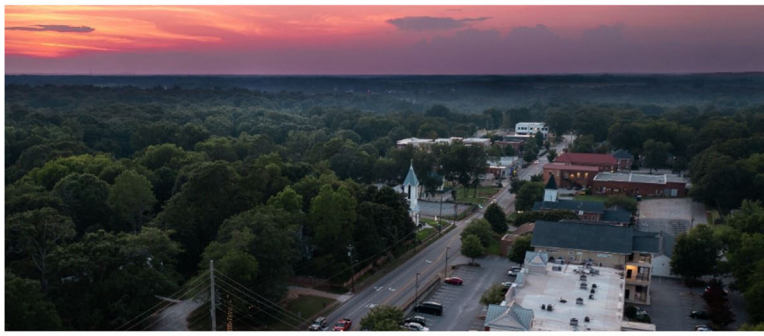
2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Adopted 2024



MACORTS

Disclaimer

The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this publication are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the Department of Transportation, the State of Georgia, the Federal Highway Administration, or the Federal Transit Administration. For more information regarding this plan or any other MACORTS activity, please contact us at:

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Resolution of Adoption

RESOLUTION BY THE MADISON ATHENS-CLARKE OCONEE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY (MACORTS) POLICY COMMITTEE

WHEREAS 23 CFR 450.322 of the Code of Federal Regulations requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to develop a performance-based long-range, multimodal, financially constrained transportation plan every five years for areas in air quality attainment; and

WHEREAS, through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process in conformance with applicable federal and state requirements, MACORTS developed the latest Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) with a horizon year of 2050; and

WHEREAS, a 30-day public involvement period was conducted for review of the Final Draft 2050 MTP including three (3) public meetings consistent with the adopted MACORTS participation plan; and

WHEREAS, the Technical Coordination Committee of MACORTS in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and the Georgia Department of Transportation has reviewed the plan update,

WHEREAS, the Technical Coordinating Committee at its August 28, 2024 meeting recommended the adoption of the MACORTS 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MACORTS Policy Committee concurs with the recommendation of the Technical Coordinating Committee of MACORTS that the horizon of the MACORTS MTP be extended to the year 2050 and the MACORTS 2050 MTP be adopted.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a Resolution adopted by the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study Policy Committee, at their meeting held on October 2, 2024

Recommended by:

Chair, MACORTS Policy Committee

Interim TCC Chairman/MPO Director

2050 MTP Amendments Log

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Introduction and Background

The Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS) region includes all of Athens-Clarke County, portions of Oconee and Madison Counties, and four local municipalities within those counties. MACORTS serves as the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and a regional center for northeast Georgia. The transportation system of the region is a critical element connecting the region's growing population with the services and employment needed for everyday life.

The transportation sector and transportation needs of the community continue to evolve due to changing technologies and mobility preferences of the population. Updating the MTP allows MACORTS to assess the existing transportation system performance, estimate future demand, and strategically evaluate transportation investments to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the region's residents now and into the future.

What is a Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)?

The MTP is a federally required plan that identifies how each MPO will prioritize and invest in a multi-modal transportation system to meet the region's needs.

The MTP, which is updated every 5 years, covers a 20-year planning horizon and the resulting list of projects must be fiscally constrained.

This Metropolitan Transportation Plan is divided into sections, each of which contributes to the overall success of the plan:

MACORTS VISION

The vision set forth for the MTP at the outset of the process provides guidance for selecting and prioritizing projects based on the values of the MPO and member municipalities.

EXISTING AND FUTURE CONDITIONS

An MTP is updated every five years with a 20-year planning horizon. The existing conditions provide an update for the current demographic and economic conditions and the conditions of the existing transportation system, while future conditions project growth and changes likely to occur between 2024 and 2050.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Several resources were utilized in order to determine the gaps in the current transportation system where the MTP may prioritize investment in order to fill those gaps. This chapter describes each of those resources including public and stakeholder input, travel demand model outputs and findings, and assessments and analyses of key areas such as safety and freight.

2050 MTP

The 2050 MTP section includes the outcomes of the analyses described in previous chapters. This section details the process of finalizing the 2050 MTP including project lists, project prioritization metrics, and the financially constrained project list.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

Since the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1962, every MPO must prepare an MTP in accordance with United States Code Title 49, Chapter 53 regarding Public Transportation systems. Subsequently, the federal government periodically passes legislation that require updates to the planning processes or plans of MPOs. On November 15th, 2021, President Joe Biden signed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, or the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Among other updates, the BIL added statewide and local housing pattern consideration to the metropolitan planning process, requires data consistency, and allows for the opportunity for lower-density MPOs or lower-income portions of the metropolitan area to receive a federal share greater than 80 percent.

To demonstrate compliance with each of the legislative requirements detailed in CFR 23 450.306 and CFR 23 450.324, a checklist is provided in Appendix A.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION AND THE MTP: WHAT IS REQUIRED?

Federal legislation requires that the Metropolitan Transportation Plan include the following performance-based MTP elements:

- ☑ CONTEXT SETTING INFORMATION
- ☑ GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- ☑ PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS
- ☑ SYSTEM PERFORMANCE REPORT
- ☑ IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS
- ☑ STRATEGIES, INVESTMENTS AND FINANCIAL PLANS
- ☑ CONNECTION TO PROGRAMMING

MPO 101

A BRIEF GUIDE FOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS (MPO)

What is a MPO?

Federal regulations require that areas with a population of 50,000 people or more, per the US Census Bureau, are designated as a Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). MPOs are charged with carrying out the federally mandated transportation planning process and facilitating Federal Highway and State transportation investments in designated urbanized areas and areas expected to become urbanized within the next 20 years.

MPOs are designated through an agreement with the governor and local governments that represent at least 75% of the affected population.

Are all MPOs the Same?

There are 16 MPOs in the State of Georgia representing both large and small urban populations. Areas with populations between 50,000 and 200,000 are designated as small urban MPOs and function as sub-recipients to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

Urbanized areas with a population over 200,000 are called Transportation Management Areas (TMA) that report directly to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) with additional reporting requirements and a more active role in project selection for funding.

MACORTS is a Small Urban MPO.

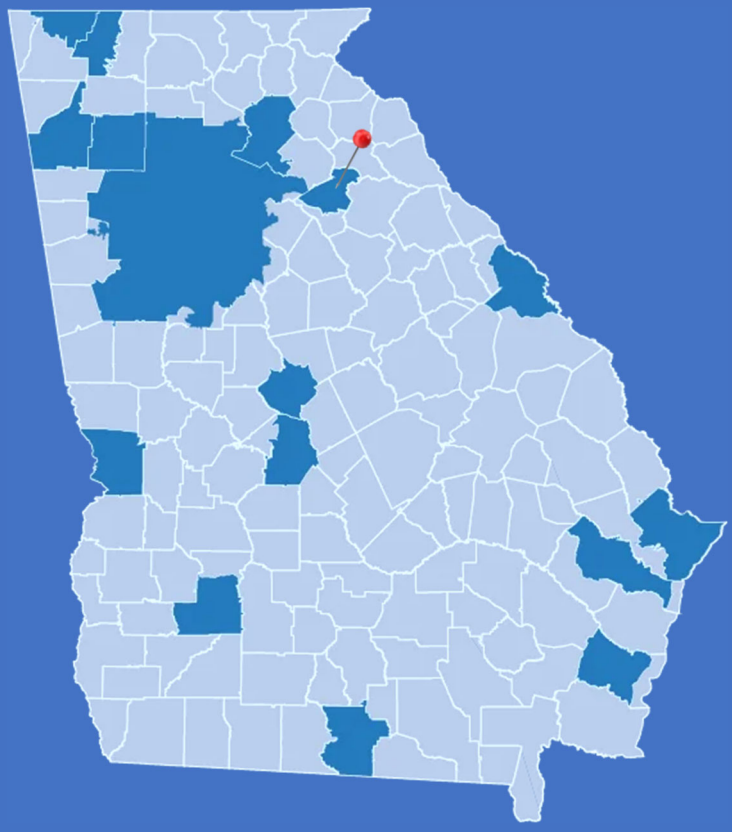


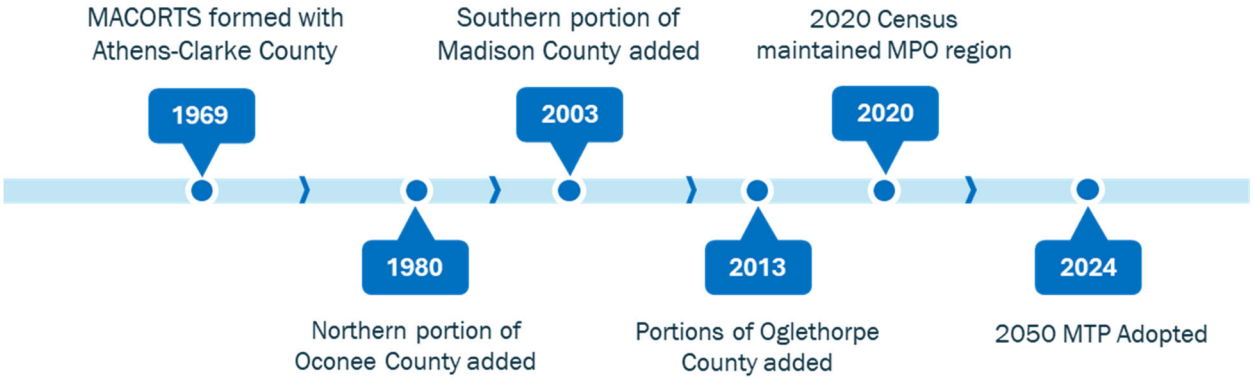
Image Source: GAMPO.org

MACORTS FORMATION AND STRUCTURE

MPO Designation

MACORTS became an MPO in 1969, and initially incorporated all of Athens-Clarke County. MACORTS has grown since its inception adding additional planning areas and partners as detailed in the following figure. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between local planning partners, the State Transportation Department, and public transportation operators within the planning area binds the MPO with an agreement to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) metropolitan transportation planning and programming process. As an MPO grows, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) must be updated to include the new MPO boundary, population, and partners.

Figure 1: Timeline of MACORTS



In the 2010 Decennial Census, the MACORTS region population was 151,973. In 2020, the population grew to 174,074, representing a 14.5% increase over the previous Census count. Individual county growth figures from the two most recent census counts are in the table below. Oglethorpe and Jackson Counties are not included as they have elected not to participate in the MACORTS planning process.

Table 1: MPO County Population Statistics

County	2010 Census Pop.	2020 Census Pop.	% Change
Athens-Clarke	116,714	128,671	10.2%
Madison	28,120	30,120	7.1%
Oconee	32,808	41,799	27.4%

MACORTS is a subrecipient to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). As a subrecipient, MACORTS is required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to follow federal regulations under the oversight of the GDOT. One of the primary responsibilities of the MPO is to maintain and follow the mandated 3C federal planning process.

A key component of the 3C process is the management and maintenance of the region's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as a prerequisite for FHWA funding.

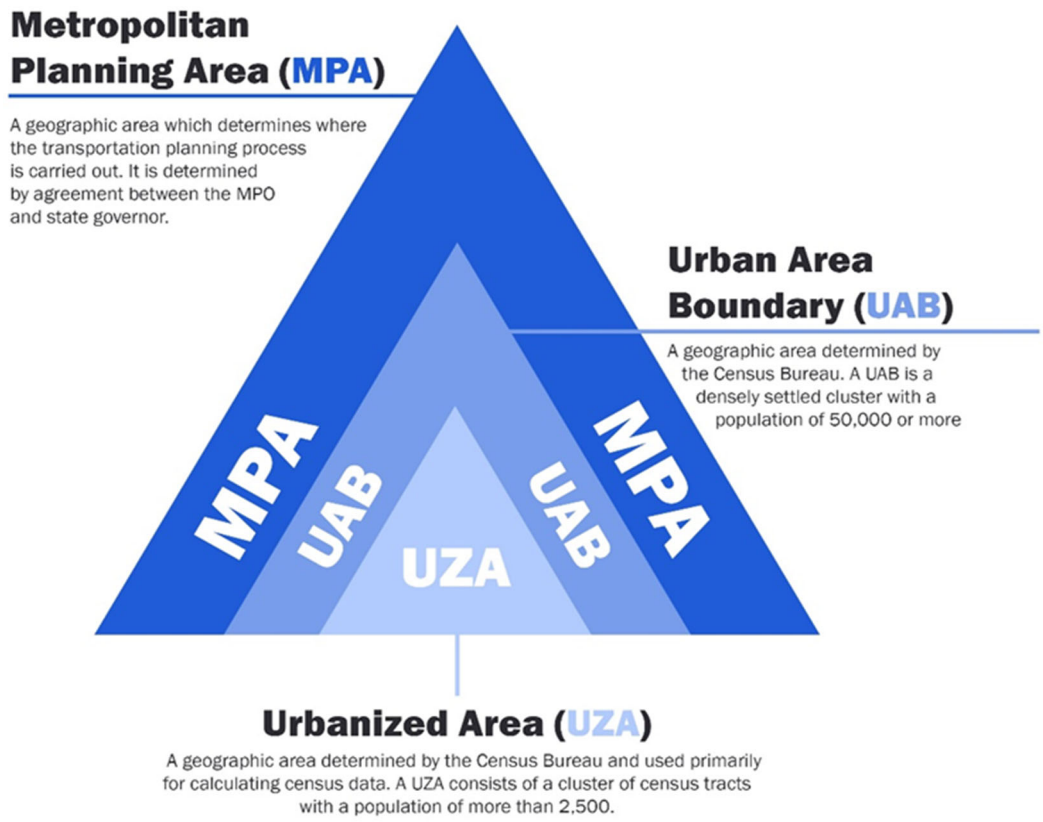
3C

COMPREHENSIVE
CONTINUOUS
COORDINATED

As subrecipients of federal formula and discretionary funds, MPOs must adhere to both state and federal requirements for MTP updates.

MPA BOUNDARY

Figure 2: Relationship of MPA to UZA



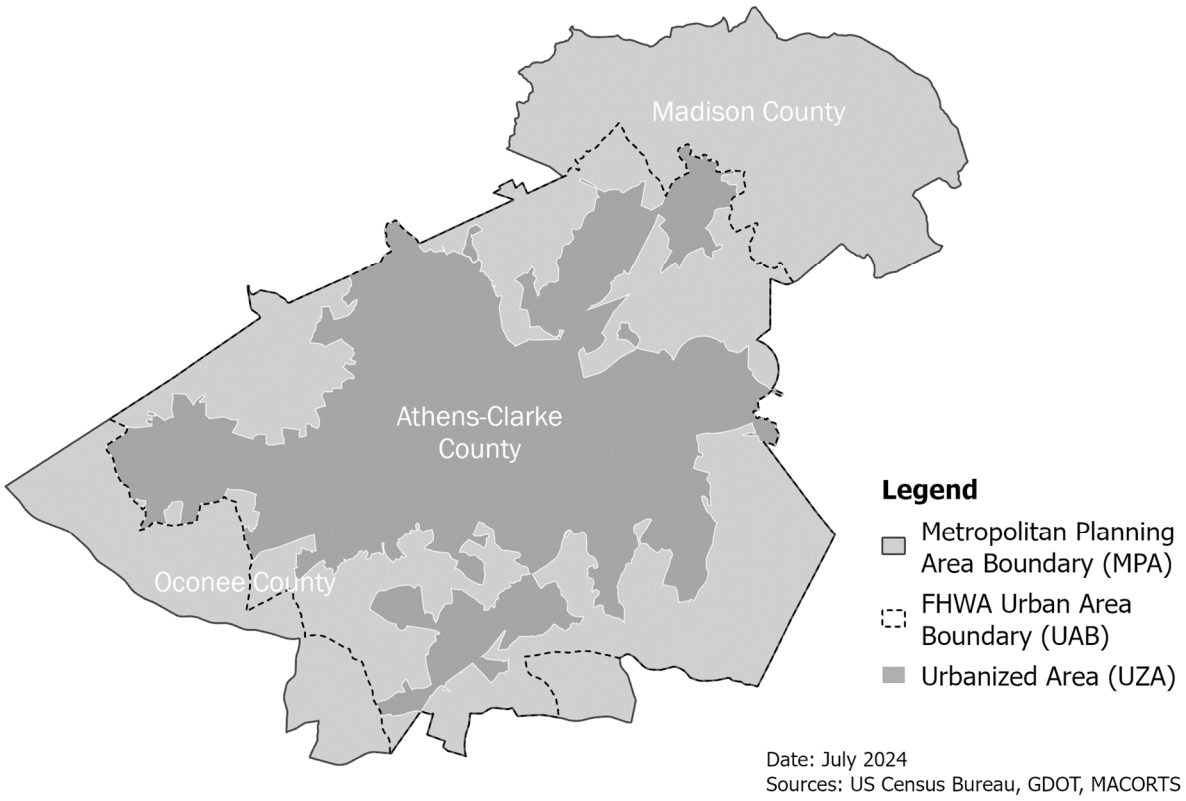


Figure 3: MACORTS MPA Boundary

The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary refers to the geographic area in which the metropolitan transportation planning process must be carried out. The boundary is determined in agreement by the MPO and the Governor, through the MOU.

By law, the Metropolitan Planning Area, at a minimum, must encompass the existing urbanized area as defined by the most recent Census and the contiguous area(s) likely to become urbanized within the 20-year forecast covered by the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

The Metropolitan Planning Area boundary is reviewed and updated as necessary after each Census by the MPO in collaboration with GDOT. The current MPA for MACORTS consists of Athens-Clarke County, and portions of Oconee, Madison, Oglethorpe, and Jackson Counties.

The MACORTS planning process is administered by a Policy Committee comprised of elected officials from Athens-Clarke County, Oconee County, Madison County and decision-makers from partner agencies. A Technical Committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Policy Committee ensuring techical accuracy for deliverables and program actions.

MACORTS Vision

The MACORTS area encompasses a broad geography and communities with varied interests but a shared mission of improved transportation in the region. The transportation system in the region is responsible for moving people and goods efficiently and safely within a system with finite financial resources. The MTP establishes goals and objectives that support the local, state, regional, and federal priorities and the collective transportation vision.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The MACORTS member jurisdictions each bring their unique perspectives and visions for their communities into a collective Vision for this MTP. Vision statements from each member county are shared below to demonstrate this shared perspective.

Protection of the natural environment is a widely shared value amongst the MACORTS members. communities. Whether resulting policies are aimed at guiding urban growth or point to sustainable transportation systems, it is evident that MACORTS citizens place a high value on nature!

ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY VISION STATEMENT, 2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

"While Athens has an established music and arts scene and close ties with the state's flagship university, in recent decades the city has evolved into the economic driver for Northeast Georgia. Health care, manufacturing, tourism and small businesses are now tightly woven into the fabric of Athens, giving the Classic City a diverse population and economy.

Despite the challenges associated with growth and change, Athens-Clarke County remains steadfast in its commitment to improve the health, equity and prosperity for all residents and to preserve our natural and cultural resources. We also recognize that our community expects a responsive government that follows a collaborative and open process of public decision-making.

The Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision for our future. This Plan guides decisions on land use, transportation, and county investments in parks and open space, transit, utilities, and other public infrastructure and services. The Plan reflects our commitment to proactively manage and embrace growth while maintaining our core values of race and social equity, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and community connectedness."

MADISON COUNTY VISION STATEMENT, 2022-2042 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

"Madison County is a dynamic community that enjoys strong ties to the surrounding region while preserving its own charm, style, and pace. The citizens' vision focuses on the desire to maintain the county's rural and natural qualities by preserving agriculture and environmental resources. Industry and business growth, infrastructure, and residential development should be directed into cities and other planned development nodes, thus allowing economic growth that can support services needed by residents. Madison County will be a place where citizens can live and work and take pride in their community."

OCONEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT, STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2024

Mission: Provide the highest quality services in a fiscally responsible manner to promote the health, safety, and general welfare of all Oconee citizens.

Vision: An engaged community with world-class schools, thriving commercial sectors, vibrant town centers, high-quality residential housing and diverse amenities, and the preservation of rural life.

ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

A Stakeholder Committee comprised of members of the communities within the MACORTS region was convened to provide guidance and to serve as project ambassadors. A technical subcommittee was also formed to provide technical expertise on the process and outcomes of the plan. As an early part of the engagement process, these members were asked to reflect on the goals of the MTP and prioritize them within the context of the 2050 MTP. Safety and security were identified as the top priority. Committee members also recognized the significant growth that has occurred within the region since the previous MTP and highlighted the importance of the relationship between the growth that a place experiences and context sensitive transportation accessibility and options. The prioritized 2050 MTP goals are shown in the following list.

PRIORTIZATION CRITERIA:

1. Safety and Security
2. Multimodal Connectivity
3. Transit
4. Enhance Land Use
5. Context Sensitive Mobility
6. Environment/Quality of Life
7. Equity
8. Reliability/Resiliency
9. Economic Vitality
10. System Preservation and Maintenance
11. System Management and Operation
12. Travel and Tourism

TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE

STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Goals

The establishment of Goals and Objectives is a collaborative process that involves all stakeholders involved in the MPO planning process, including federal oversight agencies, state agencies, local government, and the public. Goals are established through public and stakeholder input and then reviewed against existing federal, state, and local goals and performance targets. This process ensures that there is adequate input from the traveling public while also making sure that established goals are compliant with the federal and state visions and regulatory requirements for the transportation planning process.

