

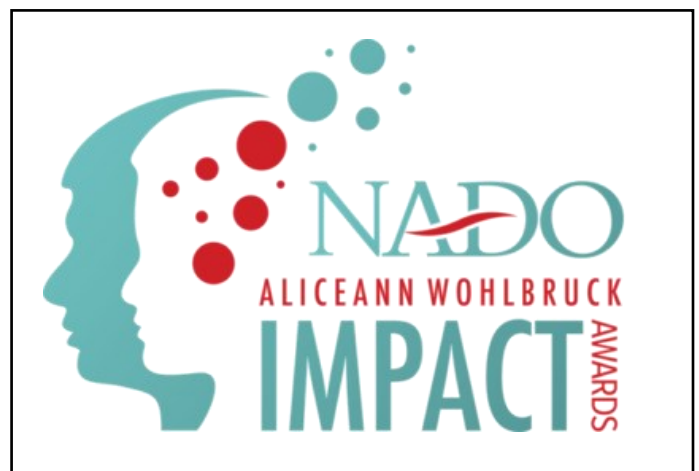
# In the REGION

## SGRC Receives Three 2022 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission was awarded three 2022 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the Valdosta-Lowndes Metropolitan Planning Organization (VLMPO) Low Impact Development Policy, regional and small urban public transit implementation efforts, and workshops and social media campaigns to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety.

Similar to the VLMPO's Complete Streets Policy, the Low Impact Development Policy only applies to roadway improvements that are funded with federal funds.

The VLMPO's Vision2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the 2017 Suwanee-Satilla Regional Water Plan encourage implementation of cost-effective water management strategies that improve the overall quality of surface water in



local water bodies. Low impact development best practices include the installation of pavement, stormwater storage and reuse, bio filtration in detention areas, and green roofs on buildings among other practices.

In 2021, the SGRC assisted the City of Valdosta in launching the Valdosta On-demand micro-transit service and launched its own 18-county regional

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*The Southern Georgia Regional Commission proudly serves Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.*

# Transportation and Environmental

## SGRC Receives Three 2022 Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards (continued)

rural transit service. The Valdosta On-demand service is one of the most successful micro-transit startups for the operator Via, maintaining 300 average daily trips since its second week of operation (more than 64,000 trips in its first year of operation). Recently the City of Valdosta approved funding to add additional vehicles to better meet the mobility needs of the residents.

SGRC Regional Transit assumed operations from eleven existing county transit programs, and is working to restore ridership from COVID-lows by offering new services and reducing administrative burdens. The SGRC has been a leader in implementing these new services amid a global pandemic and using technologies to make these services more efficient and better for the individual users.

As bicycle and pedestrian crashes have increased in the region post-pandemic (like much of the rest of the nation), the SGRC implemented workshops for law enforcement officers on recent Georgia bicycle law changes, guidance on crash reporting, and analysis of local bicycle and pedestrian crash data. These workshops were supplemented by a social media marketing campaign to promote bicycle and pedestrian safety using local statistics and graphics to inform the public about being safe motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

NADO is a Washington, DC-based association that promotes programs and policies to strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through regional cooperation, program delivery, and comprehensive strategies. The Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards showcase organizations for noteworthy projects and practices in rural and small metropolitan transportation planning, program delivery, and special initiatives. Award winners received national recognition during the 2022 National Regional Transportation Conference, held on July 19-21 in Kansas City, Missouri.

According to NADO President Misty Crosby, Executive Director of the Buckeye Hills Regional Commission in Marietta, Ohio: “The Excellence in Regional Transportation Awards highlight advances in transportation services and creative initiatives that improve accessibility, mobility, safety, and quality of life. Programs and projects like these efforts at the SGRC are central to fostering community connections, facilitating economic vitality, and promoting effective transportation planning and networks.”

