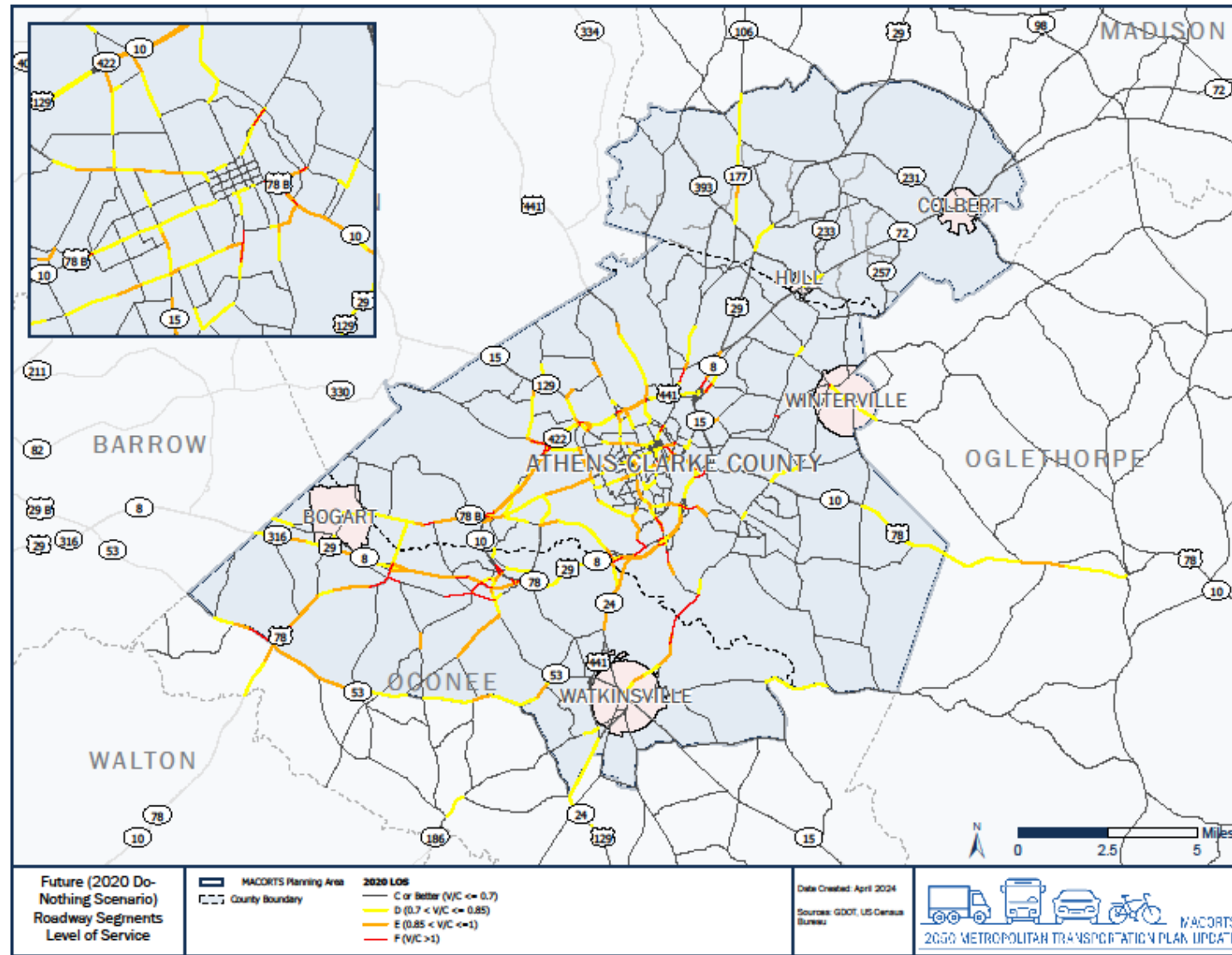
Level of Service Designation	Description
<b>A</b>	Free flow with individual users virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic system
<b>B</b>	Stable flow with a high degree of freedom to select speed and operating conditions but with some influence from other users
<b>C</b>	Restricted flow which remains stable but with significant interactions with others in the traffic stream. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level.
<b>D</b>	High-density flow in which speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted and comfort and convenience have declined even though traffic flow remains stable.
<b>E</b>	Unstable flow at or near capacity levels with poor levels of comfort and convenience.
<b>F</b>	Forced flow in which the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount that can be served, and queues form, characterized by stop-and-go waves, poor travel times, low comfort and convenience, and increased accident exposure.

SOURCE: TRANSPORTATION PLANNING HANDBOOK (2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION), INSTITUTE OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER, 1999.

This analysis utilizes the Georgia Statewide Travel Demand Model (GSTDM) to assign a LOS rating to a roadway. The GSTDM model utilizes various data inputs, such as socioeconomic data, Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS), and Regional Economic Models, Inc. model (REMI), to generate travel patterns and demand. When this data is compiled, it creates an accurate picture of what areas of the transportation network are being most utilized as well as which segments may need specific attention for future planning and infrastructure investment opportunities. The results of the GSTDM are shown in **Figure 23**.



Figure 23. GSTDM Level of Service





## TRANSIT NETWORK

### Athens-Clarke County Transit

Athens-Clarke County Transit (ACCT) is the primary transit agency and operator within the MACORTS planning area. ACCT offers a network of fixed-route bus services with 20 routes as well as curb-to-curb paratransit within one mile of a fixed-route service. The transit system serves to connect residential areas to Downtown Athens as well as to commercial areas. Transit to and from the University of Georgia campus is also provided, however, the University of Georgia also maintains its own transit system. ACCT's fixed-route bus service has been fare-free since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The Multimodal Transit Center located at 775 East Broad Street in Downtown Athens is both the operational headquarters of ACCT and the origin and endpoint for fixed-route services provided by both ACCT and the University of Georgia Transit. The ACCT system is shown in **Figure 24**.