Objectives are actionable initiatives that represent the way in which goals are implemented across capital infrastructure investments and transportation planning policy. Objectives can serve to forward multiple goals, as many of the identified goals overlap.

Goal 1: Safety

Establishing a safe and accessible transportation system for both motorized and non-motorized users is a vital goal of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Federal and state oversight agencies have established metrics for measuring roadway safety, as well as principles for guiding capital investment strategies. In reviewing existing goals and measures of effectiveness, achieving compliance with federal and state performance measures and addressing the safety needs identified by the public and stakeholders was a high priority. The following actionable objectives were established to achieve this goal.

SAFETY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure existing infrastructure is in a good state of repair.
- Identify and improve areas of conflict or deficiencies in the transportation system.
- Reduce the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries across all modes of travel.
- Improve multi-modal connectivity and non-motorized user safety.
- Identification of intersection safety improvement projects.

Figure 4: FHWA Safe System Approach

Goal 2: Resiliency

Resiliency is ensuring that infrastructure is capable of not only withstanding but also adapting to severe conditions, such as tornadoes, flooding, or other weather events. Maintaining a resilient transportation system ensures that in times of disturbance vital services and users can reach their destinations.

RESILIENCY OBJECTIVES

- Consultation with emergency management and stormwater management agencies on infrastructure projects.
- Ensuring infrastructure is in a good state of repair and compliant with state resiliency guidelines.
- Identifying infrastructure projects within the vicinity of flood zones, waterways, and other natural resources.

Figure 5: Steps in Resiliency Process

Source Climate.gov

Goal 3: System Efficiency

An efficient transportation system ensures the timely and safe movement of people, goods, and services throughout the planning area. To ensure efficiency, deficient areas of the transportation system and transportation infrastructure are identified and alternative solutions to overcome conflict areas are developed. System efficiency enables the transportation system to meet all other goals established. Level of service (LOS) is one metric that is utilized to determine infrastructure efficiency, however, other qualitative metrics such as stakeholder and public feedback are also utilized. System efficiency objectives include the following:

DEFINITIONS

LOS: Level of Service indicates how effectively a roadway is serving vehicle traffic. Based upon demand vs vehicle capacity.

LOS A = Free Flow

LOS D = Acceptable

LOS F = Failing

A B C D E F

Figure 6: Level of Service Defined

SYSTEM EFFICIENCY OBJECTIVES

- Identify system deficiencies and conflict areas through quantitative data analysis and qualitative public and stakeholder input.
- Support and develop multi-modal improvements that enable the traveling public to travel efficiently across and between modes of travel.
- Coordinate with regional partners and agencies to improve transportation options.
- Coordination with local agencies to ensure future land use development is complemented by transportation priorities.

Goal 4: Accessibility and Equity

The transportation system should exist to serve all members of the traveling public, in an accessible, equitable, and safe fashion. Infrastructure should exist that ensures all modes of transit are physically and economically accessible to the public. Policy decisions, such as education and outreach, should also be implemented to ensure the transportation system reaches vulnerable and historically disadvantaged populations.

ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUITY OBJECTIVES

- Ensure Title VI, Environmental Justice, and Limited English Proficiency policies are properly maintained, updated, and implemented into the transportation planning process.
- Regularly update and maintain public outreach and educational materials.
- Identify populations underserved by existing transportation infrastructure and develop alternatives to encourage accessibility.
- Ensure the development of new transit infrastructure is accessible.
- Implement processes that increase the accessibility of information regarding the transportation system.
- Prioritize projects that ensure accessibility of pedestrian, transit, and bicycle infrastructure.

Goal 5: Environmental Stewardship

Related to resiliency, environmental stewardship is the proper maintenance and protection of natural resources through sustainable infrastructure and policy. This goal also includes the preservation of existing natural resources, through the identification and cataloging of transportation projects within their vicinity.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OBJECTIVES

- Ensure infrastructure development incorporates sustainability principles and is resilient to climate-related disasters.
- Encourage the development of alternative energy and electric vehicle infrastructure and technologies.
- Coordinate with municipal agencies to ensure the continued preservation of natural resources and conservation areas.
- Invest in the further development of active transportation infrastructure and greenways and trails.

Goal 6: Connectivity

Connectivity enables the various modes of transportation to provide effective regional and inter-county methods of transportation. Utilizing various forms of transportation and confirming that they are interlinked and complementary is paramount to ensuring proper connectivity of the transportation system.

CONNECTIVITY OBJECTIVES

- Recognizing the stated desire for connectivity to metro Atlanta, in particular a passenger rail line from Athens to Atlanta.
- Maintaining and improving upon multi-modal infrastructure and identifying gaps within the existing system.
- Enabling the safe and accessible use of non-motorized transportation infrastructure and identifying expansion opportunities.
- Providing accessible information and education on transportation and transit modes and route and trail information to the public.

Goal 7: Economic Development

The safe, efficient movement of people, goods, and services promotes regional economic development and benefits a variety of industries. In particular, access to employment centers and freight traffic are two major components of the transportation system that are tied to this goal. The transportation planning process should seek to benefit businesses through the maintenance of a robust multi-modal transportation system that enables investment into the region.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

- Identifying and addressing congestion and conflict points in the transportation system that impact the movement of freight.
- Enabling connectivity to regional employment centers through infrastructure investment and improvements.
- Providing efficient multi-modal transportation options to places of work and commercial hubs.
- Analyzing new technologies, such as alternative energy and autonomous vehicles, which can promote the efficient movement of goods and services.

Goal 8: Enhance Land Use

Land use and the development of land have a significant impact on the transportation system. It can dictate increases or decreases in demand, shifts in demand by mode of transportation, and impacts on transportation infrastructure. It is important that the vision for the MPO transportation system be complementary to existing and future land use goals, and that the two are coordinated in achieving the same vision for the region.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

- Ensure that transportation goals are in line with adopted land use goals in all three counties.
- Identify areas of growth and development and future demand through tools such as the Traffic Demand Model.
- Support the existing desire for Transit Orientated Developments (TOD) within the planning area.
- Coordinate with local planning agencies and establish cooperative processes for inter-agency communication.

Goal 9: Operational Efficiency

Ensuring the efficiency of the management and operations of the transportation system is a major concern in minimizing congestion and project delays. The planning process should seek to minimize deficiencies and ensure that processes are continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive.

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY OBJECTIVES

- Minimize project delays through proactive planning and cooperative processes with other agencies.
- Incorporate the use of new technologies such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Maximize the efficiency of the transportation system through the reduction of congestion.

Goal 10: Travel & Tourism

Travel and Tourism should be enhanced by the transportation system, ensuring that visitors can efficiently make it to their desired destinations. Transportation infrastructure should also not only enhance, but attract tourism, through enabling accessible and enhanced transportation options for the region.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM OBJECTIVES

- Promote transportation investments that benefit regional connectivity and access to the area.
- Support initiatives that enable regional access and connectivity to public airports.
- Ensure that transportation infrastructure enables the tourism industry and visitor access to the transportation system.
- Promote the connection between the existing greenway network and ecotourism opportunities.
- Ensure the transportation system is accessible through the provision of visitor information and educational materials.

The following table provides an overview of how the Federal, State, and Regional goals support one another to meet legislative requirements for the MTP.

Table 2: Federal, State, and Regional Goals Matrix

National Planning Factors	National Goal	State Goal (GDOT Focus Areas)	MTP 2050 Goal
Economic Vitality: Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency;	*Freight Movement and Economic Vitality:* To improve the national freight network, strengthen the ability of rural communities to access national and international trade markets, and support regional economic development.	*Streamline Processes and improve access to opportunities for small businesses.*	*MACORTS Goal 7: Economic Development*
Safety: Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;	*Safety:* To achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads.	*Put Georgians' Safety First through innovation and technology.*	*MACORTS Goal 1: Safety and Security*

National Planning Factors	National Goal	State Goal (GDOT Focus Areas)	MTP 2050 Goal
Security: Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users;	*No applicable goal*	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 1: Safety and Security*
Accessibility: Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight;	*No applicable goal*	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 4: Accessibility and Equity*
Environmental Sustainability: Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns;	*Environmental Sustainability:* To enhance the performance of the transportation system while protecting and enhancing the natural environment.	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 5: Environmental Stewardship*
Connectivity: Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight;	*No applicable goal*	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 6: Connectivity*

National Planning Factors	National Goal	State Goal (GDOT Focus Areas)	MTP 2050 Goal
Efficiency: Promote efficient system management and operation	*Reduced Project Delivery Delays:* To reduce project costs, promote jobs and the economy, and expedite the movement of people and goods by accelerating project completion through eliminating delays in the project development and delivery process, including reducing regulatory burdens and improving agencies' work practices.	*Utilize Performance-based Management, Innovation, and P3* to deliver GDOT's mission responsibly and more efficiently.	*MACORTS Goal 9: Operational Efficiency*
Preservation: Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system;	*Systems Reliability:* To improve the efficiency of the surface transportation system	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 3: System Efficiency and Preservation*
Resiliency: Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation	*No applicable goal*	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 2: Resiliency*
Travel and Tourism: Enhance travel and tourism.	*No applicable goal*	*No applicable goal*	*MACORTS Goal 9: Travel and Tourism*

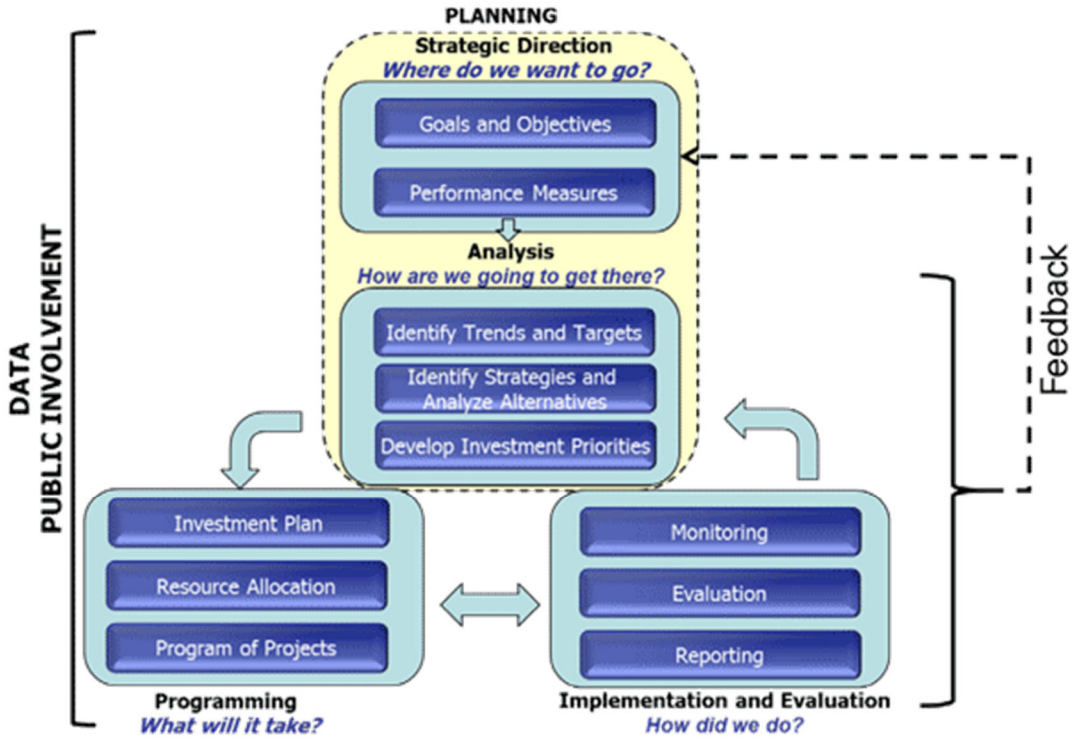
Performance Management

PERFORMANCE-BASED PLANNING

Performance-based planning and programming (PBPP) is a strategic approach to performance management of the transportation planning process. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act established performance-based planning approaches as a federal requirement for MPOs engaging in the transportation planning process and was continued in subsequent transportation legislation. This approach to planning includes a series of strategies and activities, including the 3C (Cooperative, Continuing, and Comprehensive) process, which provides programming and guidance through the development of major planning documents (such as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan) and processes.

The figure below demonstrates the framework for performance-based planning. The core of the process is based upon establishing a strategic direction, a vision or goal, and then setting quantitative metrics to measure the success in achieving this goal. The planning analysis stage of this process focuses on the development of actionable strategies and priorities that support the attainment of the identified and adopted planning goals.

Figure 7: FHWA Performance Based Planning and Programming



Source: Federal Highway Administration, Performance-Based Planning and Programming Guidebook, September 2013

Public involvement is a consistent focus throughout the process and assists in the establishment of the general strategic direction. From this vision, policymakers and agencies can make decisions on investments, resource allocation, and project programming. A system of project prioritization is established, which is applied to documents such as the TIP/STIP and the MTP fiscally constrained project list. Project prioritization takes into consideration the established community goals, public input, technical advisory input, and fiscal constraints.

Implementation and Evaluation occurs simultaneously with programming efforts and is an on-going review process. This process includes three major activities:

- **Monitoring:** Collection of data throughout and following the implementation process.
- **Evaluation:** Analyzing data to identify the efficiency of implemented processes.
- **Reporting:** Relay of data analysis and outcomes to the public, oversight agencies, and policymakers.

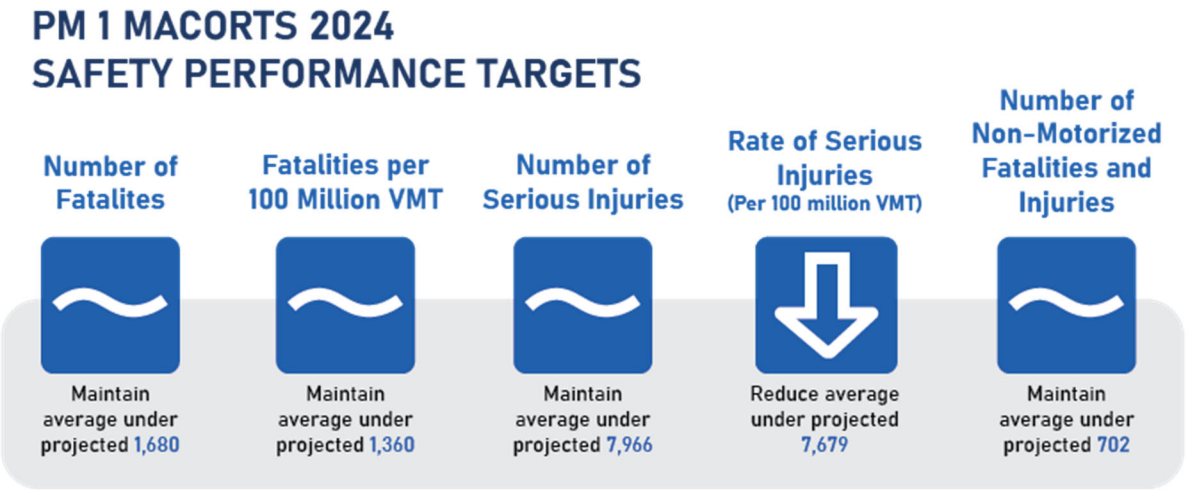
Performance Measures are metrics established by the federal government to measure the performance of the transportation system in specific areas. These measures were adopted under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) and continued in subsequent legislation. Each performance measure establishes quantitative targets on which states and MPOs must report. require Failure to meet state targets can result in a reallocation of funding to assist an MPO in meeting annual targets. Performance Measures are updated annually and amended into the MTP. Annual updates can be found in Appendix B of this report.

Performance Measure 1

Performance Measure 1 (PM 1) was established to provide performance targets for highway safety. The metrics are set annually and are based upon 5-year rolling averages for each of the five safety measures. The five safety measures established under this rule are the following:

- Number of fatalities
- Fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
- Number of serious injuries
- Rate of serious injuries (per 100 million VMT)
- Number of non-motorized fatalities and number of non-motorized serious injuries combined.

Federal legislation allows MPOs to develop and adopt their own goals and targets, or to join, via Memorandum of Agreement, GDOT's Statewide targets. On January 10, 2024, the MACORTS Policy Committee adopted the following targets for the 2024 Safety Performance measures for each of the



above categories.

The Safety Performance Report and annual targets are updated annually and can be found in Appendix B of this report.

Performance Measure 2

Performance Measure 2 (PM 2) was adopted with the goal of maintaining roadways and bridges in a good state of repair and sets forth metrics to evaluate the condition of an MPOs roadways. Metrics for PM 2 are set as 2-year and 4-year targets and are adopted annually.

This performance measure differentiates roadways on the Interstate System and non-Interstate National Highway System (NHS) roads. Infrastructure is rated as being either in poor condition (major investment is required) or good condition (no major investment is needed). The percentage of pavements and bridges that are in good condition and poor condition are then utilized as the performance metric to measure the state of repair of roadways within an MPO boundary.

The methodology for evaluating the state of repair of infrastructure is based upon protocol and frequency established by the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS). Safety inspections evaluate the state of pavement and bridge structures, forming a condition assessment and then documenting this data for reporting.

The table below demonstrates the adopted MACORTS 2023 PM 2 Performance Targets for bridge structures. The 2-year and 4-year targets were set separately for bridge level of service. These targets are scheduled for review and, if needed, adjusted in 2024.

Table 3: Bridge Level of Service

Performance Measure	2-Year Target	4-Year Target
Bridge Structures in Poor Condition	*≤10% (NHS) in Poor Condition*	*≤10% (NHS) in Poor Condition*
Bridge Structures in Good Condition	*≥50% (NHS) in Good Condition*	*≥50% (NHS) in Good Condition*

The following table lists targets adopted as part of the MACORTS 2023 PM2 Performance Targets for pavement condition. The 2-year and 4-year targets for all performance measures were set to be the same. As with the performance targets set for bridge level of service, these targets will be reviewed and adjusted in 2024 by GDOT.

Table 4: Pavement Level of Service

Performance Measure	Target
Interstate NHS in Poor Condition	*≤5% (NHS) in Poor Condition*
Interstate NHS in Good Condition	*≥50% (NHS) in Good Condition*
Non-Interstate NHS in Poor Condition	*≤12% (NHS) in Poor Condition*
Non-Interstate NHS in Good Condition	*≥40% (NHS) in Good Condition*

Performance Measure 3

Performance Measure 3 (PM 3), System Performance, was established on February 17, 2017, by the FHWA. PM 3 measures the system efficiency of the National Highway System, the movement of freight, and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ). Metrics for this performance measure focus on how effectively traffic is moving through the transportation system, as well as the efficiency of the movement of goods and freight. This data enables agencies to identify congestion problems and other issues of capacity across the transportation system.

There are six metrics that are used to set targets for PM 3 and overall transportation system performance. Each metric has a 2-year and 4-year target which is set, adopted, and revised as needed on an annual basis. The six metrics are as follows:

- Percent of Person-miles traveled on the Interstate that are reliable.
- Percent of Person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are reliable.
- Truck Travel Time Reliability Index (TTTR)
- Annual Hours of Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) Per Capita

- Percent Non-Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Travel
- Total Emissions Reduction

The following table provides the MACORTS adopted targets for PM 3, with 2-year and 4-year targets.

Table 5: PM 3 Targets

Performance Measure	2-Year Target	4-Year Target
Percent of Person-Miles Traveled on the Interstate that are Reliable	73.9%	68.4%
Percent Person-miles traveled on the non-Interstate NHS that are Reliable	87.3%	85.3%
Truck Travel Time Reliability Index (TTTR)	1.62	1.65
Annual Hours of Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED) Per Capita	23.7 hours	27.2 hours
Percent of Non-Single Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) Travel	22.7%	22.7%
Total Emissions Reduction	VOC: 157.00 kg/day NOx: 510.900 kg/day	VOC: 257.100 kg/day NOx: 904.200 kg/day

PM 3

Person-Miles: The amount of miles a singular person / occupant traveled.

Truck Travel Time Reliability Index (TTTR): Metric utilized to calculate the reliability of the movement of freight.

Peak Hours: Peak travel hours; typically, 6:00 – 10:00 AM

Peak Hour Excessive Delay (PHED): Measurement of delay based on vehicle travel time at peak hour.

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC): Gases that are emitted from vehicle emissions.

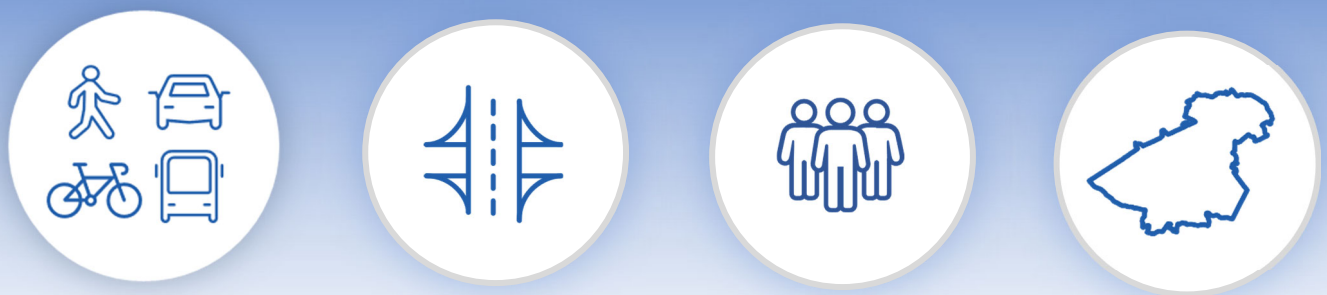
Nitrogen Oxides (NOx): A family of chemicals found in vehicle emissions

Existing and Future Conditions

This chapter of the MTP provides a more detailed summary of the existing and future characteristics of the MACORTS study area, including demographic and employment statistics and the current multimodal transportation system within the community.

The information summarized in this chapter focuses on key findings that contribute to the needs assessment and MTP recommendations. The comprehensive Existing Conditions technical report included the following elements can be found in Appendix C.

- ✓ Past and Present Studies
- ✓ Local Comprehensive Plans
- ✓ Demographic Data (2020 US Census and America Community Survey (ACS)
  - Population
  - Households
  - Employment
- ✓ Roadway Network
  - Functional Classification
  - Level of Service / Volume to Capacity
- ✓ Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities
- ✓ Transit Facilities
- ✓ Rail, Freight, and Airport Infrastructure
- ✓ Crash Statistics
- ✓ Complete streets



EXISTING POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

The region is home to a number of diverse communities, ranging in character and including urban, suburban, and rural population centers. Growth has been consistent across all three counties since the previous MTP, following the trend that most metropolitan areas of comparable size in Georgia have been exhibiting. Economic growth has also been a characteristic of the area, with the relocation and establishment of new employment centers and the increase in the movement of goods and services. Major legacy employers, such as the University of Georgia, also report consistent growth.

Figure 8: Employment Overview

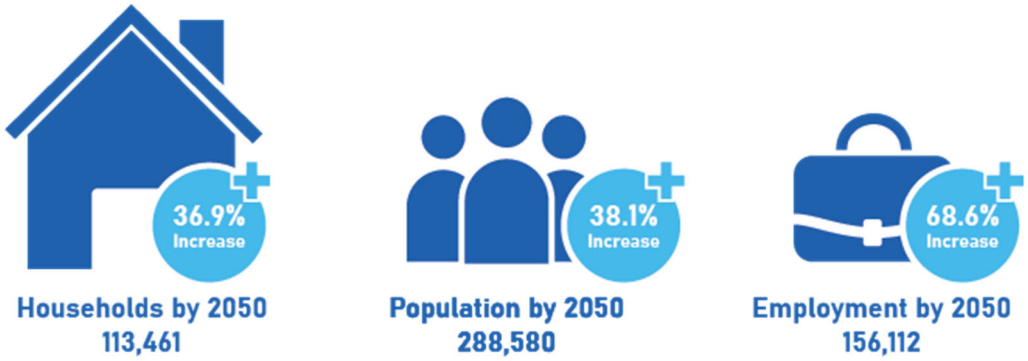
Athens remains a major population, economic, and social center as the highest-density community within the planning area. Within Athens-Clarke County are major regional employment and shopping centers, with particular focus placed upon the educational and healthcare industries. Northern Oconee County also possesses a number of office and research parks and regional employment centers that are likely to continue to grow and expand. Madison County is the least dense, most rural of the three counties, however it has experienced the highest percentage rate of growth since 2015.

Educational Services, Healthcare, and Social Assistance represent the largest industry by share of employment in the region. The presence of the University of Georgia campus, as well as various office and research parks in Athens-Clarke County and Oconee County contributes to this large percentage share of employment. Retail is another significant source of employment as retail centers, particularly "big box" stores and shopping centers, can be found along most major corridors in the region such as SR 72 and SR 76.

FUTURE POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT

To understand the trend of development and growth, a future year of 2050 is projected for population, households, and employment figures. These projections provide a more accurate picture of the location and type of growth the MACORTS area will experience over the next several decades.

Figure 9: Future Population and Employment



The regional MACORTS population is projected to increase 38.1% by 2050, to a total of 288,580 (including Athens-Clarke, Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe counties). Oconee County is projected to have the largest increase in population, with an 85.5% increase. The number of households is also projected to increase by 36.9% by 2050, with Oconee County showing the highest projected increase with an 84.6% increase. The projected total number of households in the MACORTS area by 2050 is 113,461.

Employment is also expected to rise by 2050, with a 68.6% increase to a total of 156,112 employees. Madison, Oconee, and Oglethorpe counties all show an increase of 120% or more based on individual county employment projection increases. These projections demonstrate that the current identified growth trends in population and employment will continue at a steady rate.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

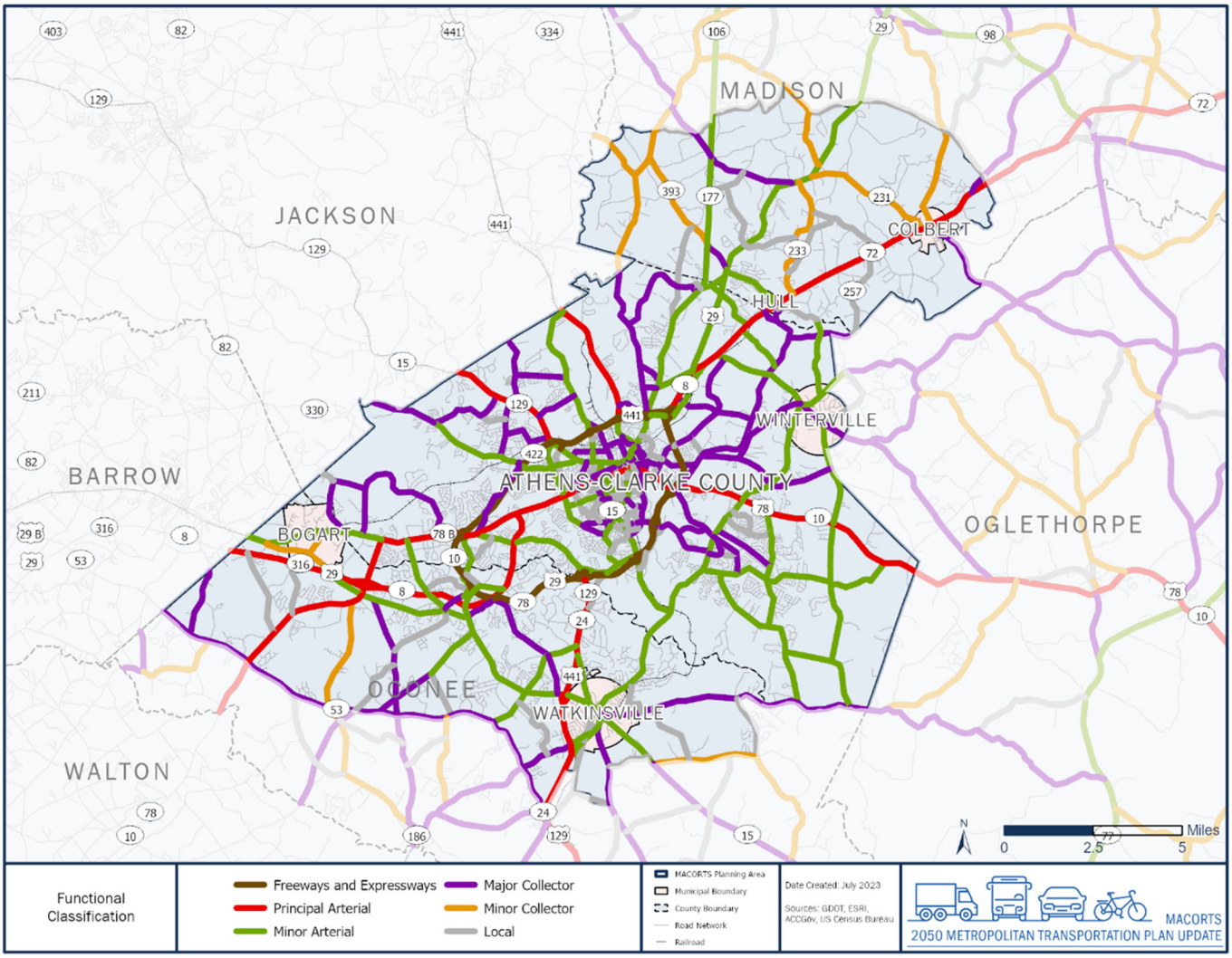
All modes of the existing transportation network were surveyed and identified, drawing upon information from previous plans and documents. Producing an overview of the system as it exists is important for recognizing areas of conflict and opportunities for improvement

Roadways

The MACORTS area has robust system of roadways that facilitate the movement of people and goods within and through the region. Functional Classification was utilized to categorize the capacity and service of major roadways within the region. The State Route 10 Loop (SR10) and 316 are major high-capacity roadways, and the only roadways categorized as a freeways within the MACORTS area. Other high-capacity roads include State Route 72 (SR 72), US 441, and US29, US 129, and US 78.

The map below displays the functional classification of major roadways within the region. Arterial roadways provide many of the connections for longer commutes between the three counties. These roadways also constitute many of the major corridors within the region, where businesses, offices, and other places of employment are located.

Figure 10: Functional Classification



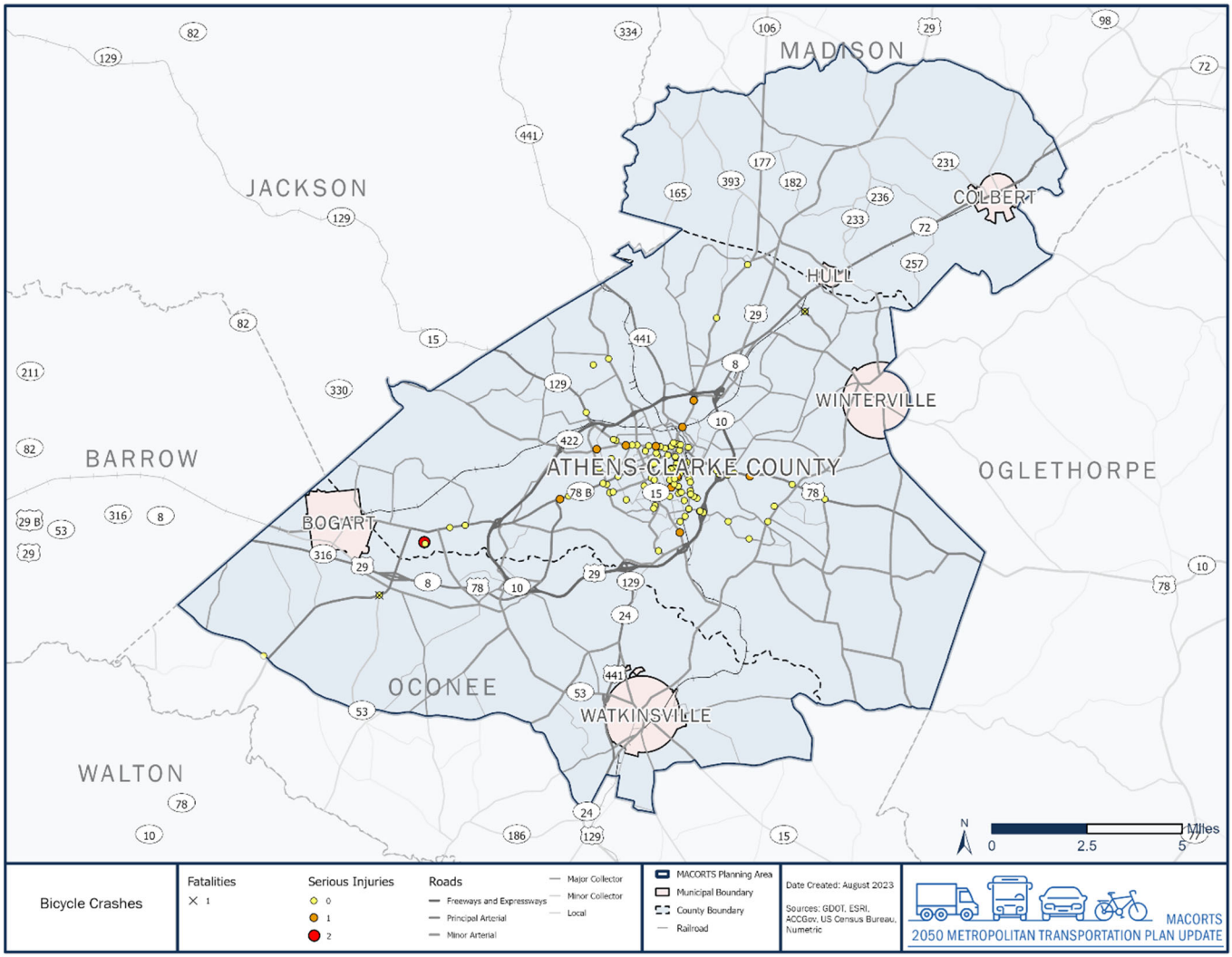
Bike / Pedestrian

The bicycle and pedestrian network consists of bicycle lanes, multi-use paths, trails, and sidewalks that benefit safe active, non-motorized transportation. The desire for a robust system of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure has been a consistent goal for all three countries of the MACORTS area, as referenced in the Athens-Clarke, Madison, and Oconee Comprehensive Plans. The Athens in Motion plan and the Athens-Clarke County Greenway Network Plan were both referenced in the review of the existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure network.

The existing bicycle infrastructure consists of bike lanes, off-road facilities, sharrows, and greenways. Many of the area's bicycle facilities are located within and around Downtown Athens, and span outward in order to connect residential areas to the downtown core. There are several existing gaps in the current system, primarily found in eastern Athens-Clarke County and along the county line between Athens-Clarke and Madison County.

The proximity of high-capacity roads, such as SR 10 Loop does pose a potential challenge to the further development of bicycle infrastructure. As safety and connectivity are both identified goals of the 2050 MTP, conflict areas between vehicles and active forms of transportation should be highlighted.

Figure 11: Bicycle Crashes



RAIL

Rail infrastructure in the MACORTS area consists of three major freight railways: the 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. The northern portion of the Southern Railway, which crosses into Jackson County, is operated by Norfolk Southern.

While demand for passenger rail exists, there is currently no existing passenger rail service within the MACORTS area. Both the GDOT 2021 Statewide Rail Plan and the Athens-Clarke County 2023 Comprehensive plan highlight the desire for passenger rail, particularly for regional connections between Athens and Atlanta.

TRANSIT

There are two major transit providers in the MACORTS area: Athens-Clarke County Transit (ACCT) and the University of Georgia Transit system. Both provide services within and around Athens.

Athens-Clarke County Transit is the primary public transit provider, with a network of fixed-route bus services that operate on 20 routes. These routes connect passengers to areas around Athens-Clarke County and to and from Downtown Athens. ACCT also serves portions of the University of Georgia campus. ACCT maintains a curb-to-curb paratransit service, which operates within one mile of a fixed-route service. The fixed-route bus service has been fare-free since the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The University of Georgia Transit system is a public system with the primary mission of serving the University of Georgia campus and enabling transportation between campus facilities. This system maintains 11 routes, with transit stops located around the university's campus. Ridership on the fixed-route service is fare-free, and open to all passengers regardless of affiliation with the University of Georgia.

AVIATION

Aviation is an important element for regional connectivity, and greatly supports the identified goal of enhancing travel and tourism. Currently, the MACORTS area has one public use airport: Ben Epps Airport (IATA: AHN) in Athens. The airport is located at 1010 Benn Epps Drive and is accessible via the Athens Bypass to Winterville Road. Increasing accessibility to the airport and ensuring roadway infrastructure is sufficient has been a consistent priority.

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, facilities include 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.

PROTECTED POPULATIONS

The planning process must be equitable, accessible, and transparent to people of all backgrounds, and take into account the needs of all population groups within the MACORTS area. As 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."*

Environmental Justice (EJ) refers to the process of identifying impacts on minority populations, as well as low-income populations and persons with disabilities. Title VI and EJ policies ensure that no one group of people is excluded from the planning process. It also ensures that the transportation system is equipped to serve the needs of the communities within the MACORTS area in an equitable manner.

This section identifies populations of individuals protected by Federal Legislation.

Minority Populations

AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION

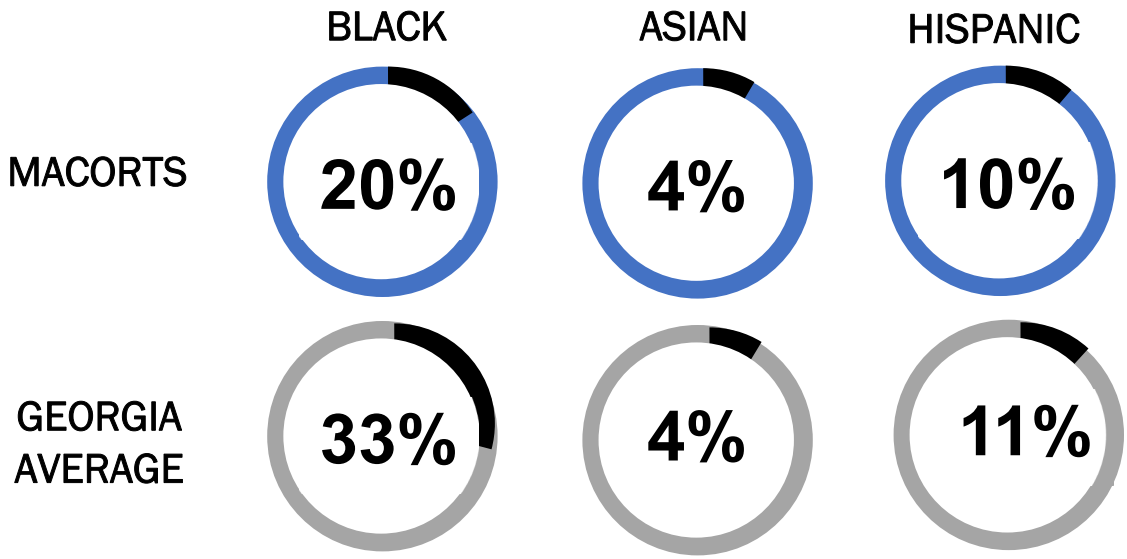
African American populations above the regional average of 20.4% are located in block groups around US 441 and northern Athens-Clarke County as well as Downtown Athens.

ASIAN POPULATION

Asian populations above the regional average of 4.0% are located in block groups around US 78 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

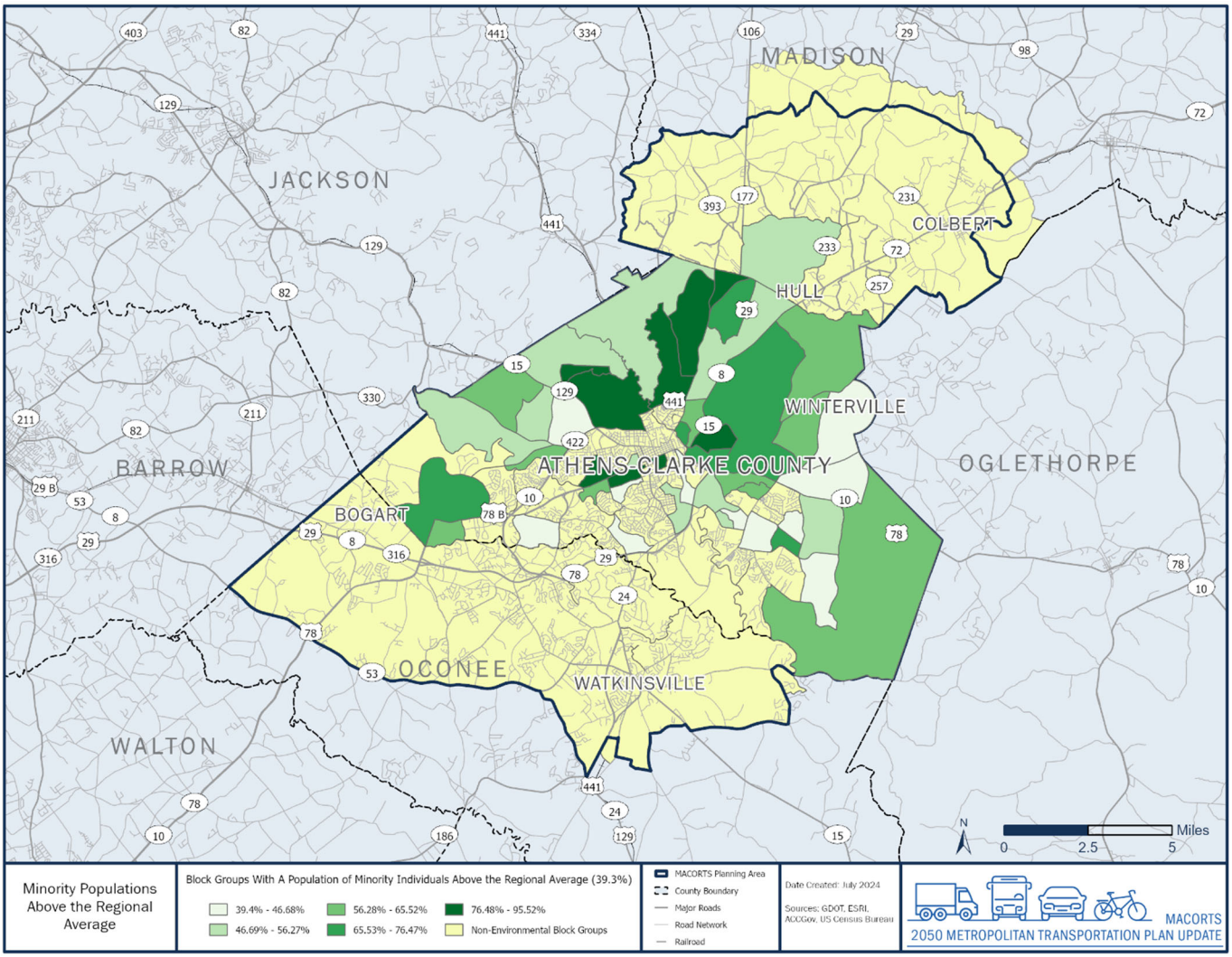
Hispanic/Latino populations above the regional average of 10.2% are located in block groups around US 29 and the area outside of the Hull community. The majority of these block groups are located in northern Athens-Clarke County and southern Madison County.