### University of Georgia Transit

The University of Georgia maintains a public transit system with fixed-route buses, paratransit, and on-demand services. 11 routes are provided with the primary objective of providing transportation for students, faculty, and staff however UGA transit is open to all regardless of affiliation with the university. UGA transit stops are located around the university's campus which is concentrated in the area around Downtown Athens. Fixed routes on UGA's transit system are fare-free. The UGA transit system is shown in **Figure 25**.



**MAP DETAIL**

Legend:

- BUS ROUTE
- LIMITED SERVICE
- ➡ BUS STOP/ DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

**On Demand service area in blue**

**ACC TRANSIT IS FARE FREE!**

**HOURS OF OPERATION**  
No bus service on major Holidays.

Monday – Friday: 6:00 am – approx. 9:45 pm  
Saturday & Sunday: 7:00 am – 9:45 pm\*  
On-Demand from 6:30 pm – 9:45 pm  
Use the Uber app to schedule

Bus schedules vary by route & day  
Please confirm schedule prior to travel.

Visit: [accgov.com/transit](http://accgov.com/transit)  
for route maps & timetables.

**ATTENTION PASSENGERS!**

- Routes 9, 12, & 14 bypass Lumpkin St from E. Broad to Carlton to serve Sanford Dr
- Route 26 bypasses E. Campus from Hooper to Carlton to serve Sanford Dr

**myStop® for live bus tracking**

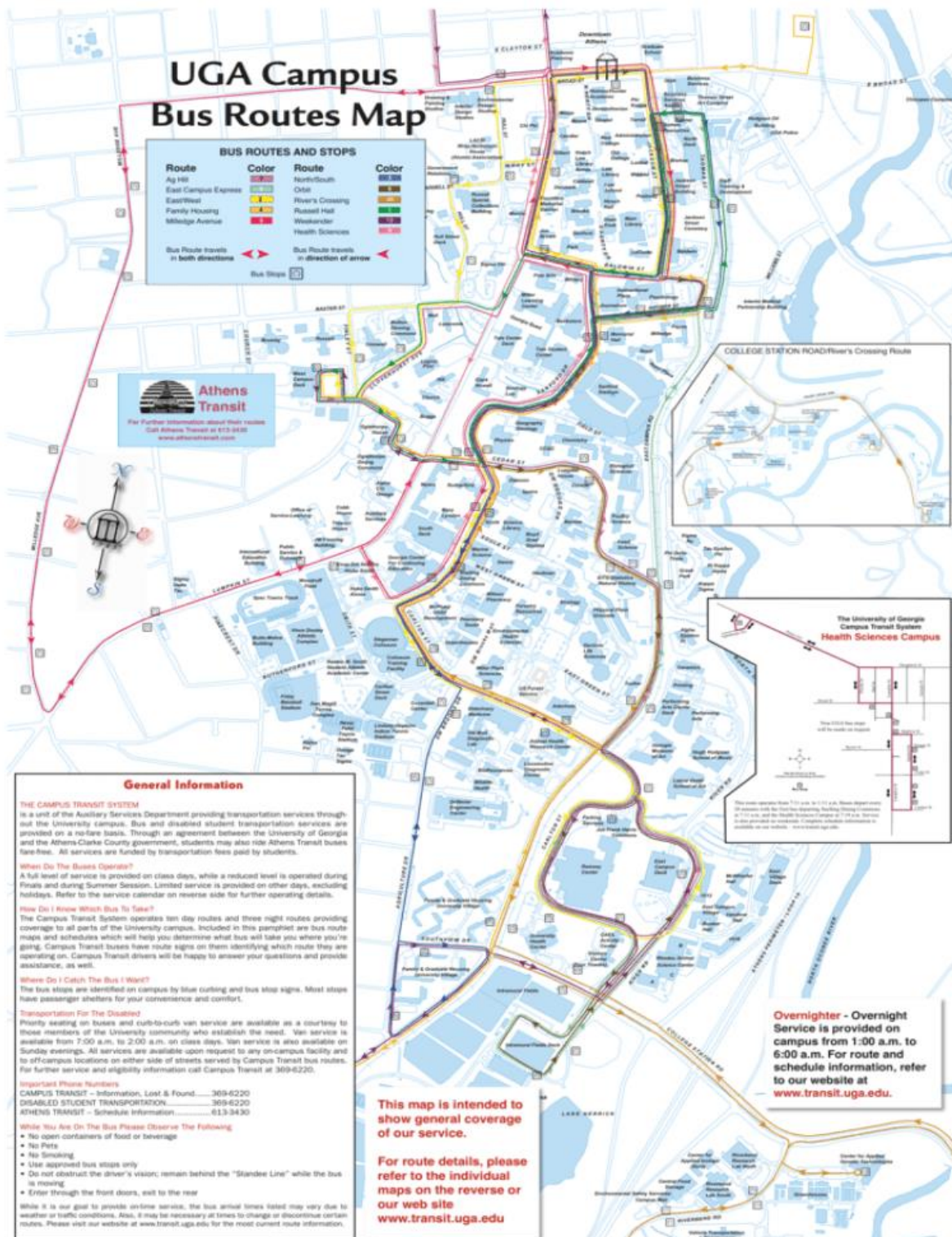
**ROUTES & SERVICE LEVELS**

Route	Service Level
1 North Ave	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
2 East Athens / Nellie B	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
3 East Athens Northside	WEEKDAYS
4 Beechwood / Boater	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
5 Hancock / Baxter	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
6 Prince Ave	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
7 Barber / Vincent	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
9 Macon Hwy / S Pts	WEEKDAYS
12 Riverbend	WEEKDAYS
14 Lumpkin / S Millledge	WEEKDAYS
20 Georgia Square Mall	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
21 West Athens	WEEKDAYS
22 East Side Circulator	WEEKDAYS
24 Athens Tech	WEEKDAYS + EVENING
25 Lexington / Gaines School	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
26 College Station	WEEKDAYS
27 Barnett Shoals / Cedar Shoals	7 DAYS + EVENINGS
30 North Side Circulator	ON DEMAND, 7 DAYS + EVENINGS





Figure 25: UGA Campus Bus Routes





## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are an important element of any multimodal transportation plan. Focus on pedestrian and bicycle connectivity has been highlighted in the comprehensive plans of Athens-Clarke County, Madison County, and Oconee County. Additional plans, such as the Athens in Motion plan and the Athens-Clarke County Greenway Network Plan, have been compiled in the past which focus specifically on bicycle and pedestrian needs and issues.

The Athens in Motion plan identified areas where existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure could be improved through the creation of a low-stress network. The existing bicycle and pedestrian network features bike lanes, off-road facilities, sharrows, and greenways. Many bike lanes are found in or around Downtown Athens and serve to connect the surrounding residential areas to the downtown core.

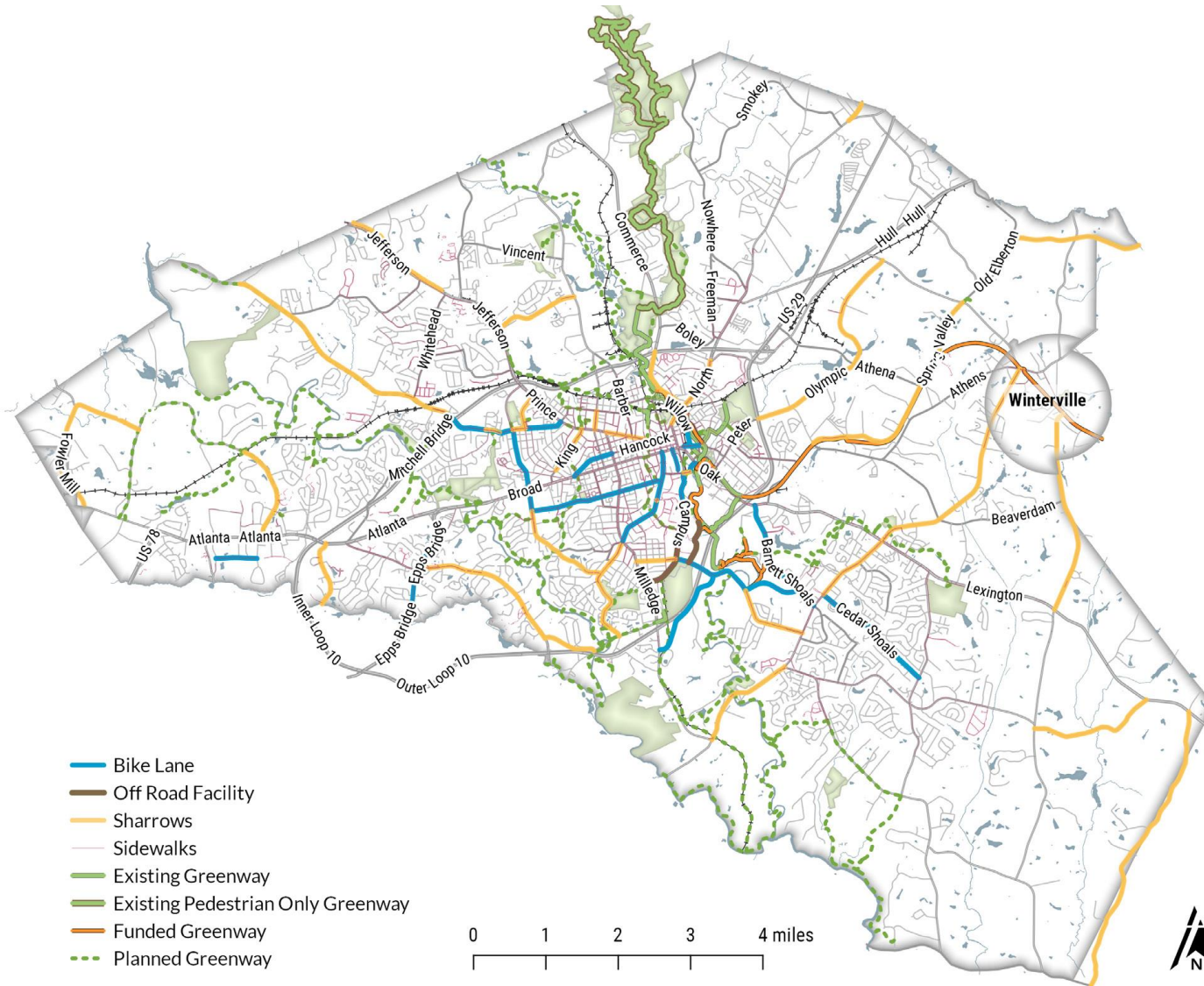
Gaps in the connectivity of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure are highlighted in the Athens in Motion plan, specifically in and between more rural areas of the county. The greenway and trail system presents the opportunity to connect existing infrastructure in these areas, as mentioned in the 2016 Greenway Network Plan.