While the MACORTS region as a whole has a minority population consistent with or below the state average, the following map identifies concentrations of protected populations higher than the national average located within the study area.

Figure 12 provides a geographical reference to the locations of these concentrated populations.

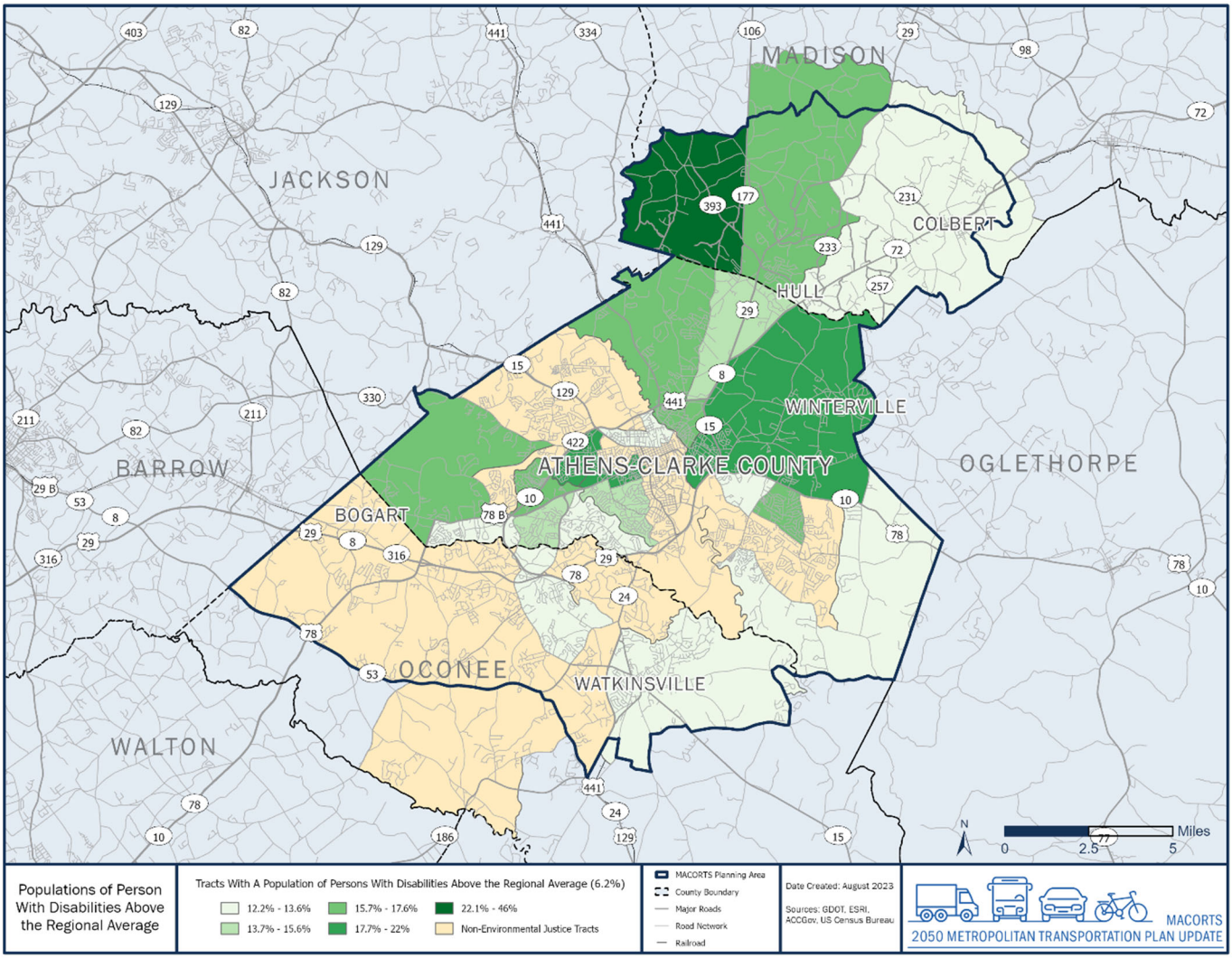
Figure 12: Minority Population Densities



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 portion of Madison County have the highest percentages of these populations per block group.

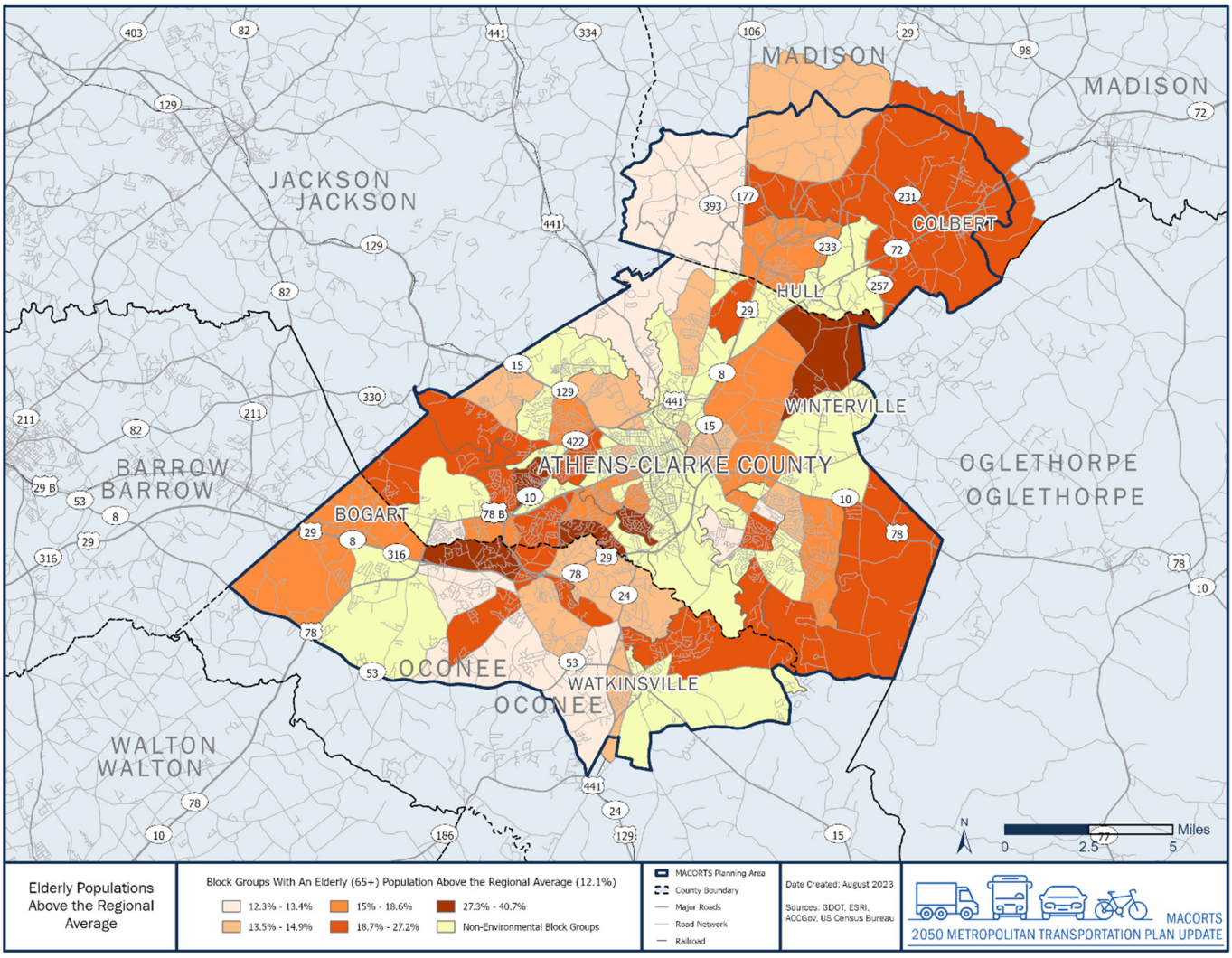
Figure 13: Persons with Disabilities



Senior 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.

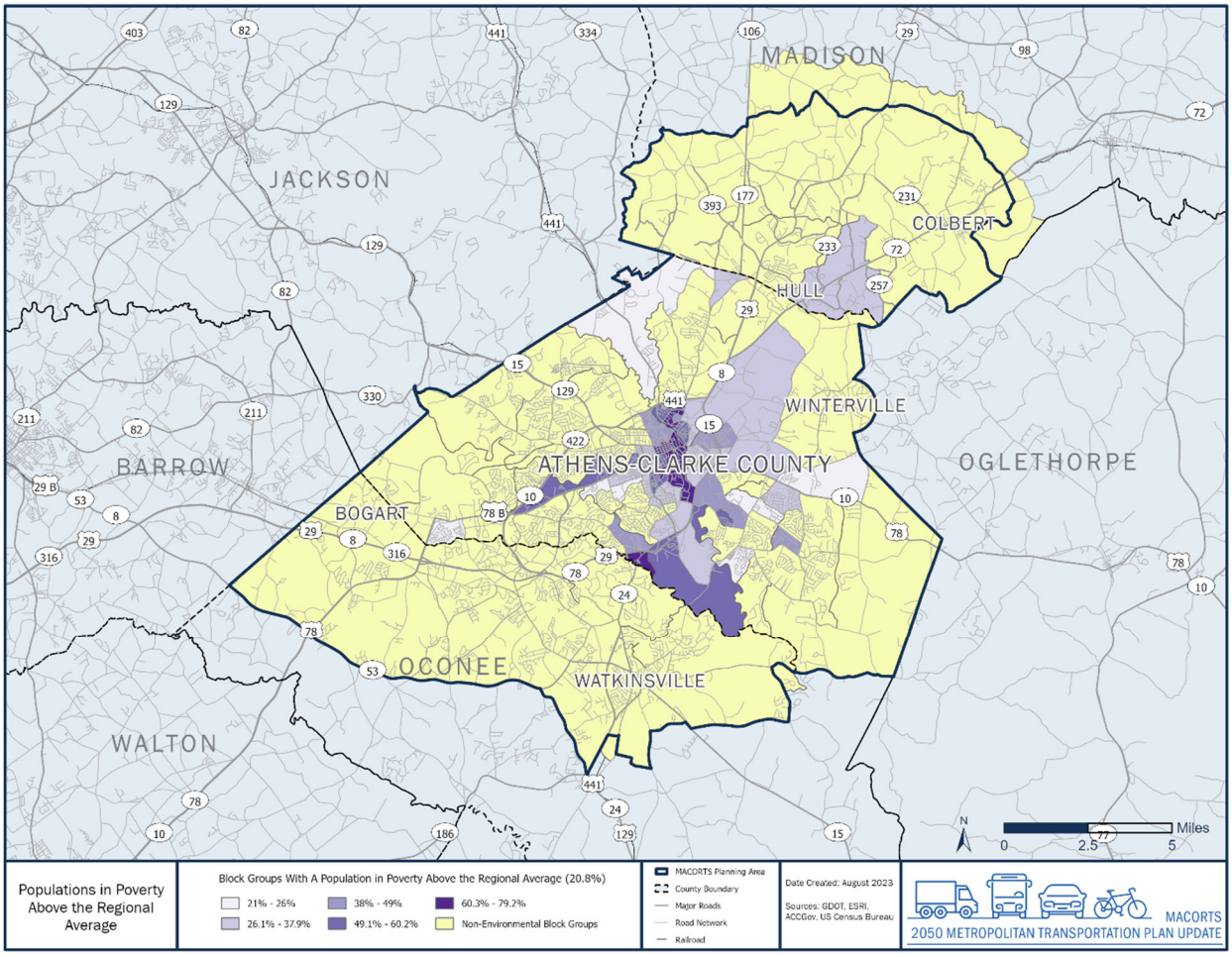
Figure 14: Senior Population Densities



Impoverished Populations

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.

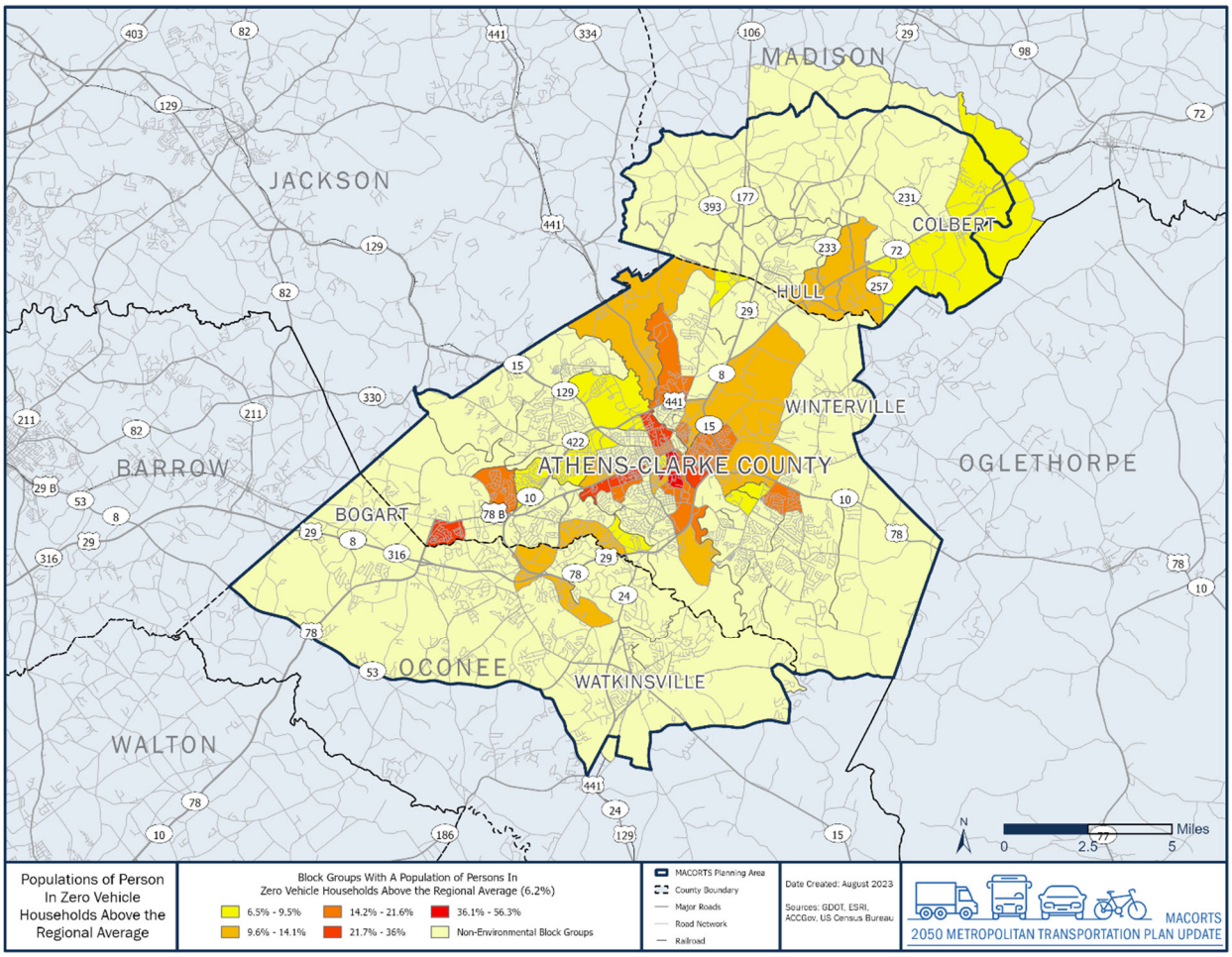
Figure 15: Impoverished Population Densities



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 16: Zero Vehicle Household Densities



1 NATIONAL LANDMARK

17 HISTORIC DISTRICTS

44 LOCAL LANDMARKS

2,098 REGISTERED HISTORIC RESOURCES

HISTORIC NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Identification and recognition of historic resources is important, as transportation infrastructure can impact sites and resources. Improvement to the transportation system can also serve to benefit these sites by increasing accessibility and connectivity, benefiting tourism to the region, as well as maintaining the region's unique character.

Utilizing the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Department's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) it was determined that Athens-Clarke County has the highest count of historic resources (2,093). In Madison County, the majority of the historic resources within the planning boundary are concentrated in the City of Colbert and the Colbert Historic District. There are no locally designated districts or landmarks within Colbert.

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.

NATURAL RESOURCES

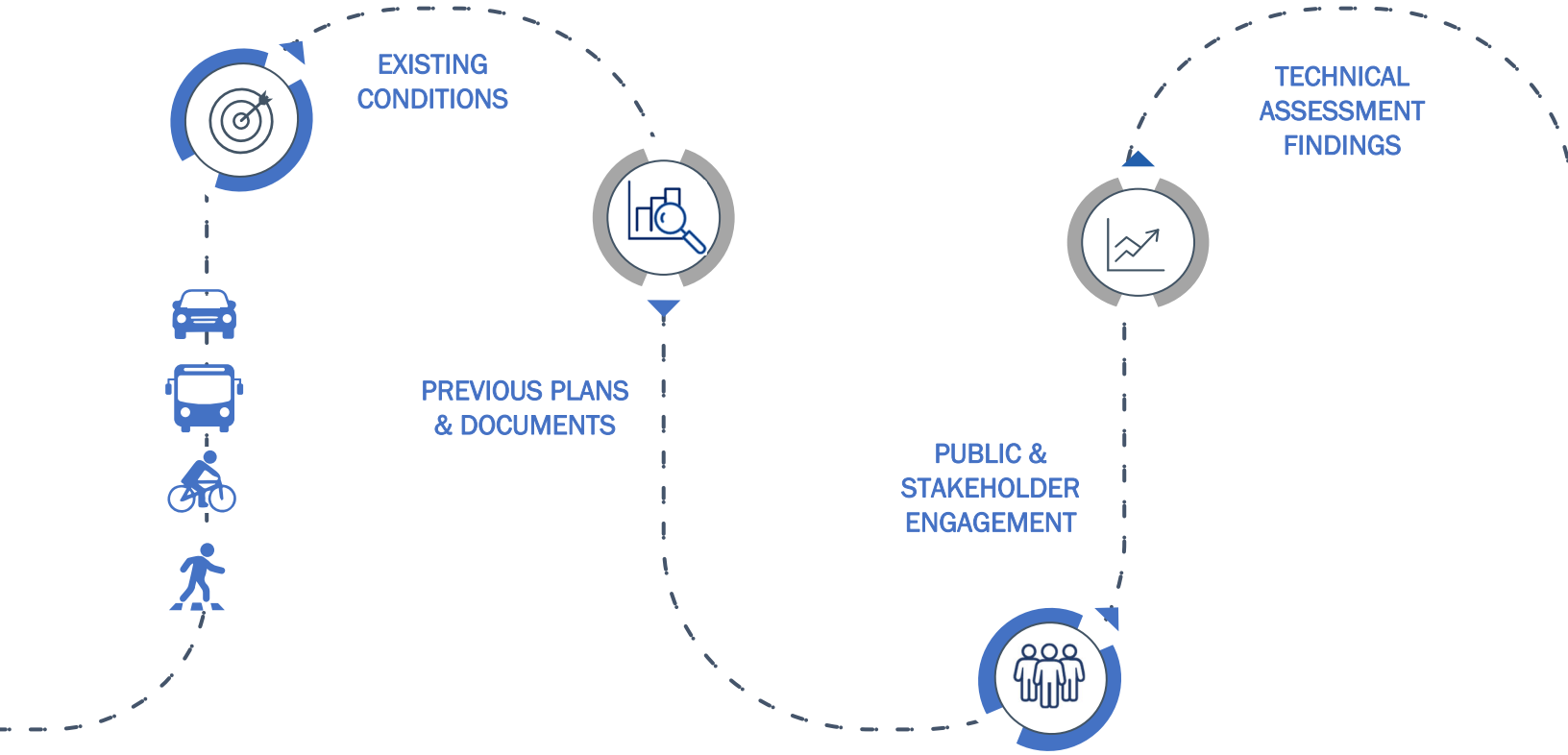
Surveying natural resources is an important step to ensuring that the transportation planning process is aligned with the identified goal of environmental stewardship. These resources are important to recognize and maintain to avoid potential adverse impacts from transportation infrastructure projects. Transportation infrastructure improvements and investments can also benefit natural resources, allowing easier access to parks, greenspaces, and other conservation sites.