Athens in Motion utilized a Level of Comfort (LOC) analysis to understand gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian transit system. The Level of Comfort system is based on public rider perception of certain roadways. This system of analysis is based on a Mineta Transportation Institute report which assigns a category to a roadway based on characteristics that would impact a cyclist's comfort on the road. These characteristics include level of separation from traffic, road speeds, traffic volumes, and number of safe crossings. Error! Reference source not found.26 displays the bicycle and pedestrian network and **Figure 27**, from the Athens in Motion plan, demonstrates the LOC category of major roadways in Athens-Clarke County.





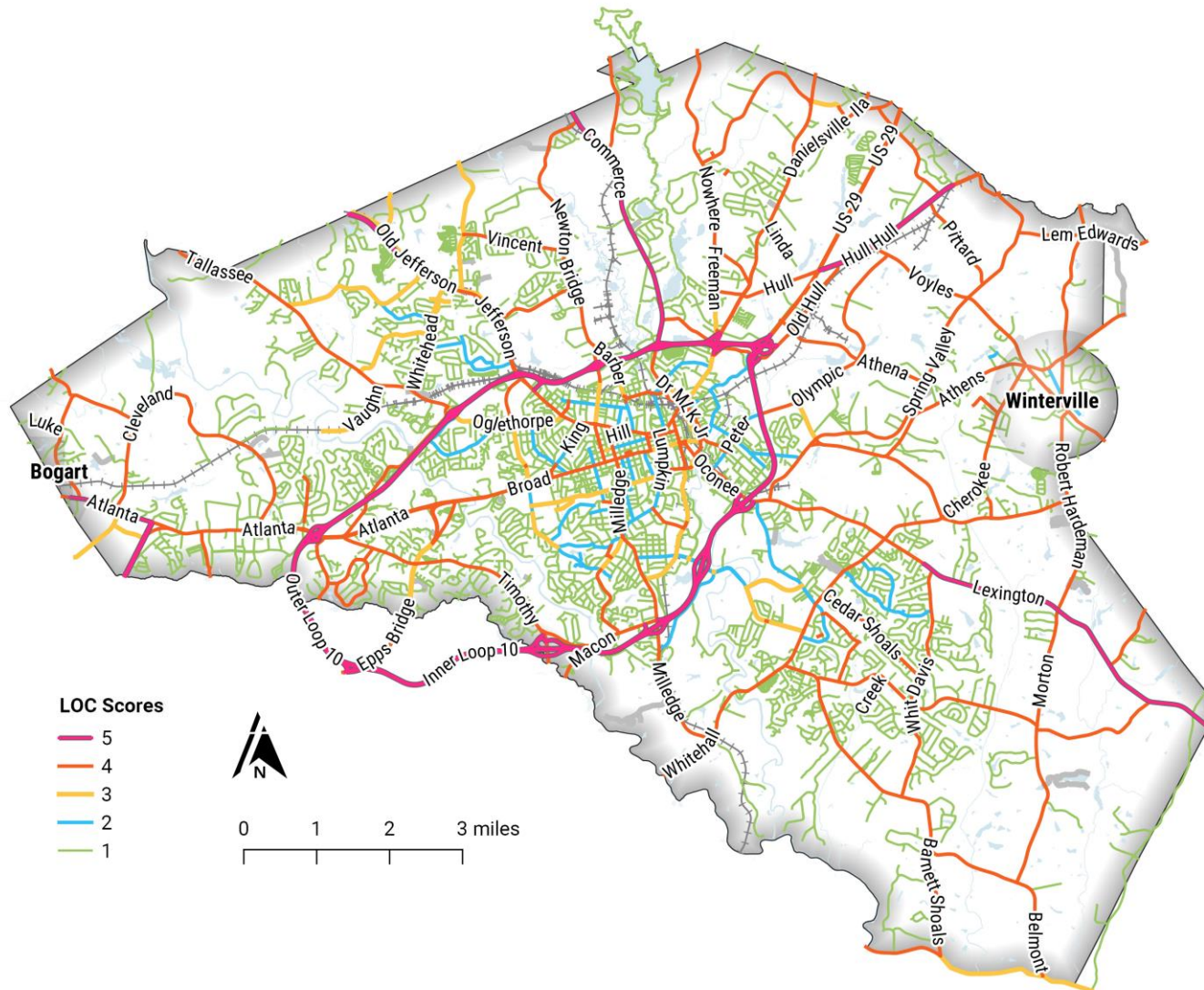
Figure 26: Bicycle and Pedestrian Network Map



SOURCE: ATHENS IN MOTION: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN 2018



Figure 27: Level of Comfort Analysis Map



SOURCE: ATHENS IN MOTION: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN 2018



The LOC analysis uses five categories (1-5), with 1 being the most comfortable conditions and 5 being the least. Each category is based upon the previously mentioned roadway characteristics. **Table 55** provides further detail on each category of level of comfort.

Table 5: Level of Comfort Analysis

Level of Comfort	Description
Level of Comfort 1	Assigned to areas where riding a bike is comfortable for a wide range of ages and abilities. Off-street bike facilities such as multiuse paths, trails, and greenway trails are included in this category. Roads within this category are characterized by slower speeds (<25 MPH or 30 MPH with bike lanes).
Level of Comfort 2	Assigned to roads that may be comfortable for adults that don't ride a bike often. Roads within this category are characterized by designated bike lanes, moderate speeds (30-40 MPH).
Level of Comfort 3	Assigned to areas well suited for enthusiastic cyclists that are confident in their abilities and comfortable riding in mixed traffic. Roads within this category are characterized by designated bike lanes, moderately high speeds (35-45 MPH).
Level of Comfort 4	Streets that are not comfortable for bicycle travel and may only be suitable for the most advanced level of cyclist, the strong and fearless, in rare circumstances. Roads within this category are characterized by high speeds and one or more adjacent travel lanes.
Level of Comfort 5	A category that is intolerable for even the most experienced adult cyclists. Roads within this category are characterized by very high speeds (45+ MPH), multiple adjacent travel lanes, and limited access.

SOURCE: ATHENS IN MOTION: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN 2018



Within the MACORTS area there are three major railways, Central of Georgia Railroad, Southern Railway, and Seaboard Coastline Railway. The Central of Georgia and Southern Railway are operated by The Great Walton Railroad by way of the Athens Line, The Seaboard Coast Line Railroad is operated by CSX, a major freight railroad company that operates in the Eastern United States and Canada. The northern portion of the Southern Railway, which crosses into Jackson County, is operated by Norfolk Southern.

Two of these rail line companies are categorized as Class I railroad companies. Railroad classification is based upon annual revenue, with Class I representing the largest revenue-producing railways in the country. These railways are understood to be of high importance to the overall state and national freight rail infrastructure.

There is currently no passenger rail service within the MACORTS area, however, the Athens-Clarke County 2023 Comprehensive Plan identifies the desire for passenger rail service from Athens to Atlanta.

The GDOT 2021 Statewide Rail Plan also highlights this desire for additional passenger rail service, specifically to facilitate the movement of people to and from emerging metropolitan areas such as Athens to the Atlanta area.

The GDOT 2021 Statewide Rail Plan also recognizes the goal of modernizing shortline railroad infrastructure. The Central of Georgia Railway in Athens-Clarke County, highlighted in pink in **Freight**

GDOT has identified three major freight corridors within the MACORTS area. These include State Route 441, State Route 72, and State Route 316. These corridors provide connectivity to facilities in the Atlanta region, as well as facilities northeast of Atlanta in Gainesville.

Of note, is the 2021 project to construct an inland container port facility in Gainesville to assist in the movement of goods in north Georgia. The map shown in **Figure 29** depicts the statewide freight corridors and additional freight assets in the state of Georgia.



Figure 28: Freight Rail Infrastructure<sup>28</sup> below, is designated as a shortline railway. The CSX Athens, Georgia Depot is located at 101 Ware Street, just north of Downtown Athens.

## FREIGHT

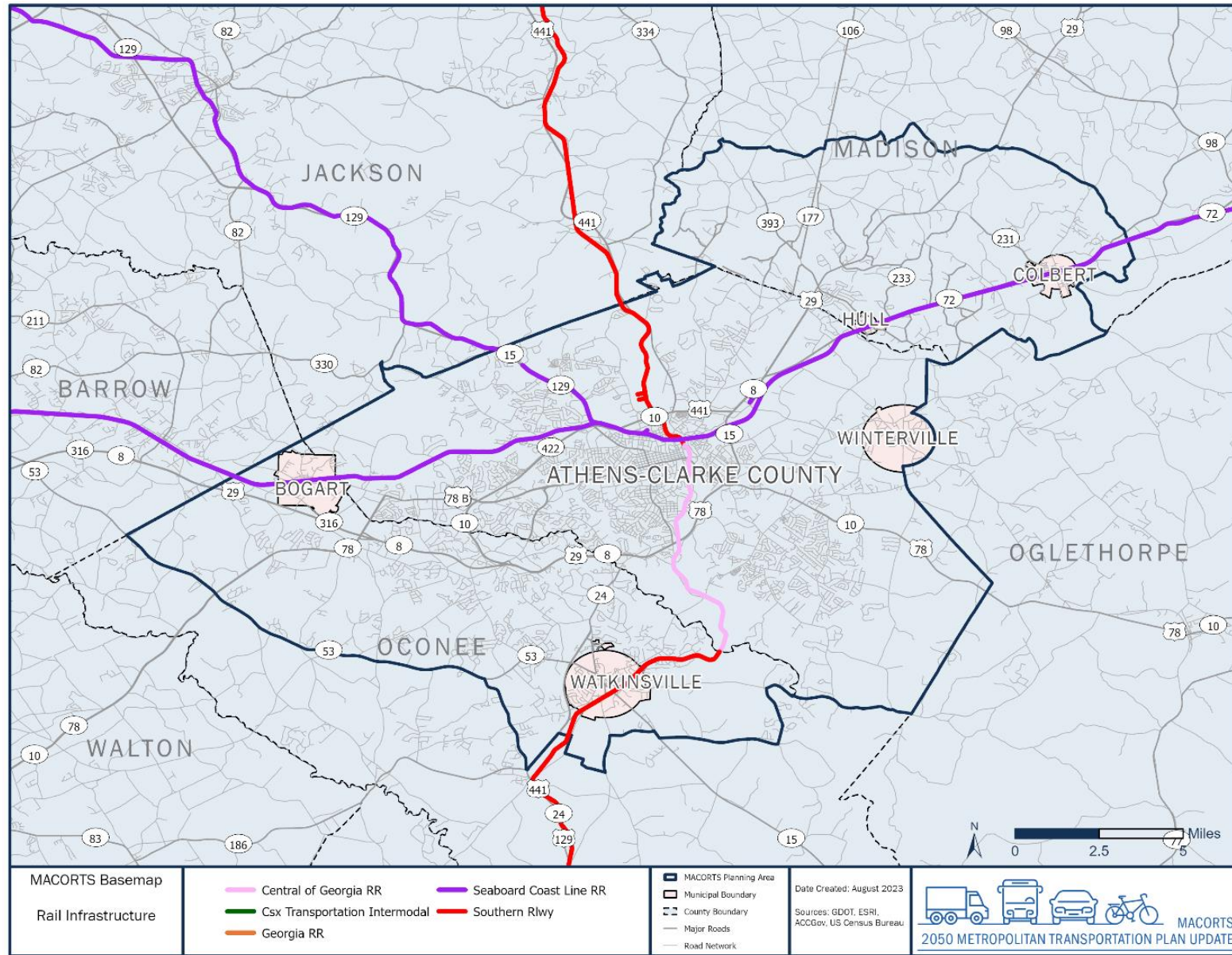
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Of note, is the 2021 project to construct an inland container port facility in Gainesville to assist in the movement of goods in north Georgia. The map shown in **Figure 29** depicts the statewide freight corridors and additional freight assets in the state of Georgia.