Wetlands and flood zones are major resources that were identified during the planning process. 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.

- ✓ DESIGNATED WETLANDS
- ✓ FLOOD ZONES
- ✓ PROTECTED HABITATS

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment is a key feature of the MTP process that identifies specific transportation needs throughout the region. These needs are identified through recommendations of previous plans and documents, key findings of the existing and future conditions assessment, technical analysis using tools such as the Travel Demand Model, and public and stakeholder input.



The assessment includes a review of existing and future transportation model conditions, areas of safety concerns, equity considerations, and the identification of freight and multimodal needs across the multicounty region. This review considered and highlighted existing projects intended to address known needs and where applicable, identified new projects where other needs exist.

The following sections highlights the assessment components and the key findings identified.

Public and Stakeholder Engagement

The public and stakeholder engagement process began with the development of an engagement plan that identified strategies, resources, and key partners. The plan was developed within the framework of the MACORTS Participation Plan and incorporated best practices for meeting and exceeding federal and state requirements for engaging with Title VI, Environmental Justice, ADA, and Limited English Proficiency populations.

Members of the public and regional stakeholders were given opportunities throughout the MTP process to weigh in on issues, priorities, goals and objectives, and regional needs. The following section summarizes engagement tactics and key outcomes used to inform the needs assessment of the 2050 MTP. The full Public and Stakeholder Engagement technical memo can be found in Appendix D of the report.

MTP Stakeholders Committee

The stakeholder groups were identified through coordination with regional jurisdictions and consisted of members from the following groups:

- Athens-Clarke County
- Bike Athens
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Visit Athens
- Oconee County
- University of Georgia
- Athens Technical College
- ACC Aging
- Athens for Everyone
- Federal Highway Administration
- City of Winterville
- City of Bogart
- Georgia Bikes
- Oconee Schools
- Madison County
- Athens Housing
- MACORTS
- Athens-Clarke County Transit

The stakeholders gathered three times (January 1st, April 30th, and July 16th, 2024) during the process to discuss project needs and progress. At each meeting, a presentation was given and feedback was gathered from the participants. As needed, additional one on one meetings were held with stakeholders who desired to further understand the content and provide their feedback on the process. These interactions were critical to the development of the MTP and ensured its relevance to the region.

ENGAGE

- DIGITAL OUTREACH
- IN-PERSON MEETINGS
- NEWSLETTERS / FLYERS
- POP UP EVENTS
- ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAPPING & SURVEYS
- VIRTUAL MEETINGS

PUBLIC ENGAGMENT

Public input and involvement was carried out following the strategies defined in the MTP Engagement Plan and included combinations of traditional and technology-based methods. Key components of the engagement process included education, surveys and collection of input, and ongoing updates throughout the plan development.

The study team deployed the “meet the community where they are” approach to reduce barriers and encourage equitable engagement. In addition to meetings, members of the public were given opportunities to provide input at in-person “pop-up” style events at community events in spring of 2024. The following figure shows a project fact sheet used to educate members of the community about the study and encourage participation in the process.

An interactive prioritization exercise was conducted at public meetings to collect input and gain insight into community needs and priorities related to transportation.

Participants were allotted five tokens and asked to indicate the types of transportation projects they felt were most important. This exercise reflected one of the survey questions, and results were integrated into the aggregated priority ranking results.

The top five priority areas include:

1. Bicycle lanes and trails
2. Sidewalks
3. Transportation system maintenance
4. Traffic operations (i.e., turn lanes, signals, etc.)
5. Transit service

MACORTS

METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN | 2023 FACT SHEET

MACORTS' MISSION

Formed in 1969 to provide a transportation planning mechanism for the urbanized area, MACORTS is the conduit through which Federal transportation funds come to theurbanized area.

BACKGROUND

A Metropolitan Transportation Plan (or MTP) is the single-most important document produced by an MPO. It covers a **20-year planning horizon** and governs expenditures of federal and state highway funds. It includes **all modes** of transportation, including passenger and freight. MACORTS is currently developing their 2050 MTP, between 2023-2034

PROJECT ELEMENTS

- PROJECT MANAGEMENT PLAN
- PUBLIC-STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION
- MULTI-MODAL AND FREIGHT ANALYSIS
- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
- FINANCIAL ANALYSIS
- PLAN DEVELOPMENT AND DOCUMENTATION

PROJECT SCHEDULE

1. **PROJECT KICKOFF**
   March 2023
2. **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**
   August 2023
3. **30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT**
   August - September 2024
4. **OVERSIGHT AGENCY REVIEW**
   September 2024
5. **PLAN ADOPTION**
   October 2024

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In-person Engagement Results

In-person engagement allowed for members of the public to provide direct input and interact with the MTP project team. These interactions provided vital perspectives on the preference and understanding of conditions throughout the region. The project team interacted with over 100 community members during these events.

At community events, a project booth was set up. Each booth included a table with several project handouts, two large informational displays on the project background and upcoming engagement, an interactive prioritization exercise for all ages, tablets for a short-form survey, and giveaways.

Respondents provided feedback which resulted in the following key takeaways:

- Community members were highly supportive of enhanced multimodal infrastructure, including improved bicycle lanes, trails, and sidewalks. Projects to improve roadway aesthetics also proved popular.
- Improving traffic operations and transportation system maintenance received moderate support, as did expanded or enhanced transit service and improved regional highway infrastructure.
- New major roads, road widenings, and new heavy truck facilities were relatively unpopular.
- Some individuals provided specific feedback, which is noted below:
    - A need for more or improved sidewalk infrastructure, especially around schools and connecting to adjacent neighborhoods
    - The need for a four-way stop or roundabout at the intersection of Fowler Drive and Freeman Drive.
    - A desire for more roundabouts in general in residential areas.
    - A concern about safety on the overpasses along SR 316 undergoing reconstruction.
    - Safety concerns at the Jamestown Boulevard and Hog Mountain Road intersection
    - The need for a light to the left when exiting SR10 onto Tallassee Road.
    - Interest from multiple people in high-speed rail options for Athens.

Public Survey

A public survey was available over one month in spring of 2024 from February 5th to March 31st. This duration allowed for significant feedback to be gathered throughout the region, while also being supported by in-person events. The survey included interactive mapping and prioritization questions, as well as opportunities for unrestricted feedback.

The public survey was available in both English and Spanish and garnered responses in both languages. A detailed summary of the survey questions and responses can be found in Appendix D of this report.

321 TOTAL RESPONSES

15 HOME ZIP CODES

101 MAPPED ISSUES

93 UNIQUE COMMENTS

Responses were received from throughout the planning area, with the majority of respondents from Athens-Clarke and Oconee counties.

Survey results included the following key takeaways.

- Higher conflict areas appear in more urban areas, especially central/downtown Athens, where several comments were related to safety and congestion.
- Improvements to sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails are a common priority across the study area.
- Priorities and perspectives on transportation opportunities vary between Athens-Clarke County and Oconee/Madison Counties.
- Improvements for access management interventions and traffic flow are common needs throughout the region.
- Personal automobile use was the most common transportation method.
- The majority of respondents indicated that the roadways networks were in fair to good condition, while pedestrian / bicycle infrastructure and the transit system (bus) was generally ranked from poor to fair.

SURVEY QUESTION: WHAT ARE THE TOP 3 CHALLENGES YOUR COMMUNITY FACES WITH REGARDS TO TRANSPORTATION?

Lack of Sidewalks (43.5%)

Insufficient Public Transit Options (39.4%)

Lack of Passenger Rail/Commercial Airport Access (32.2%)

Increased Traffic/Congestion/Delay (30.3%)

Safety (28.4%)

Reliability of Public Transportation System (26.8%)

Lack of Choices (23%)

Technical Analysis

The needs assessment phase of the MTP included both qualitative and quantitative analysis to ensure perceived supplemented using available data. The technical analysis included several key screenings including the following.

1. System Performance Analysis
2. Safety / Crash Analysis
3. Freight Assessment
4. Complete Streets Assessment
5. Equity Analysis
6. Environmental Vulnerability Assessment

TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

The MACORTS technical subcommittee was formed to guide the planning process and to ensure accuracy and consistency with local priorities.

The technical subcommittee reviewed and provided guidance on the following project elements:

- ✓ Goals, objectives, and measures of effectiveness
- ✓ Existing conditions and needs assessment results
- ✓ Identification of projects for consideration
- ✓ Modal Considerations (Bike, Ped, Transit, Freight, Air)
- ✓ Project assessment and prioritization criteria
- ✓ Prioritized and cost constrained project list

The technical analysis was a collaborative effort between oversight agencies, MACORTS staff, and local industry professionals. The findings of each screening and assessment were summarized and presented to the technical subcommittee and MACORTS Technical and Policy Committees for review and comment.

The following sections provide summaries of the approach and key findings. Additional information about these technical evaluations can be found in Appendix E of this report.

System Performance

A comprehensive understanding of the region and its travel patterns is required to effectively plan for transportation and serve the mobility needs of the population. The changes in population and employment, development patterns, and the region's position as the economic and educational hub for northeastern Georgia influence the region's transportation needs and travel patterns.

The system performance analysis utilized the federally mandated Travel Demand Model, as well as supplemental tools for alternative transportation modes.

Travel Demand Model

A key feature of MTP development is the creation of a Travel Demand Model (TDM) which identifies areas with roadway volume and capacity constraints (congestion) based on Socioeconomic (SE) data including population and employment. traffic counts, and network characteristics. Through coordination with GDOT, the MACORTS TDM was developed to estimate traffic conditions for both the base year (2020) and the future year 2050. These results provide important information about the Level of Service (LOS) of the roadways.

Table 6: Level of Service Designations

LEVEL OF SERVICE DESIGNATION	DESCRIPTION
A	Free flow with individual users virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream.
B	Stable flow with a high degree of freedom to select speed and operating conditions but with some influence from other users.
C	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.
D	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.
E	Unstable flow at or near capacity levels with poor levels of comfort and convenience.
F	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 (2nd Edition), Institute of Transportation Engineers, 1999.

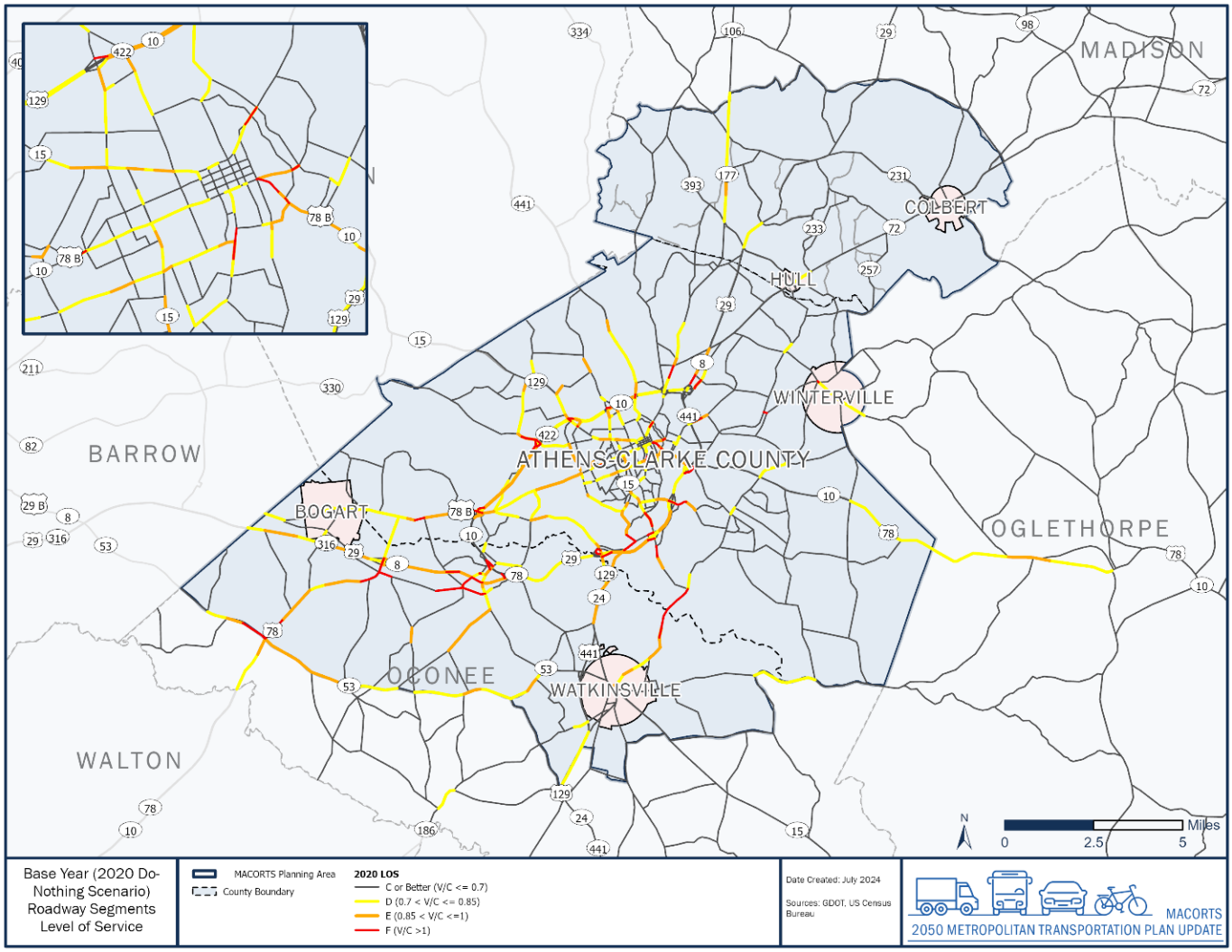
The TDM is a powerful tool, but there are limitations to its ability to accurately identify specific issues particularly when evaluating multimodal or complete streets travel behaviors across the network. By nature, the tool is generated through the development of localized population, school, and employment statistics combined with anticipated movements to generate traffic volumes. While an effective method for estimation and projection, it can lead to generalizations about current conditions. As such, the LOS results generated from the model are used as a data point to identify areas for additional analysis but are also reviewed in context with other data to determine if potential improvements or projects are applicable.

Figure 17: TDM Functional Diagram

The MACORTS TDM included 6 modeling scenarios that were developed by the GDOT office of planning. These scenarios include an iterative data evaluation and adjustment effort with the MACORTS planning team to ensure accuracy of the modeled outputs.

The outputs of the TDM process were summarized by GDOT and presented to the MACORTS Technical and Policy Committees for review and adoption. The following exhibits were sourced from the TDM model outputs and demonstrate the current and projected performance of the highway system.

Figure 18: 2020 Base Year Model Results



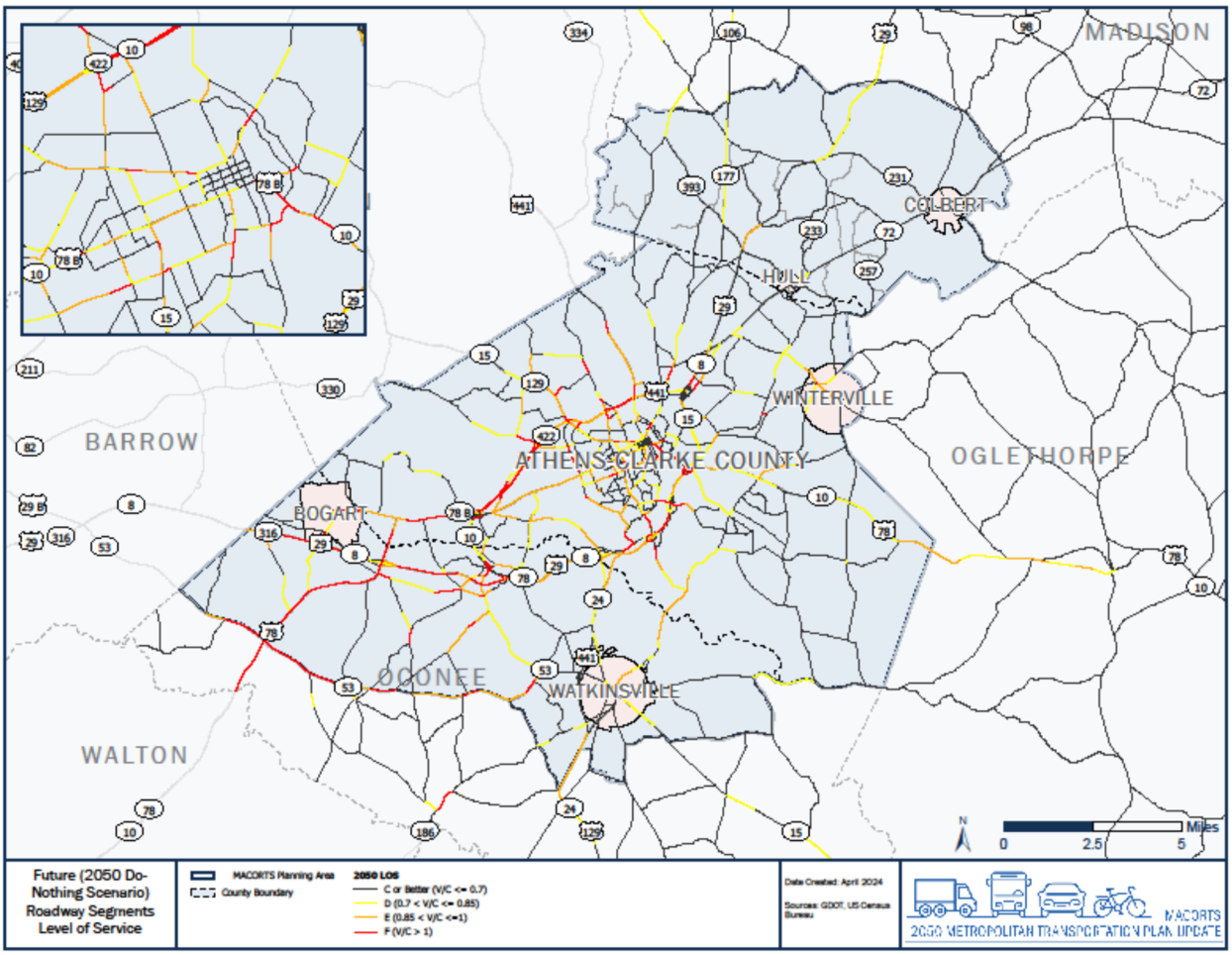
The base year (2020) model results shown in *Figure 18* demonstrates that the majority of the transportation network is operating at acceptable levels of service (D or better) however major regional highways and some local arterials and connectors are demonstrating LOS E and F.

- US 78 and US 441 Interchange was identified as the segment with the highest V/C and low LOS.

80%

EXISTING NETWORK OPERATING AT ACCEPTABLE LOS

Figure 19: Future 2050 Do Nothing Scenario Results



The "Do Nothing" future horizon (2050) scenario is a combination of projected population and employment growth for the MPO region, and no additional transportation network capacity. The resulting model outputs show a significant degradation of the network with increased congestion and delay becoming prominent across the region.

↑ 65%

INCREASE IN LOS D – F (INCREASED DELAY)

- Decrease in LOS on SR 10 Loop
- Decrease in LOS on major roadways in South Athens-Clarke County and North Oconee

[HOLD FOR TDM SCENARIOS 5 AND 6]

The GDOT Travel Demand Model report can be found in Appendix F of this report.

Safety / Crash Analysis

An in-depth safety analysis was performed for the MPO planning area. Focus was given to the KABCO [1] severity of the crashes throughout the region with additional analysis considering pedestrian, bicycle, and freight related crash locations. This review of crashes over the 2017-2021 five-year period is used to identify trend areas, intersections and corridors with significant crash rates and severity of crashes that are occurring.

Aided through the inclusion of public and stakeholder feedback, the safety analysis highlights areas of concern throughout the region. These areas of concern were reviewed for potential project needs and whether the proposed projects would address these needs. Key features of this analysis included the review of specific crash types such as pPedestrian and cyclist crashes and freight involved crashes for the identification of additional projects or modifications to existing projects to include infrastructure needed to reduce modal conflicts.

COMMON CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO CRASH FREQUENCY & SEVERITY

MODAL CONFLICTS

VEHICULAR SPEED

POOR LIGHTING & SIGNAGE

LACK OF BIKE & PED FACILITIES

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRASHES

There were 65 bicycle / pedestrian related crashes reported that resulted in a fatality or serious injury. These crashes are identified as Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) crashes. The crash locations were screened against improvement projects already identified and new projects recommended where no safety improvements were already specified. The screening resulted in the following:

- 23 KSI locations aligned with MTP projects and Complete Streets elements were added.
- 7 New projects with Safety Counter Measures were added.
- 46 Projects with Complete Street recommendations were added to the project description.
- 35 Crashes were identified as areas requiring additional analysis.