Figure 28: Freight Rail Infrastructure







**Legend**

- Statewide Freight Corridor
- Freight Rail Yards
- Sea Port
- \*Industrial Facilities by Number of Parking Spaces**
  - 55 - 125
  - 126 - 350
  - 351 - 1000
  - HJAIA
  - Counties

Map labels include: Macon-LaGrange, Fall Line Freeway, and various highway shields (e.g., 59, 27, 75, 675, 385, 85, 400, 316, 17, 72, 20, 35, 74, 109, 185, 79, 441, 16, 1, 84, 95, 82, 133, 520).

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## AIRPORTS

Currently, MACORTS is home to only one public use airport, Ben Epps Airport (IATA: AHN) in Athens. AHN is owned and operated by Athens-Clarke County. The airport is located at 1010 Ben Epps Dr, and is accessible via the Athens Bypass (Exits 8 or 9) to Winterville Rd. The airport is available for commercial passenger service, cargo/freight, charters for sports teams including the University of Georgia (15 out of 16 UGA athletic teams were serviced by this airport in FY 2022) and has car/truck rental on site in addition to a flight school that offers pilot training. The airport maintains two paved runways (Runways 2/20 and 9/27) and offers 77 T-Hangers that are currently at 100% use with a waiting list of about 20.

Athens Airport released their FY 2022 Annual Report that outlines their strategic plan with six stated goals listed. Understanding these goals helps to ensure that project priorities of the 2050 MTP enhance regional connectivity and support the identified goals of encouraging tourism and connectivity:

- Goal 1- Enhance the Airport Infrastructure per the Capital Improvement Plan to continue to provide reliable air transportation systems which enables economic development and enriches the quality of life for ACC citizens.
- Goal 2- Establish Scheduled & Increase Non-Scheduled Passenger/Air Cargo Service to provide greater transportation options for ACC residents and our region for convenience and for economic growth.
- Goal 3- Expand the General Aviation Experience to better serve customers and increase revenue which will help ensure the airport's future.
- Goal 4- Inform and Connect Community, Businesses and Customers to provide a greater understanding of the Airport's role in the community and to build good will.
- Goal 5- Establish Scheduled & Increase Non-Scheduled Passenger/Air Cargo Service to provide greater transportation options for ACC residents and our region for convenience and for economic growth.
- Goal 6- Create an Employee Development Culture to improve employees' existing competencies and skills to increase safety and customer service.

Alternatively, MACORTS residents have the option to take commercial passenger flights from Barrow County Airport in Winder, Lee Gilmer Memorial Airport in Gainesville, or Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.



## 1.6 SAFETY

### ROAD SAFETY

Ensuring that the transportation system is safe is the number one priority. Automotive vehicle crashes have the potential to cause significant damage to life and property due to the speed at which they travel. When examining crashes in the MACORTS area, many were found to occur on major corridors and arterial roads as well as on roadways that pass through Downtown Athens. Error! Reference source not found.**30** provides an overview of where clusters of crashes occur.

Crash severity is measured on a scale based upon the impact to human life. Crashes which result in a fatal injury are considered to be the most severe, and often occur on high-speed corridors. Many of the recorded high severity crashes occurred on state routes or arterial roads, particularly along State Route 78B and around the State Route 10 Loop. Severe crashes are dispersed throughout the MACORTS Area; however a cluster of these crashes occur in the area around central Athens-Clarke County. Error! Reference source not found.**31** shows areas where crashes occurred and the severity of these crashes.

### BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Safety is one of the most important factors to consider during the planning process. Safety is especially a concern for pedestrians and cyclists, due to the potential for more serious injury than in any crashes. Crash data for both cyclist and pedestrian-involved accidents were mapped in Error! Reference source not found.**32** and Error! Reference source not found.**33**, respectively.

The location of more severe crashes coincides with roadways that rated low on level of comfort in the level of comfort analysis provided in the Athens in Motion plan. The majority of these crashes are concentrated in the area around Downtown Athens, specifically along major corridors such as West Broad Street, Prince Ave, and US 78.



Figure 30: Crash Location Map

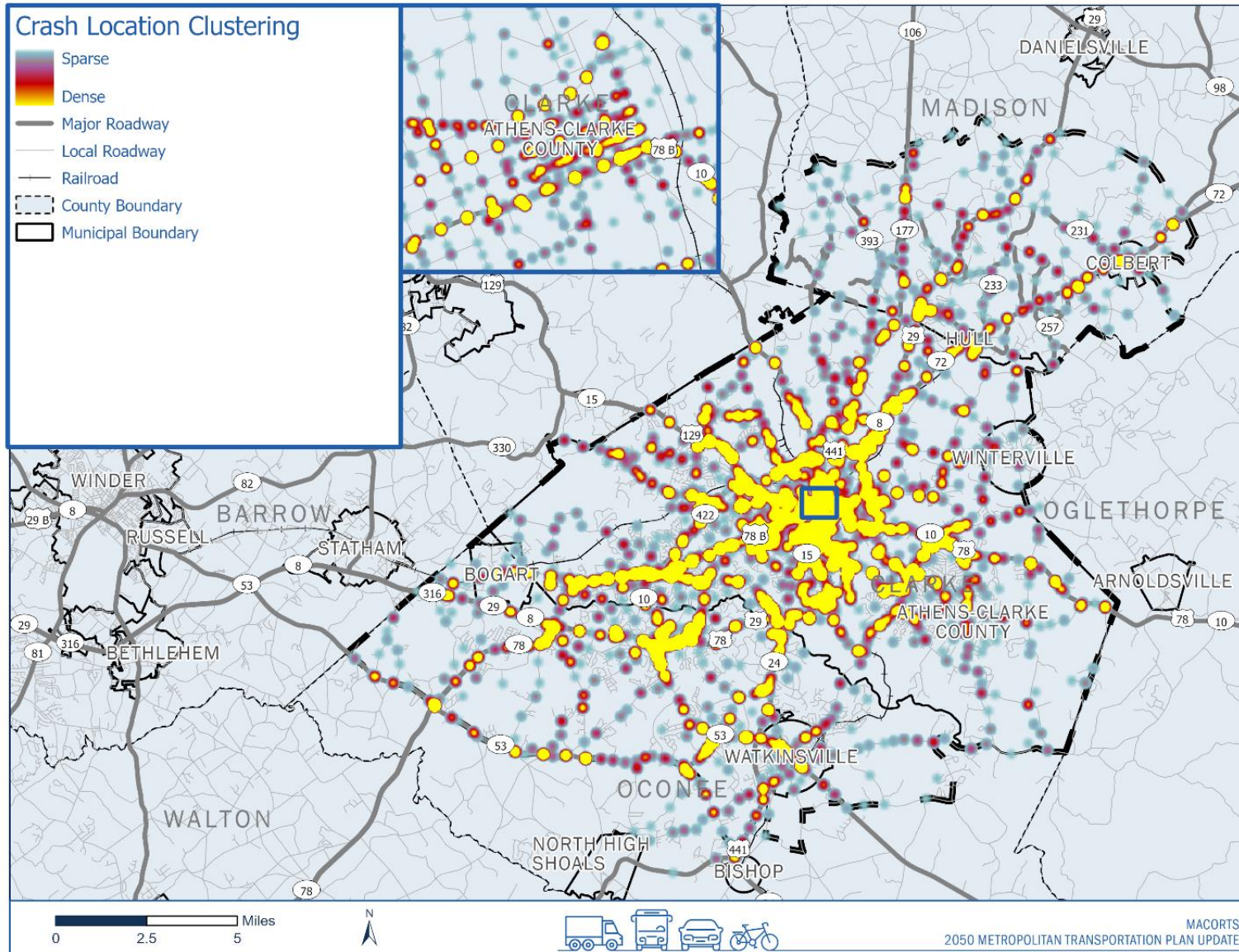






Figure 31: Crash Severity Map

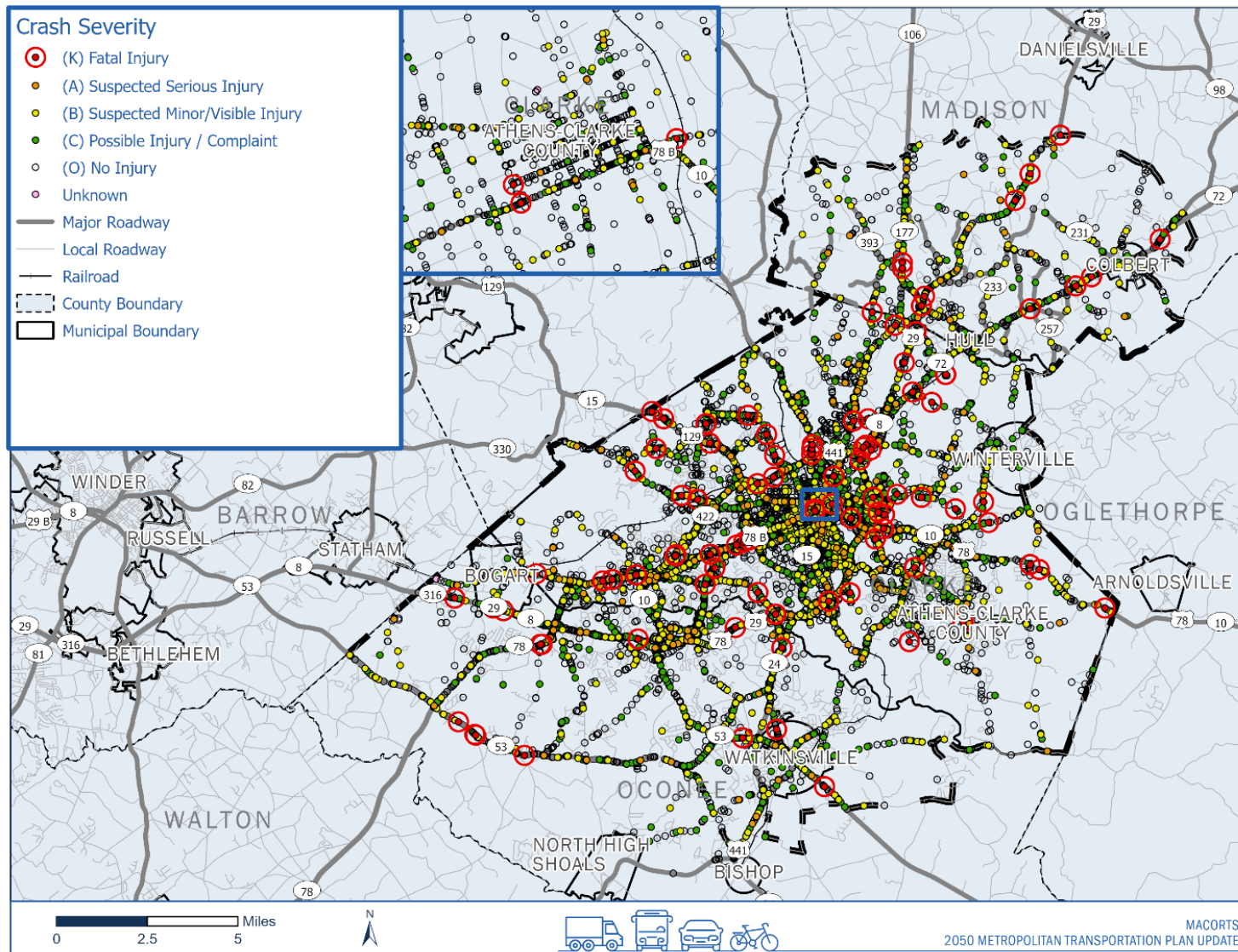