[1] KABCO: K = Fatality, A = Suspected Serious Injury, B = Suspected Minor Injury, C = Possible Injury, O = No Apparent Injury

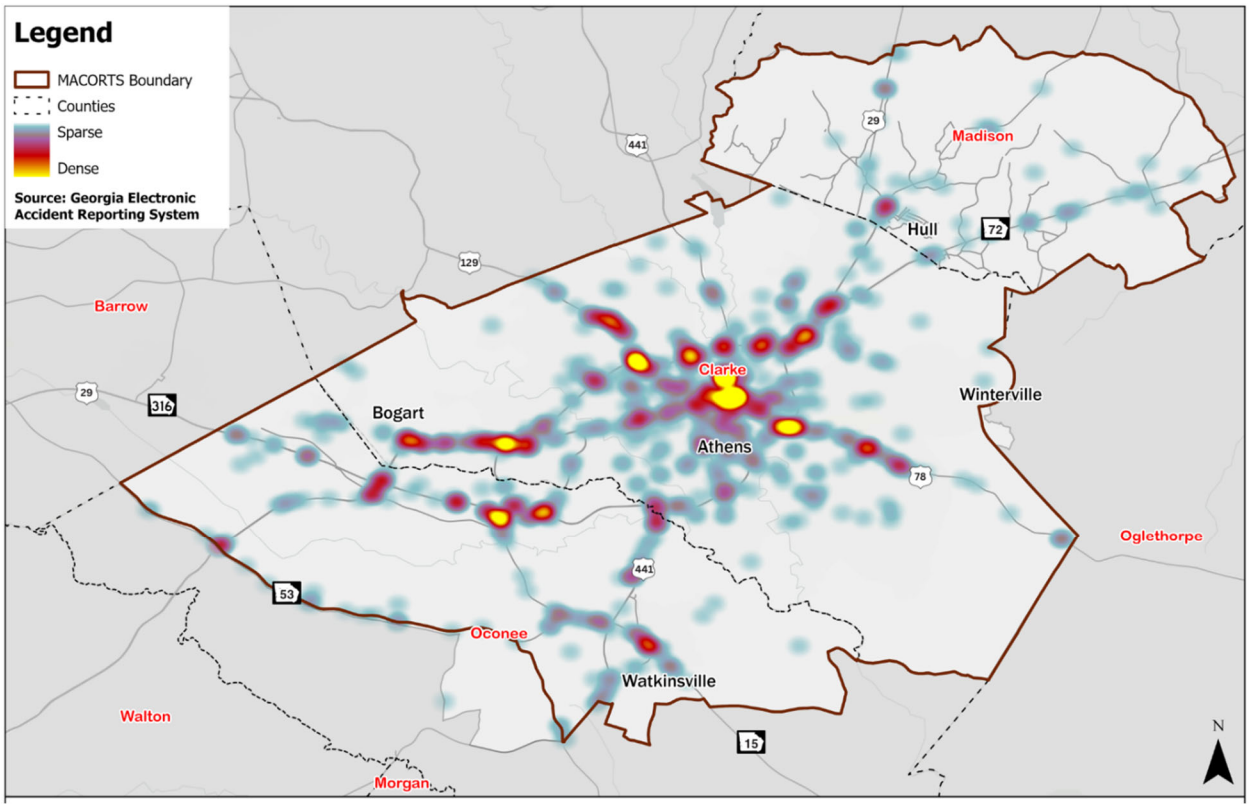
https://highways.dot.gov

FREIGHT CRASHES

The severity of a crash statistically increases when larger and heavier vehicles are involved. This statistical link requires a focused screening for freight related crashes in order to identify high crash frequency locations and determine if improvements in the multimodal network can reduce the frequency and severity of these crashes. The 2017 – 2021 crash data was utilized to identity vehicles involving freight resulting in the identification of 1,129 crashes or 4% of the total crashes for the MACORTS Region.

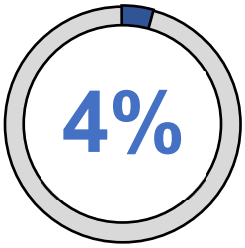
Figure 20 shows the frequency of freight related crashes within the study area and the following section further describes the outcome of the MACORTS Freight Analysis.

Figure 20: Freight Related Crashes



1,129 TRUCK-RELATED CRASHES

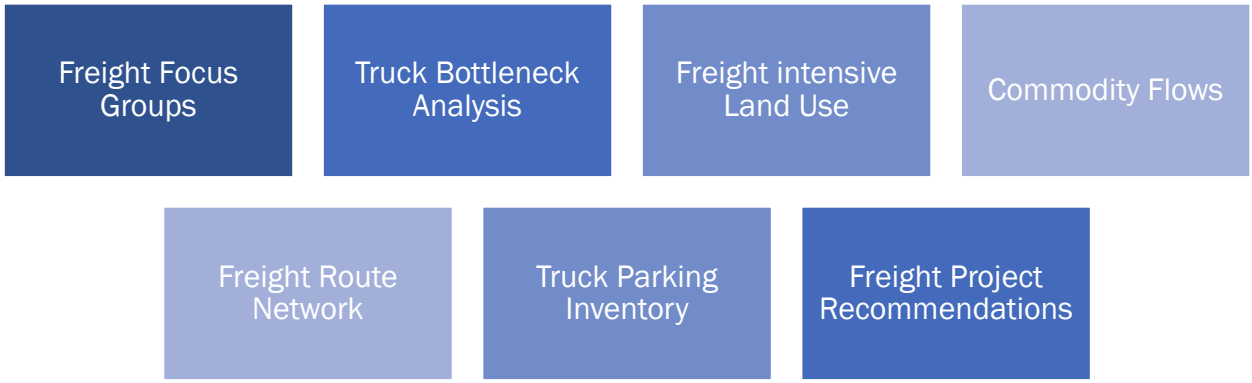
31,435 TOTAL CRASHES



Freight Analysis

Each MTP must also consider the movement of freight vehicles through the region, and to meet this requirement, a separate document, outlining the freight conditions and an assessment of their movements has been developed and included as Appendix G. This section highlights freight commodity flows and movements throughout the region and identifies conflicts requiring infrastructure improvements and mitigating measures.

Figure 21: Key Elements of the Freight Analysis



The Georgia Statewide Freight and Logistics Plan included the designation of a statewide freight network. Within the MACORTS area, the facilities designated as freight corridors include US 441, which runs north/south through the area; SR 72, which runs eastward towards Elberton, Georgia; and SR 316 which is the main connection from the MACORTS area to the Atlanta metro area.

US 441 is also part of the Governor's Road Improvement Program (GRIP), which is a system of highways throughout the state identified for improvements to benefit economic development. Although designated as part of the freight network, none of these corridors were identified in the top 50 facilities for truck movements within the state. These corridors are shown in Figure 22. The on-roadway freight trends in this area highlight the following roadways with significant freight movement:

- SR 10 Loop, W. US 78, and N. US 29 carry the highest flows
- US 441 in Oconee and Athens-Clarke and US 29 in Madison County also carry significant flows

The full commodity flow volumes are mapped by annual truck units ranging from 27 to 6,378,038 as shown in Figure 23.

Figure 22: Georgia Statewide Designated Freight Corridors

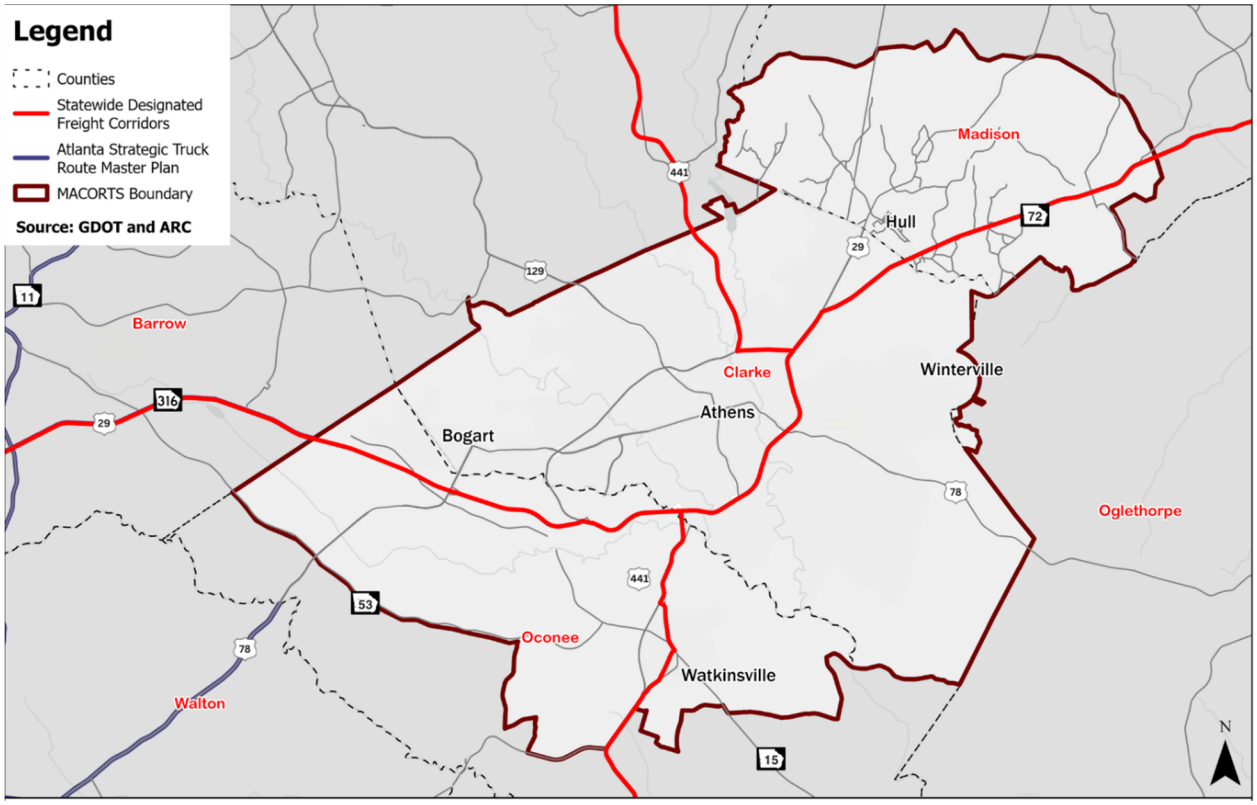
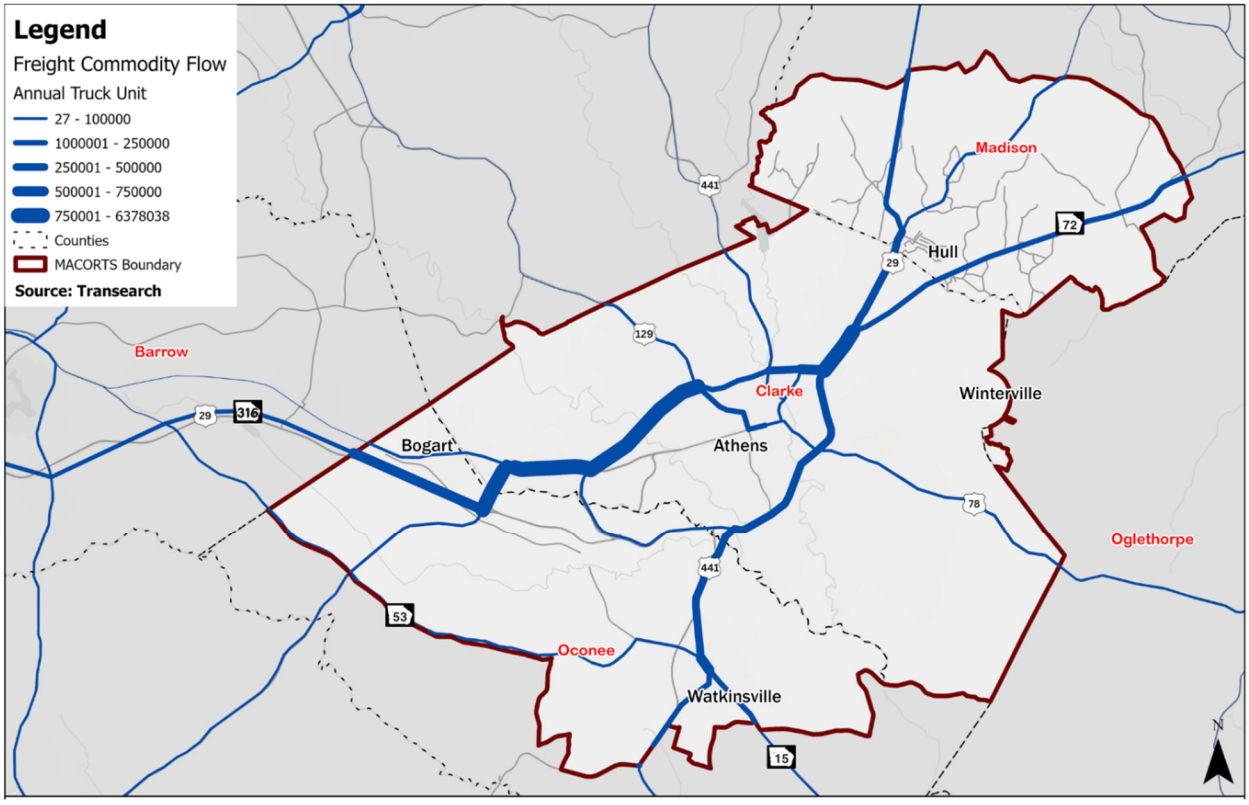


Figure 23: Freight Commodity Flows (2019)



When considering freight movements, congestion and bottleneck areas are major concerns. The freight industry relies on consistent travel times to remain effective, and areas of congestion can have significant impacts. This analysis identified four areas as significant freight bottlenecks within the region.

- US 78 (Monroe Hwy) at Atlanta Hwy
- US 78 (Oconee St) between Lumpkin St and US 441 / SR 10 Loop
- US 441 / SR 10 Loop northeast junction
- US 29 at SR 72

In addition to truck-based freight commodities, the MACORTS area is served by both CSX and Norfollk Southern , both Class 1 rail lines which move freight In addition to the Class I rail lines, there is also a short line railroad that runs from the Madison, GA area to north of Athens.

There are a total of 86 rail crossings on public roadways in Athens-Clarke County, with 54, or 63% of those crossings at grade and 32, or 37% of the crossings grade separated.

FREIGHT ANALYSIS FACTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

The MACORTS convened a Freight Focus Group comprised of regional industry representatives and local manufactures / distributors.

Local, regional, and state issues were discussed, and potential projects identified.

Key Freight Analysis Facts

- Bottlenecks = Top contributor to cost / mile for urban areas outside of Atlanta.
  - Total Cost to Freight Industries
  - Reduced Speed and Reliability
- 100% of MACORTS Committee members indicated regular / frequent use of direct delivery services.

In Madison County, there are a total of 40 public roadway rail crossings with three of those crossings grade separated. In Oconee County, there are a total of 20 rail crossings on public roadways All of these crossings are at-grade, and all are signed and/or signaled.

Unlike major distribution hubs with the major port facilities, the economy of the MACORTS region is based primarily on education, government and healthcare, which are not freight intensive. There are some more freight intensive segments of the economy, that include distribution and manufacturing, such as Caterpillar, one of the largest employers in the MACORTS region.

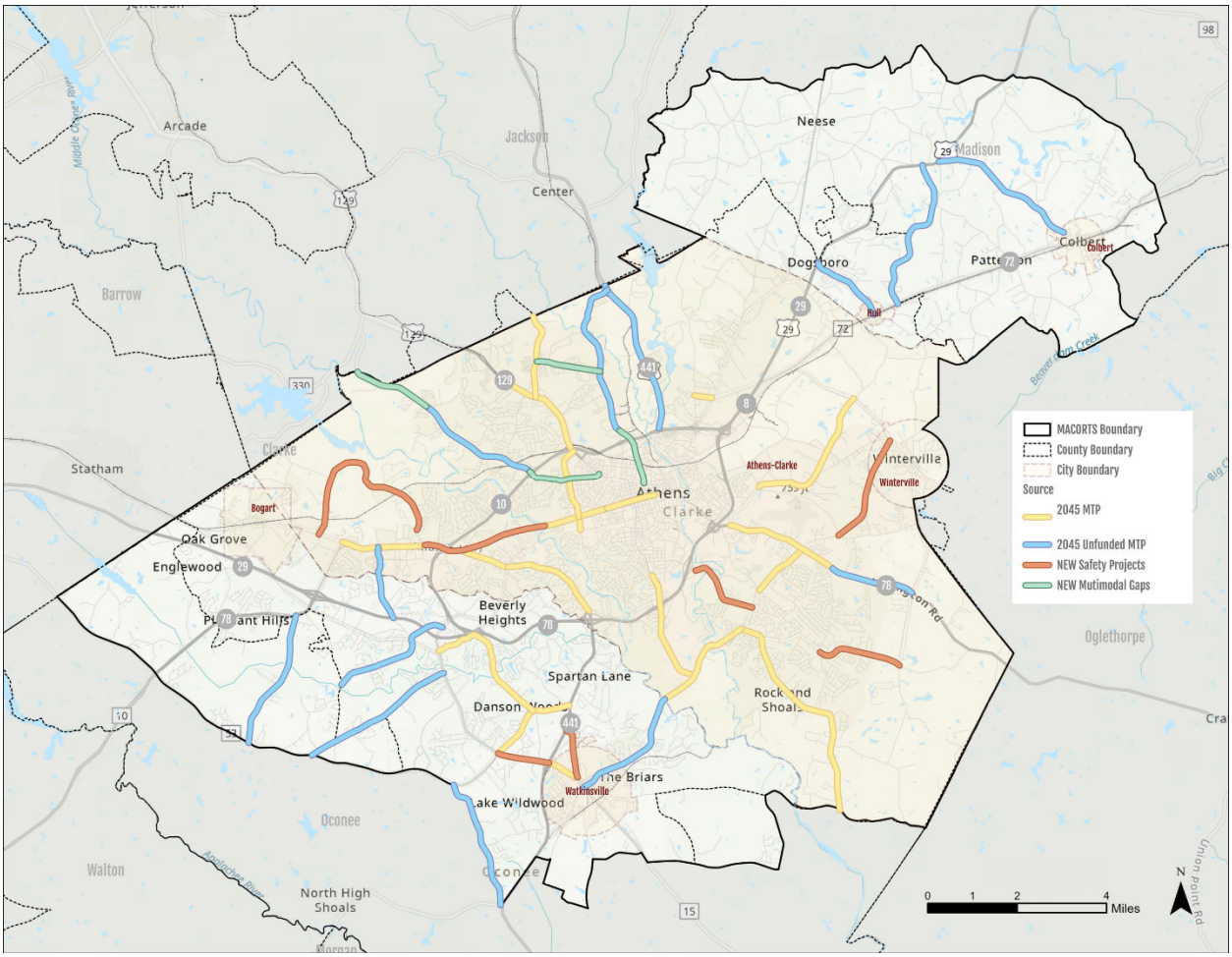
Freight movements also occurs with the retail/commercial supply chain, as well as increased deliveries by truck due to on-line shopping. Regional freight volumes are expected to increase at a substantial rate due to the continued growth of direct delivery services and the opening of the Gainesville Inland Port facility.

Complete Streets Assessment

Throughout the analysis and engagement process, the desire and need for complete streets improvements was highlighted. Local stakeholders, members of the public, and technical professionals supported the development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities where appropriate and feasible . The region has expressed an interest in the development of these facilities and the development of dedicated trail systems. Though not all of these facilities will be eligible for funding through the MTP process, specific non-eligible projects have been included within the other funding sources sections.

To support the multimodal movements throughout the community, a review of the proposed projects was undertaken, and where applicable, the project descriptions were adapted to include bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These project description updates included the development of sidewalks, bike lanes, or language describing a complete streets typical section. Figure 24 shows the projects identified by the complete streets assessment highlighting both new bicycle and pedestrian safety projects and projects to address complete streets gaps.

Figure 24: Complete Streets Assessment



COMPLETE STREETS

FHWA GUIDE TO PLANNING AND
DELIVERYING COMPLETE STREETS

"A Complete street is safe, and feels safe, for all users. FHWA is focused on supporting transportation agencies to plan, develop and operate equitable streets and networks that prioritize safety, comfort, and connectivity to destinations for all people who use the street network"

- FHWA

1

MAKE COMPLETE STREETS THE DEFAULT APPROACH

Make funding and designing Complete Streets the easiest option.

2

PLAN AND ANALYZE COMPLETE STREETS

Integrate safety for all road users into planning and data analysis.

3

IMPLEMENT COMPLETE STREETS IMPROVEMENTS

Design, construct, operate and maintain streets that are safe for all road users.

Equity Analysis

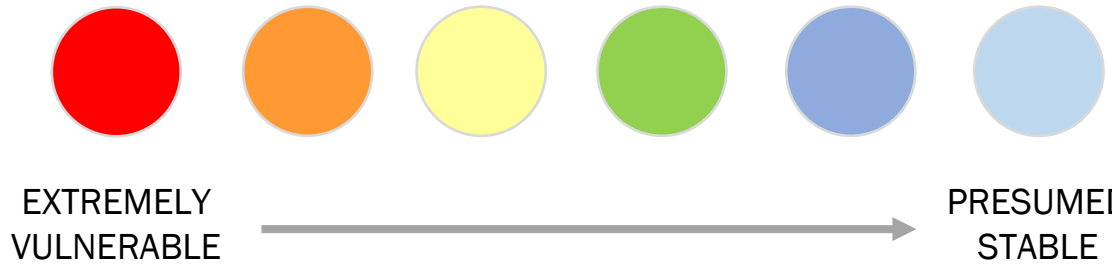
The MACORTS needs assessment included an Equity Analysis that follows the Federal Highway Administration's Equity Action Plan by identifying underserved and disadvantaged communities and identifying barriers to accessibility and economic opportunities.