Figure 32: Bicycle Crashes Map

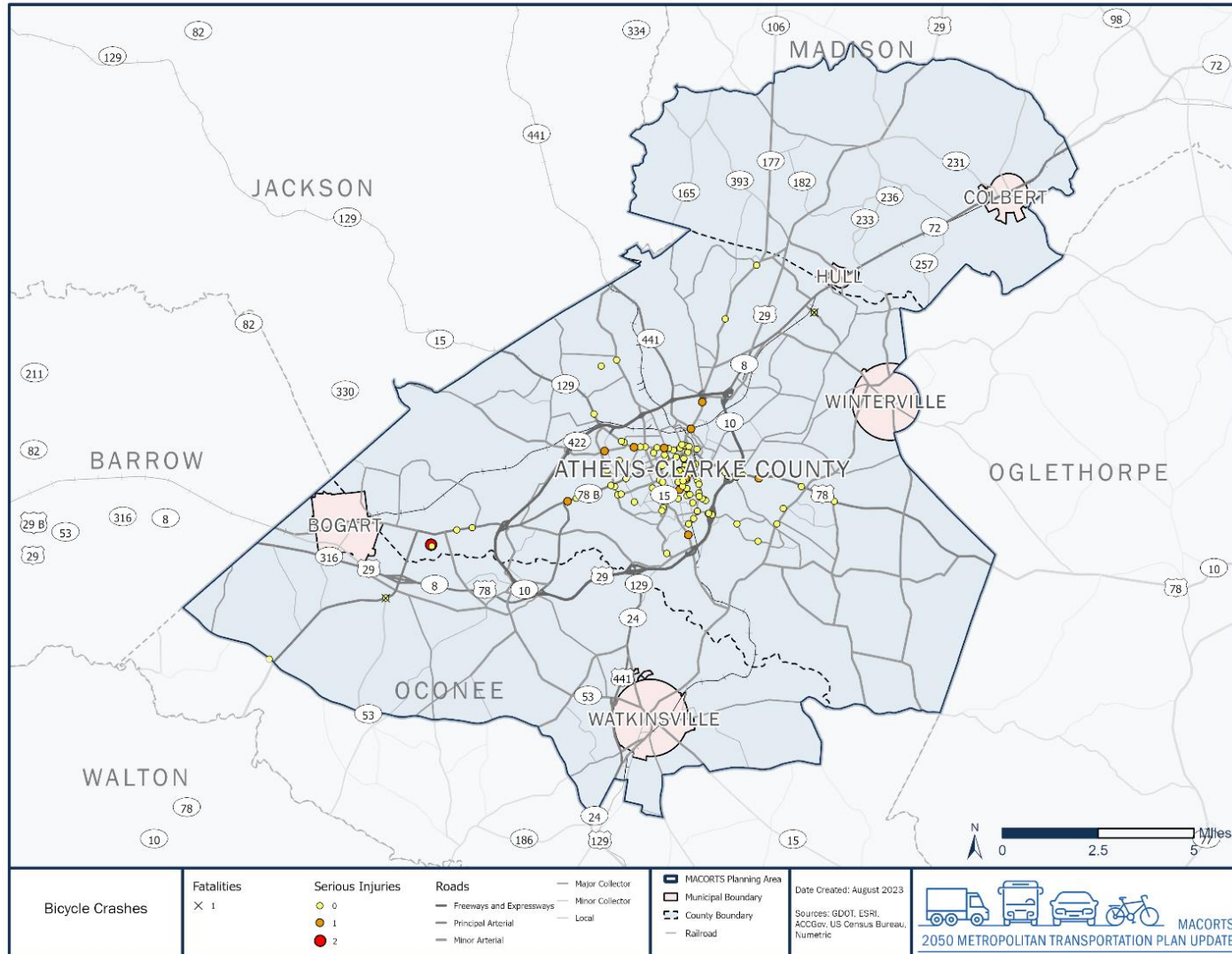




Figure 33: Pedestrian Crashes Map