The analysis began with a geospatial mapping effort to identify concentrations of disadvantaged members of the community including minorities, households without access to a vehicle, and households with incomes below the federal poverty level. These demographic profiles were used as a filter through with project evaluation criteria screened to identify issues, opportunities and disproportionate burdens on vulnerable populations.

These detailed maps can be found in the Existing Conditions Report included in Appendix C and a summary is included in the "Protected Populations" chapter of this report.

Environmental Vulnerability Assessment

Environmental vulnerability assessments are typically multidimensional assessments that include technical screenings for sensitivity, exposure, and capacity to adapt to changing conditions.



While a full vulnerability analysis was not conducted as part of the MTP planning process, a screening was conducted for sensitive lands including wetlands, flood plains, water recharge areas, and protected habitats. Presumed stable lands were prioritized for future land development and projects avoiding vulnerable habitats were ranked higher than those with anticipated negative impacts to the natural environment. Additional information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report found in Appendix C.

MACORTS 2050 MTP

The MACORTS Metropolitan Transportation Plan builds on the findings of the Existing Conditions Analysis, Previous Plans and Documents, Public and Stakeholder Engagement, Technical Analysis, and Regional Goals, Objectives and Priorities. This chapter details the process used to rank and prioritize projects and ultimately develop a multimodal, cost constrained, performance-based plan.

UNCONSTRAINED PROJECT LIST

The unconstrained project list includes all of the solutions to address the identified needs without considering cost and available revenues. The 2050 MTP planning process included reevaluation of existing projects identified in previous plan updates, but not yet completed or funded. Projects at various stages of program delivery were carried forward, and the remainder of the projects were screened to ensure consistency with current conditions. Five projects were completed since the adoption of the 2045 MTP, leaving 119 projects unfunded or incomplete projects for evaluation.

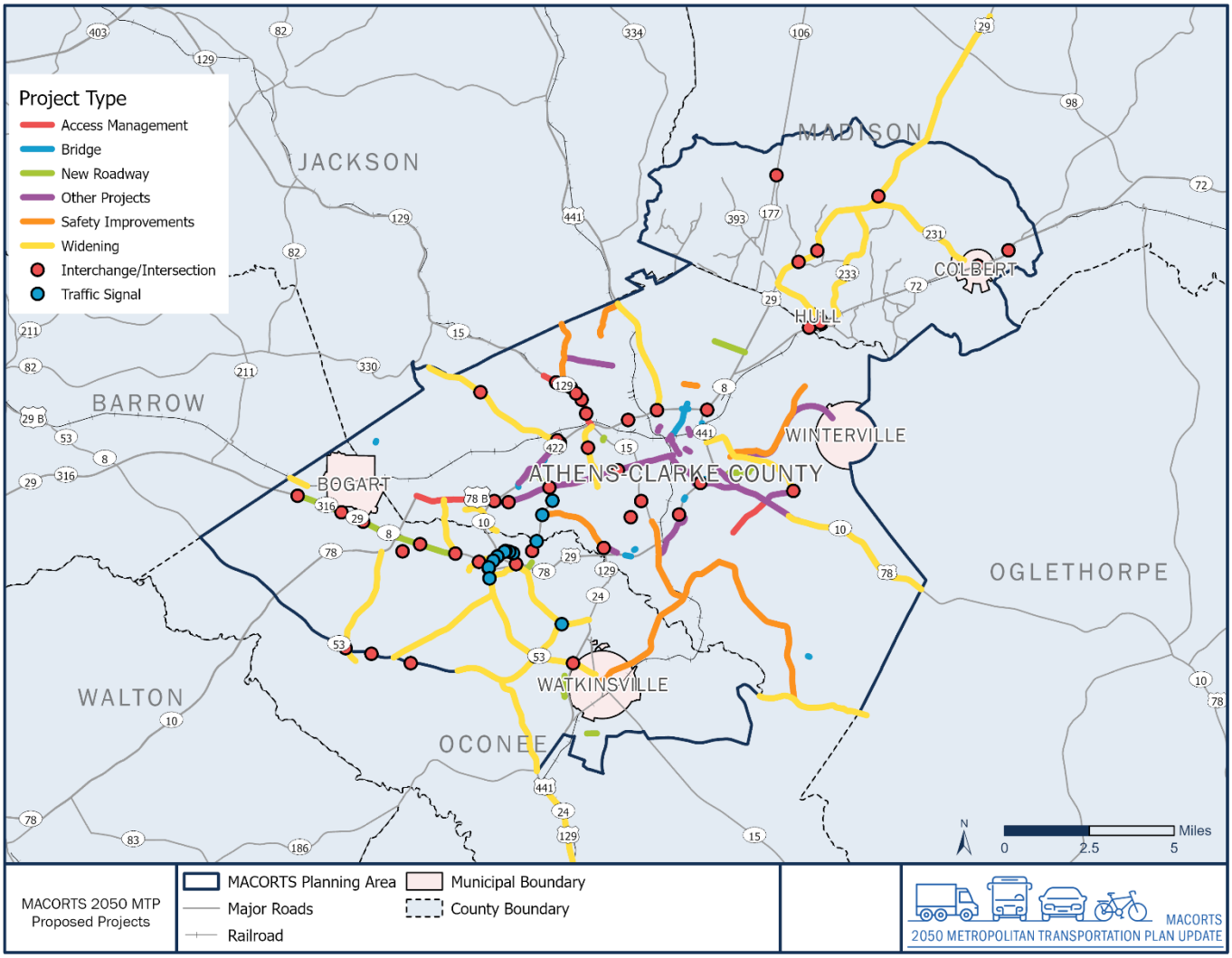
The needs assessment also identified new projects that were added to the unconstrained list resulting in 135 candidate projects. The following table summarizes these candidate projects by type.

Table 7: Unconstrained Projects by Type

Project Types	2045 MTP	2050 MTP
Access Management	7	6
Bridge	16	18
Intersection/Interchange	39	43
New Roadway	7	8
Other	6	17
Enhanced Transit / Passenger Rail	1	1
Safety Improvements	7	8
Widening	32	29
Transit	1	2
Signals	3	3
Total Projects	119	135

These projects were also mapped to visually reference the regional distribution of projects as shown in Figure 25. The projects identified during the unconstrained project list development were dispersed throughout the region with equitable distribution amongst participating local jurisdictions.

Figure 25: Unconstrained Projects Map



A complete copy of the unconstrained project list can be found in Appendix H.

PERFORMANCE BASED PRIORITIZATION

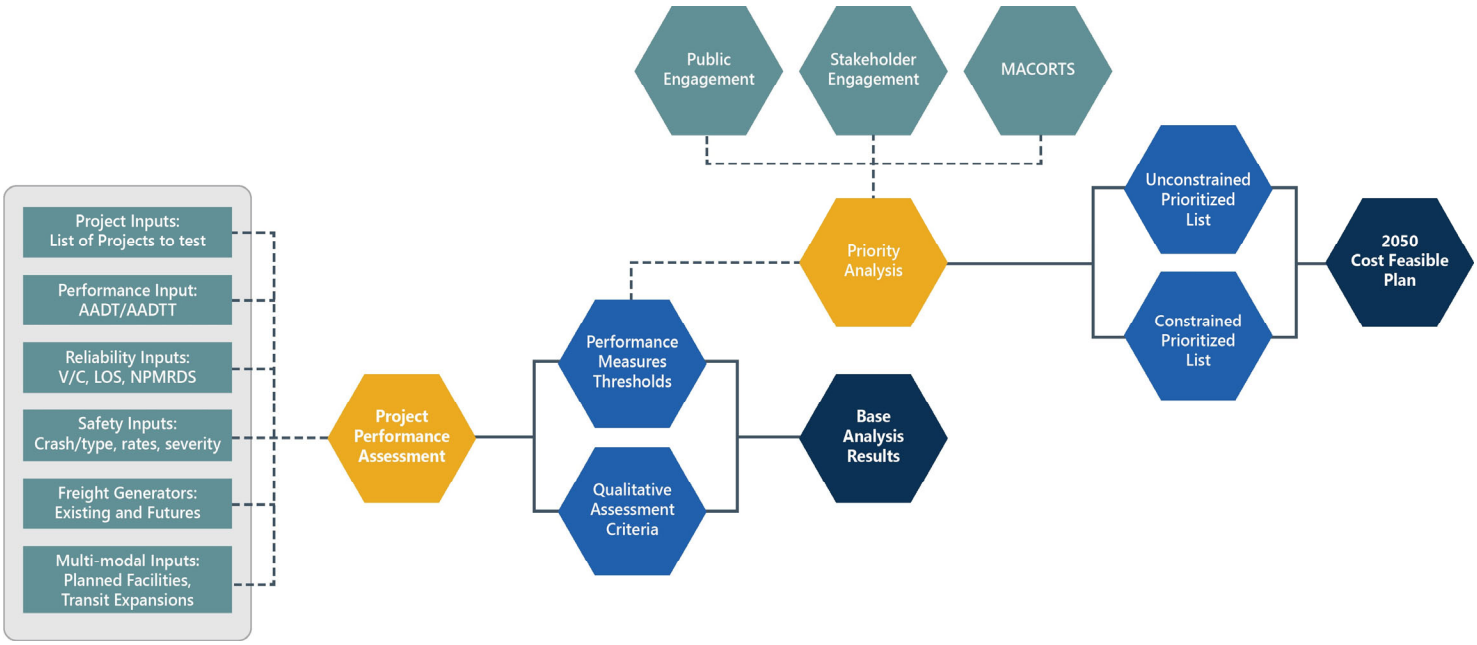
The projects identified in the MACORTS 2050 MTP were developed through a robust technical process and also included input from stakeholders, technical advisors, and the general public. The project evaluation process was designed to fulfill the Performance-Based Planning and Programming requirements of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and GDOT Office of Planning policies. According to FHWA, Performance-Based Planning and Programming is a strategic approach that uses performance data to inform decision-making and outcomes.

This approach utilizes the goals and objectives decided upon by multiple stakeholders and the public and evaluates the potential impact of projects in the unconstrained project list. These projects are then fiscally constrained and evaluated by how well they perform, meeting performance-based metrics and criteria directly tied to the goals and objectives of the region. The technical subcommittee was an invaluable resource during this process, providing technical expertise and local knowledge on potential projects. The subcommittee was comprised of the following departments and organizations.

- MACORTS
- GDOT Intermodal Division
- GDOT Highway Division
- Athens Transit
- UGA Transit
- FHWA
- Athens-Clarke County Transportation & Public Works
- Oconee County Public Works
- Madison County Road Department
- Oconee County Planning Department
- Madison County Planning Department
- Athens-Clarke County Bicycle & Pedestrian
- Georgia Bikes

A *performance-based* screening tool was developed to evaluate potential projects to understand how they meet the goals and objectives identified by the MTP stakeholders and the general public. This tool also used quantitative and qualitative inputs and metrics to assess these projects. The following graphic shows a functional summary of how the tool utilizes a data driven approach to assess a project's effectiveness at responding to existing and future transportation deficiencies and alignment with Federal, State, and Local goals to prioritize investments.

Figure 26: Performance Based Prioritization Process



Data was collected for the inputs described in Figure 26, which was then analyzed in the GIS program ESRI ArcGIS Pro to determine if those inputs would have an effect on the aforementioned projects. Once that initial evaluation was completed, the goals were given priority weightings based on the feedback received from the technical sub-committee and stakeholders. The goals and objectives from this plan and how they were assessed in this tool are listed in the Table 8.

Table 8: Prioritization Factors and Sources

Goals / Objectives	Performance Assessment	Quantitative / Qualitative
Mobility System Management and Operation System Preservation and Maintenance Reliability and Resiliency Economic Vitality: Freight Mobility	Average Annual Daily Traffic Percentage of Trucks Level of Service Volume to Capacity Ratio	Quantitative: GDOT Data
Safety and Security Reliability and Resiliency	Total Vehicle Crashes Crash Rate Total Bike/Ped Crashes Injury and Fatal Bike/Ped Crashes Injury and Fatal Vehicle Crashes Rate of Fatalities Rate of Injuries	Quantitative: GDOT Data

Goals / Objectives	Performance Assessment	Quantitative / Qualitative
Freight Mobility Enhanced Land Use Economic Vitality	Freight Supportive Supports Access to Freight Generators / Attractors	Qualitative: Project Assessed Yes = 1 No = 0 Somewhat= 0.5
Travel and Tourism	Supports Access to Tourist Attractions	Qualitative: Project Assessed Yes = 1 No = 0 Somewhat= 0.5
Mobility Multimodal Connectivity Transit Economic Vitality	Access to Planned Bike/Ped Facilities Existing or Planned Transit Service Supports Regional Multimodal Connections Supports Access to Airport	Qualitative: Project Assessed Yes = 1 No = 0 Somewhat= 0.5
Environment & Quality of Life Travel and Tourism Title VI/EJ	Potential Impact on Natural Resources Potential Impact on Historic Resources Potential Impact on Title VI and Environmental Justice Communities	Qualitative: Project Assessed Yes = 1 No = 0 Somewhat= 0.5

The projects were ranked based on their cumulative scores and a project performance matrix was developed to demonstrate how the selected projects meet the stated goals and objectives.

A Technical Memorandum detailing the prioritization process can be found in Appendix I of this report.

FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PLAN

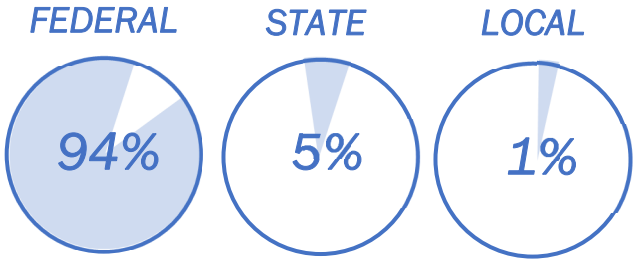
In order to develop the federally required financially feasible, or cost constrained plan, a detailed financial analysis is required. Revenues for funding transportation projects must be identified and balanced with the project costs over the planning horizon. While revenues have increased significantly since the adoption of the previous plan, the costs to deliver projects have risen exponentially, leading to a growing funding gap at all levels. . This financial trend is true for the MACORTS Region and is detailed in the following chapter.

Funding

MACORTS utilized revenue projections provided by GDOT Office of Financial Management that estimates the revenues anticipated to be available over the planning horizon. These revenue projections were provided for both project funding and operational/maintenance funding anticipated to be available on an annual basis between 2024 – 2050.

Revenues were projected to increase at a conservative inflation factor of 2% for the remainder of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2026 and then reduced to 1% for the remainder of the planning horizon.

ANTICIPATED REVENUE
$625,216,543



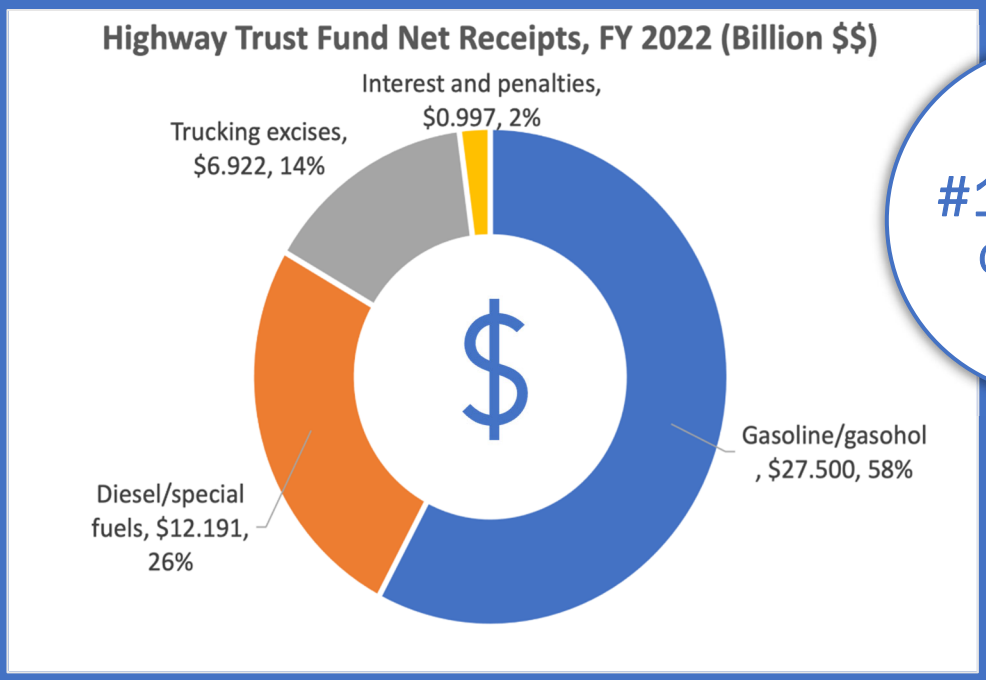
The revenue estimates for the MTP totals $625,216,543 including FHWA funding, Georgia State funding, and local match. Local funding has historically been sourced from Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) and Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST) funding. This long-standing financial partnership has led to the successful advancement of transportation projects in the region.

FEATURED FUNDING:
TSPLOST

- 1% Sales Tax Collected over 5 Years
- Voter Approved: May 24, 2022
  - Athens-Clarke, Oconee, and Madison

MTP REVENUES 101

- *FHWA funding is the only dedicated source of revenue for the MTP.*
- *Funding sources / types dictates what projects are eligible.*
- *MTP project list must be fiscally balanced against dedicated funding sources, not discretionary sources.*



#1 SOURCE
GAS TAX

SOURCE: FHWA

- Discretionary funding available for non-highway projects
  - Not included in financial projections for the MTP

Cost Estimation

Project costs were identified for the base year (2024) and then inflated annually at a rate of 5% over the 2050 plan horizon. This process establishes the federally required Year of Expenditure (YOE) cost estimates for each project. Estimates were developed using several sources including the 2024 – 2027 MACORTS Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), GDOT's GeoPI documentation, TSPLOST project estimates, FDOT Cost per Mile estimation tools, and comparable project costs. The cost estimates were stratified into project phases, which include Preliminary Engineering (PE), Right of Way (ROW), Utility Relocation (UTL) and Construction (CST).

The project cost estimates for the unconstrained project list totaled over $2.28 billion before the YOE inflation factor was applied.

$6.25 M		$2.28 B
REVEUNES		COSTS
1% - 2% INFLATION		5% INFLATION

With the available revenues and the total project costs identified, the project prioritization process provided the information needed to rank the projects and develop the financially constrained, or financially feasible project list.

Cost Constrained Projects

When preparing the cost constrained project list, it is critical to consider four key factors:

1. Project Costs Outpacing Revenues
2. Substantial Existing Commitments
3. Significant New Demand / New Ideas
4. Funding Types Dictate Project Eligibility

The first step in the development of the cost constrained project list is the identification of Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) projects that are still subject to cost constraint within the MTP. These projects have one or more phase (PE, ROW, UTL, CST) adopted within the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP horizon years and are therefore secured as an existing commitment. The 2050 MTP was prepared in alignment with the TIP horizon years of 2024 - 2027 as "Band 1" of the cost feasible plan.

Once the TIP projects were identified and incorporated, projects that are not in the TIP, but are authorized for Scoping and Preliminary Engineering phases were added. These projects are not currently reflected in the congressionally balanced TIP report but do appear in the "authorized" portion of the plan and are therefore progressing towards the next phases of funding.

Following these two categories of committed projects, projects partially funded through local revenues were incorporated to further demonstrate priority, and to ensure opportunities for financial partnership.

- ✓ 2024 – 2027 TIP PROJECTS
- ✓ COMMITTED / PARTIALLY FUNDED
- ✓ PROIRITIZED PROJECTS
- ✓ TSC REVIEW & REFINEMENT

These three stages of project programming resulted in over $300,000,000 in funding commitments. The remaining revenues were assigned to "Band 2" representing MTP years 2028 – 2050 with a mid-point year of 2039 used for cost projections. The project ranking established during the prioritization process were used to order projects based on their ability to contribute to local goals and objectives. These projects were then evaluated to determine if available revenues were sufficient to cover one or more phases. If available revenues were not sufficient, the evaluation moved to the next project in the prioritized list.

A FUNDING RESERVE WAS INCLUDED IN THE MTP TO ACCOUNT FOR AMENDMENTS ANTICIPATED FOLLOWING THE ADOPTION OF THIS PLAN.

The final step in the development of the cost constrained project list is the review and refinement by the MACORTS 2050 MTP Stakeholders and Technical Subcommittees. The members of these committees were provided with interactive tools and comment forms allowing them to evaluate project performance and identify opportunities for refinement.

A summary of the cost constrained project list is provided on pages 71 - 73 and the detailed cost constrained list is provided as Appendix H.

10	7	4	4	3	3	2
BRIDGES	INTERSECTION / INTERCHANGE	ACCESS MANAGEMENT	*OTHER PROJECTS	NEW ROADWAYS	SAFETY	WIDENING

*Other projects include electric charging infrastructure, facility rehabilitation, & raise grant improvements

Table 9: 2050 Cost Constrained Project List Summary

2050 MTP Cost Constrained Project Summary	
1	PI# 0013767: SR 8/SR 316/US 29 @ CR 55/Jimmy Daniel Road (Oconee) • Creates an interchange at SR 316 @ Jimmie Daniel Road • PE, ROW, UTL, CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
2	PI# 0015645: CR 479/BELMONT ROAD@SHOAL CREEK 6.7 MI S OF WINTERVILLE (Clarke) • Replace the existing bridge over Schoal Creek along Belmont Rd • PE and ROW Authorized; UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
3	PI# 0019264:1423 OLD MACON HWY @ MIDDLE OCONEE RIVER 3 MI S OF ATHENS: Clarke • Reconstruct bridge to allow for two standard travel lanes & shoulders plus bicycle and pedestrian facilities • PE Authorized; ROW, UTL, and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
4	PI# 0013806: SR 10/US 78 @ NORTH CONEE RIVER (Clarke) • Replace existing bridge over North Oconee River along SR 10/US 78 (Oak & Oconee St.) • PE and ROW Authorized; UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
5	PI# 0015656: CR 592 / CLOTFELTER ROAD @ BARBER CREEK 3 MI S OF BOGART (Oconee) • Replace the existing bridge over Barber Creek along Clotfelter Rd. • PE and ROW Authorized; UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
6	PI# 0019614: SR 10/US 78 FROM E BROAD STREET TO FOUNDRY STREET (Clarke) • SR 10 @ E. Broad Street and Foundry St - Drainage, Rehab and Improvement • PE Authorized; ROW, UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
7	PI# 0019549: CR 3/FOWLER MILL ROAD @ LITTLE BEAR CREEK (Clarke) • Fowler Mill Road at Little Bear Creek Bridge Replacement • PE Authorized; ROW, UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
8	PI# 0020327: SR10 LP /US 129 From Nellie B to SR 15 / SR 24 (Clarke) • NEVI Electric Vehicle Charging Program Project • PE, ROW, UTL Authorized; CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
9	PI# 0019833: NORTH AVE FROM WILLOW ST TO COLLINS IND BLVD/FREEMAN DR (Clarke) • ACC Public Works North Avenue RAISE Grant Funded Project • PE, ROW, UTL, and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
10	PI# 0016081: CR 828/Bishop Farms Pkwy Ext to New High Shoals Rd. (Oconee) • New Roadway - CR 828/Bishop Farms Pkwy Ext to New High Shoals Rd. • PE, ROW, and UTL Authorized; CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)
11	PI# 0016920: SR 10 @ CR 993/WEST HANCOCK AVE (Clarke) • Multilane roundabout connecting directly with SR 10/Broad St, W Hancock Ave, the Plaza, and Minor St while realigning Glenhaven Dr. • PE and ROW Authorized; UTL and CST TIP Funded (2024 – 2027)

2050 MTP Cost Constrained Project Summary	
12	PI# 0013769: SR 8/SR 316/US 29 @ CR 929/Oconee Connector (Oconee) • Grade separation of SR 316 from Oconee Connector • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
13	PI# 0019266: SR 10 LOOP SB & NB @ CSX Railroad 1.3 MI S OF ATHENS (Clarke) • Bridge replacement • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
14	PI# 0019267: SR 10 LOOP SB & NB @ CSX #938042F 1.5 MI NW OF ATHENS (Clarke) • Replace the existing bridges at SR10 Loop at CSX railroad • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
15	PI# 0019268: SR 10 LOOP SB & NB @ CR 600/NORTH AVE 1.5 MI NE OF ATHENS (Clarke) • Replace the existing bridges at SR10 Loop at 1.5 mi NE of Athens • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
16	PI# 0019269: SR 10 Loop EB & WB @ MIDDLE OCONEE RIVER 3.5 MI S OF ATHENS (Clarke) • Replace the existing bridges at SR10 Loop @ Middle Oconee River • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
17	PI# 0019265: SR 10 Loop SB & NB @ NORTH OCONEE RIVER 1.4 MI S OF ATHENS (Clarke) • Replace the existing bridges at SR10 Loop @ North Oconee River • PE and ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL and CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
18	PI# 0013768: SR8/SR 316/US 29 @CR 440/CR 662/VIRGIL LANGFORD ROAD (Oconee) • Construct new bridge and approaches to create a grade separation on Virgil Langford Road over SR 316 with three (3) lanes including a left turn lane. • PE Authorized; ROW TIP Funded (2024 – 2027); UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
19	PI# 0017970: WATKINSVILLE TRUCK BYPASS FROM SR 24 TO SR 15 (Oconee) • Construct connector road between SR 24/US441 and SR 15 south of Watkinsville to enable truck traffic to avoid downtown Watkinsville (exact location undetermined) • Scoping Authorized; PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
20	MTP# TSP-11: Five Points Intersection Safety Improvements (Clarke) • Safety enhancement at the Five Points Intersection. Proposed enhancements may include but are not limited to: sidewalks, relocation and upgrade of crosswalks, optimization of signal timing and infrastructure adjustments, renovation of pedestrian corner refuges, installation of pedestrian and street lighting, upgrades to traffic signals. • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
21	MTP# SP-26: Hawthorne Ave and Oglethorpe Ave Intersection Safety Improvements (Clarke) • Signal upgrade at the Hawthorne Ave. & Oglethorpe Ave. intersection; new mast arm signal poles & restriping on all four legs. New bike lanes on Oglethorpe Ave, connecting the existing lanes along Oglethorpe Ave as specified in Athens Complete Street Policy. • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)

2050 MTP Cost Constrained Project Summary	
22	MTP# TSP-4: Beaverdam Rd and Cherokee Rd Intersection Signal Improvements (Clarke) • Upgraded signal equipment and technology to optimize signal timing with dedicated bike/ped signal phases and enhanced crosswalks. • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
23	PI# 0013613: SR 24 widening from Apalachee River to CS 7 and from SR 186 to Watkinsville Bypass (Oconee) • Widen SR 24 from 2 and 3 lanes to 4 lanes with grass and flush median • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
24	MTP# P-35: Jefferson River Rd. Safety Improvements (Clarke) • Widen Jefferson River Rd. to 2 standard lanes from Jefferson Rd. to Jackson County line. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities included. • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
25	MTP# P-19: Lexington Road Safety and Access Management (Clarke) • Convert existing 5-lane section to median divided for access management between signalized intersections and safety improvements at key intersections; bicycle and pedestrian facilities included • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
26	MTP# P-10: SR10 / W Broad Street Safety and Access Management - Phase 1 (Clarke) • Convert existing 7-lane section to median divided for access management between signalized intersections and safety improvements at key intersections; bicycle and pedestrian facilities included • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
27	PI# 0012902: SR 8 FM CR 228/DIAMOND HILL COLBERT TO CR 88/IRWIN KIRK RD (Madison) • Widen US 29 to 3 or 4 standard travel lanes from CR 228/Doamond Hill-Colbert Rd. to CR 88/Irwin Kirk Rd. Approx. 2.6 miles of project within MACORTS area • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP FUNDED (2028 – 2050)
28	MTP# B-01: Mitchell Bridge Rd Bridge Replacement over SR Loop 10 (Clarke) • The Mitchell Bridge Rd Bridge Replacement over SR Loop 10, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities • PE, ROW, UTL & CST MTP Funded (2028 – 2050)
29	MTP# P-22: Timothy Road Corridor and Safety Improvements - Phase I (Clarke) • Reconstruct Timothy Road to 2 standard travel lanes plus turn lanes at key intersections along the corridor. Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements included. • PE, ROW, and UTL MTP Funded (2028 – 2050); CST Unfunded / Long-Range
30	MTP# P-29: Gaines School Road Safety and Access Management (Clarke) • Widen and convert to a 4-lane median divided for access management between signalized intersections and safety improvements at key intersections; bicycle and pedestrian facilities included. • PE MTP Funded (2028 – 2050); ROW, UTL, and CST Unfunded / Long-Range

2050 MTP Cost Constrained Project Summary	
31	MTP# P-33: Spring Valley Rd. Safety Improvements (Clarke) • Improve Spring Valley Rd. to include turn lanes at key intersections. Sidewalks and bicycle facilities included. • PE MTP Funded (2028 – 2050); ROW, UTL, and CST Unfunded / Long-Range
32	MTP# P-23: SR10 / W Broad Street Safety and Access Management - Phase 2 (Clarke) • Convert existing 4-lane section to median divided for access management between signalized intersections and safety improvements at key intersections; bicycle and pedestrian facilities included • PE, ROW, and UTL MTP Funded (2028 – 2050); CST Unfunded / Long-Range
33	MTP# P-53: Olympic Drive / Indian Hills Rd Widening (Clarke) • Widen segments of Olympic Dr., Indian Hills Rd and Winterville Rd from 2 to 4 lanes from the Athens Perimeter to Beaverdam Rd. Project Includes the construction of a divided 4 lane roadway, with turn lanes at selected locations, with bicycle facilities. • PE MTP Funded (2028 – 2050); ROW, UTL & CST Unfunded / Long-Range

UNFUNDED / ALTERNATIVELY FUNDED PROJECTS

The MACORTS 2050 cost constrained project list demonstrates regional transportation priorities that are consistent with project eligibility as defined by the Federal Highway Administration for non-discretionary / formula-based funding. This chapter summarizes both projects remaining unfunded due to lack of resources and projects that are regionally significant, but not eligible for FHWA formula funding. It is important to highlight that many projects remain unfunded due to finite resources, and their unfunded status does not indicate a lack of priority, need, or desire for these improvements. Additionally, the FHWA works in partnership with peer federal agencies to fund a comprehensive program of projects including the Federal Transit Administration and Federal Aviation Administration. The MTP does not maintain fiscal constraints for these resources but does include regionally significant projects to ensure that regional investments are coordinated and cohesive.

Unfunded Highway Improvement Projects

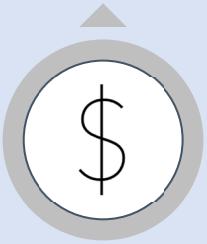
As previously described, the cost of projects consistently outpaces available revenues, therefore a significant number of highway improvement projects remained unfunded in this plan. The following table provides an overview of the projects by type that will be placed in the aspirational “Band 3” for consideration as future funding is available.

Table 10: 2050 Unfunded Projects by Type

Project Types	2050 MTP
Access Management	6
Bridge	18
Intersection/Interchange	43

Project Types	2050 MTP
New Roadway	8
Other	17
Enhanced Transit / Passenger Rail	1
Safety Improvements	8
Widening	29
Transit	2
Signals	3
Total Projects	135

DISCRETIONARY TRANSPORTATION FUNDING



1

Quick Response / Lump Sum Funding

Programmed through MACRTS but not subject to MTP constraint

Includes Lump Sum Safety, Operations, Freight, and Carbon Reduction Strategy

2

Competitive Federal Grant Programs

- Accelerated Innovation Deployment Demonstration Program (AID)
- Advanced Transportation Technologies & Innovative Mobility Deployment (ATTIMD)
- Bridge Investment Program (BIP)
- Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (CFI)
- Commuter Authority Rail Safety Improvement Grants (CARSI)
- INFRA, MEGA, RAISE SMART, ATIIP
- National Culvert Removal, Replacement, & Restoration
- National Scenic Byways Program
- Nationally Significant Federal Lands & Tribal Projects
- Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, & Cost-saving Transportation (Protect)
- Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities
- Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A)
- Tribal Programs (TTPSF and TTFBP)
- Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program

Public Transportation

The primary transit provider in the MACORTS region is the Athens-Clarke County Transit System (ACCT). The most recent Transit Development Plan (TDP), adopted in May 2018, identified projects grouped into short-term, mid-term, and long-term timeframes. The projects identified for the short-term include low, or no cost options that could realistically be accomplished within one to five years.

Short-term projects included:

- Realignments for three existing fixed routes
- New service via two fixed routes

Mid-term service recommendations were identified to occur within the five-to-ten-year timeframe. These recommendations include improvements to existing service, as well as new service, including:

- Realignments and expanded hours for two routes
- Introduction of new service via two new fixed routes
- Introduction of new service via Micro-transit services
- Decentralized transfer facility program

Long-term recommendations were identified for the 10-to-15-year timeframe. These long-range projects include:

- New Service via one new fixed route
- System-wide frequency Improvements

Table 11: 2018 Transit Cost Estimates

TDP Timeframe	Annual Operating Costs	Capital Costs
Short-Term	$1,126,807	$1,230,000
Mid-Term	$4,625,888	$4,590,000
Long Term	$7,231,917	$4,620,000
Total	$12,984,612	$10,440,000

Since the adoption of the TDP, the global pandemic COVID-19 created substantial barriers to ridership and staffing. During this time, ACCT became a zero-fare system which aided in a return to ridership but resulted in reduced revenues for the system.

ACCT is currently updating their TDP to reflect current conditions and updated vision. Key themes and programs of regional significance emerging from the planning process includes the following.

- Mobility Hub Investments (three Locations)
- Regional Connections to Neighboring Communities and Activity Centers
- Enhanced Transit: Bus Rapid Transit and Passenger Rail

The ACCT 2024 TDP was not adopted at the time of this writing.

The University of Georgia also operates a public transit system and began offering fare free services to the general public in 2020. The University offers fixed route and ADA paratransit services and operates two park-n-ride facilities within Athens, GA.

Notable regionally significant projects identified by the University includes a Bus Rapid Transit service corridor located east of Downtown and connecting to the University's North Campus. This project is in the early planning stages and includes opportunities for connection to proposed regional passenger rail services.

Aviation

The MACORTS Region is serviced by the Athens Ben Epps Airport, a Certificated Commercial Airport located in Athens, GA that supports corporate, military and charter operations. In 2019, the Airport Authority developed a Strategic Plan to expand general aviation services and to attract a and recruit scheduled commercial airline services. The plan lays out strategic goals including:

1. Develop a Comprehensive Development Plan
2. Establish Scheduled and Increase Non-Scheduled Passenger Service
3. Expand the General Aviation Experience
4. Inform and Connect Community, Business and Customers
5. Achieve and Maintain Financial Self-sufficiency

Following the adoption of the Strategic Plan, the airport successfully secured grant funding and TSPLOST funds to support the Capital Improvement Program laid out by the plan. An update to the strategic plan is anticipated in 2024 but was not available at the time of this writing.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Facilities

As previously described, the FHWA formula-based funding program includes eligibility criteria for transportation projects which excludes recreational trails. These projects are vitally important to the multimodal network and a fundamental component of the regional community vision, however funding for these projects has historically only been available through discretionary programs such as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), competitive Federal grant programs, and local funding sources.

The following table of projects was identified during the 2050 MTP as regionally significant projects seeking funding from alternative sources.

Table 12: Projects Seeking Alternative Funding

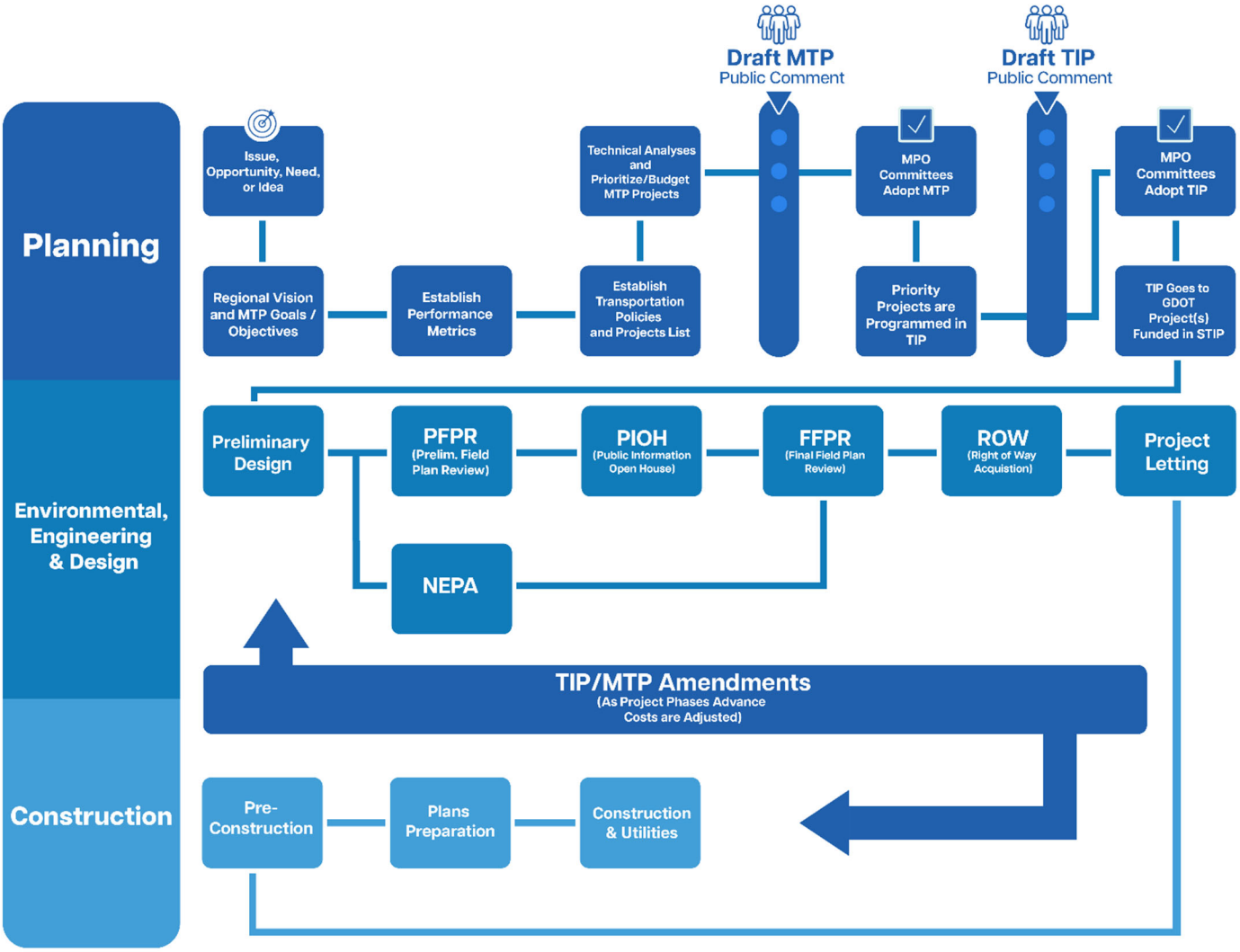
Project ID Number	Location	Project Name	Project Type
P-76	ACC / Oconee	Athens to Atlanta Commuter Rail	Passenger Rail
P-83	Clarke	West Broad / Atlanta Highway BRT	BRT
P-84	Clarke	Lexington Rd US 78 E / W BRT	BRT
SP-31	Clarke	Vincent Drive Multiuse Path	Bike / Ped
TSP-10	Clarke	Trail Creek Trail Extension	Bike / Ped
TSP-15	Clarke	Timothy Road Multi-use Path Extension	Bike / Ped
TSP-12	Clarke	Ben Burton Park Multi-use Path Extension	Bike / Ped
TSP -13	Clarke	Ben Burton Park Multi-use Path Phase II	Bike / Ped
TSP-2	Clarke	Riverbend Rd Bike / Ped Connectivity Improvements	Bike / Ped
TSP-3	Clarke	Jefferson River Road Multi-use Path	Bike / Ped
TSP-16	Clarke	Oconee River Greenway Trail Extension	Bike / Ped
TSP-5	Clarke	Lexington Rd Pedestrian Connectivity	Bike / Ped
TSP-6	Clarke	Cherokee Rd Pedestrian Connectivity	Bike / Ped
TSP-7	Clarke	Firefly Trail Phase III	Bike / Ped
TSP-8	Clarke	Firefly Trail Flyover Bridge	Ped Bridge
TSP-9	Clarke	Firefly Trail Connection to Atlas Way	Bike / Ped

Next Steps

Following the adoption of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the projects within the cost constrained plan either maintain their eligibility, or become eligible, for federal funding. Projects that are selected collaboratively by FHWA, GDOT, and MACORTS will advance into the Transportation Improvement Program where they will begin the process of Scoping, Preliminary Engineering , Right-of-Way acquisitions , Utility Relocation, and Construction.

The following flow chart graphic provides an overview of how projects identified in the MTP move through the TIP funding, environmental, engineering and design phases and ultimately through construction.

Figure 27: Transportation Planning and Program Delivery Process Overview



Appendices

APPENDIX A – FHWA CHECKLIST

APPENDIX B – SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT

APPENDIX C – EXISTING CONDITIONS TECHNICAL REPORT

APPENDIX D – PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

APPENDIX E – TECHNICAL ANALYSIS/NEEDS ANALYSIS

APPENDIX F – TRAVEL DEMAND MODEL REPORT

APPENDIX G – FREIGHT ANALYSIS

APPENDIX H – UNCONSTRAINED PROJECT LIST

APPENDIX I – PRIORITIZATION PROCESS TECH MEMO

Appendices can be found on the MACORTS 2050 MTP webpage.

https://www.macorts.org/2050-mtp-update.html