# Community and Economic Development

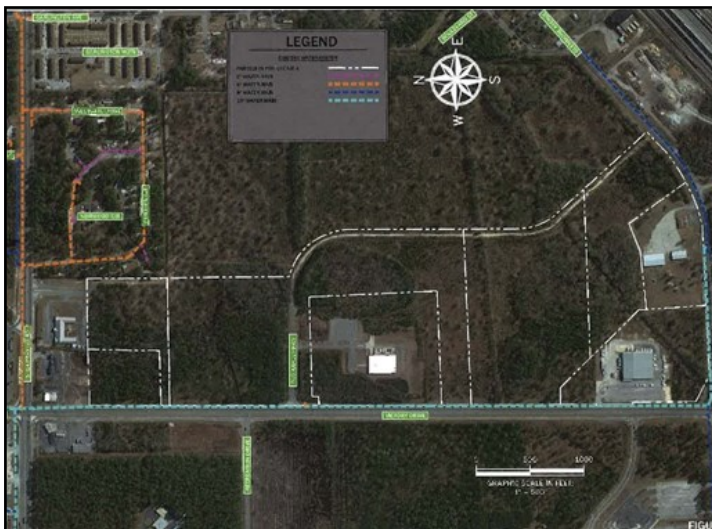
## OneGeorgia Grant Awarded to Waycross-Ware County Development Authority

The SGRC recently assisted the Waycross and Ware County Development Authority in securing One-Georgia Equity Grant funds for corporate park infrastructure improvements. This project will provide the essential infrastructure that is needed for successful industrial recruitment and job creation.

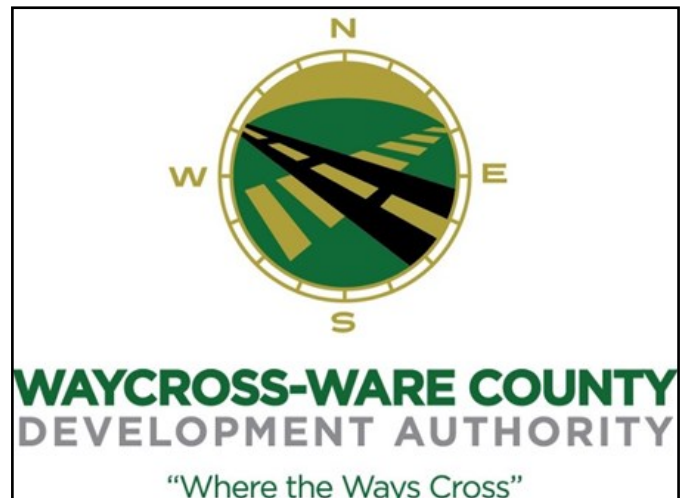
On June 28th, the Waycross and Ware County Development Authority was awarded \$500,000 in One-Georgia funds to construct water improvements to serve the 163.37-acre Waycross-Ware County Corporate Park. The total project cost for the proposed water improvements and land clearance is \$1,170,164.

The OneGeorgia Equity Fund provides financial assistance to rural communities to help build the necessary infrastructure for economic development. Equity funds are also available as loans for several different types of projects, such as constructing speculative buildings in order to attract additional industries

For more information on OneGeorgia Equity, please contact Tonia Hendricks at (912) 285-6097.



Waycross-Ware County Corporate Park site.



# Small Business Lending

## Small Businesses Experience Increased Percentage of Job Openings in FY2022

The Small Business Administration's Office of Advocacy recently released a report on Small Business Hiring Needs using data from the Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) and Job Openings by Employee Count. The report reveals that small businesses with anywhere from 1 to 249 employees have the highest number of job openings compared to businesses with greater numbers of employees.

Following are the statistics:

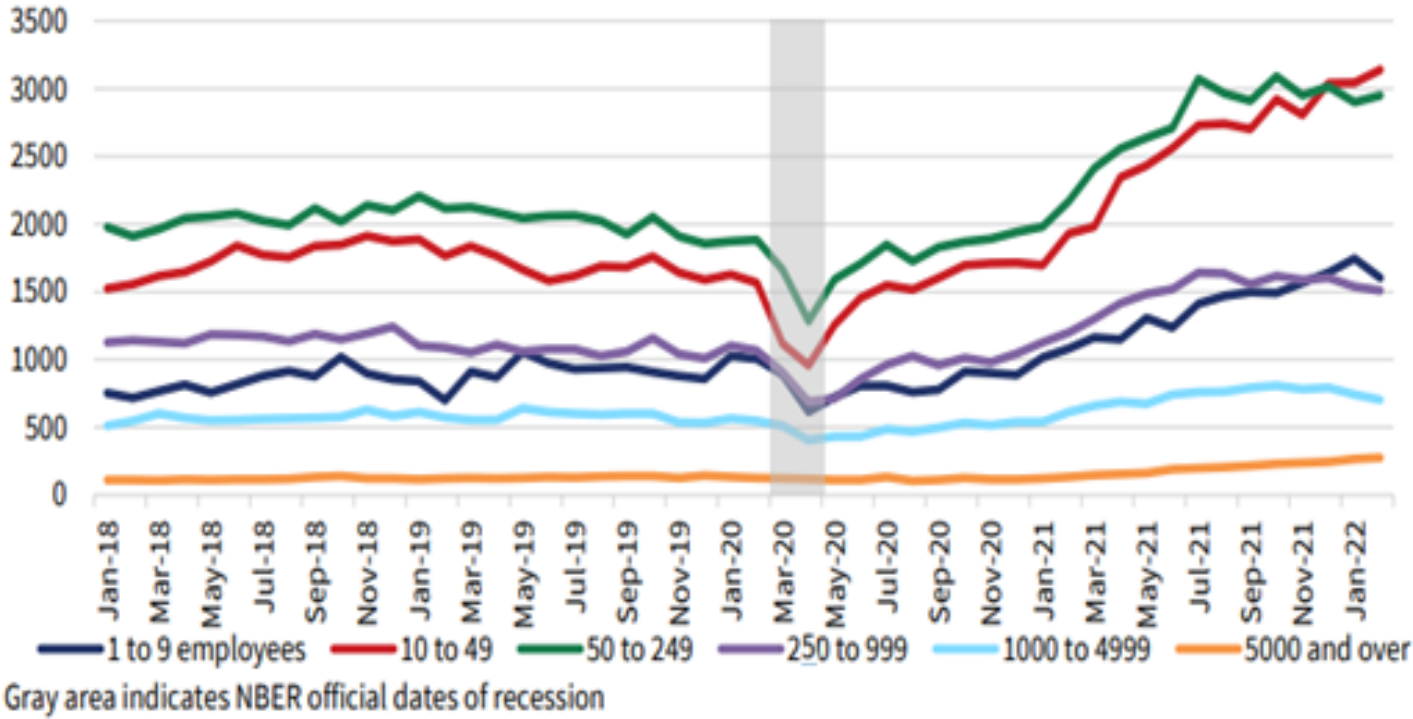
- The number of small businesses in need of new workers has almost doubled since August 2020. In August 2020, 23.4% of businesses cited labor needs, and in March 2022, that number increased to over 40%.
- In February 2022, there were about 11.3 million job openings, close to the December 2021 record of 11.4 million job openings. Prior to that, the pre-COVID peak number of job openings was reached in November 2018 with 7.6 million.
- The pre-COVID record number of job openings for small businesses with 50 to 249 was in January 2019 with 2.2 million job openings. At the end of 2021, this number reached more than 3 million openings.
- Small businesses and larger businesses experienced similar fluctuations in job openings, but at the start of 2022, job openings for the smallest of small businesses (1 to 9 employees) exceeded the number of job openings for larger businesses (250 to 999 employees).
- Although the highest number of job openings historically involves businesses with 50 to 249 employees, at the end of 2021 and the start of 2022 small businesses with 10 to 49 employees have the highest number of job openings compared to every other size category at 3.1 million openings.

For more information on SGRC Lending and the programs offered, contact Larry Wilcher at 229-333-5277 or [lwilcher@sgrc.us](mailto:lwilcher@sgrc.us).

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# Small Business Lending

## Small Businesses Experience Increased Percentage of Job Openings in FY2022 (continued)



Job openings by employer size, using the Job Openings by Employee Count.



# Area Agency on Aging

## Shawn Taylor Receives 2022 ADRC Service Award

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) would like to congratulate Lead Program Manager Shawn Taylor who received a 2022 Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Service Award on June 16 during the Virtual ADRC Summit. Taylor was nominated for demonstrating a high level of motivation and tireless effort toward implementing the Food Fitness First program. Taylor taught the curriculum of nutrition and exercise programs at various sites throughout the SGRC-AAA region. To learn more about Food Fitness First, visit their website at <https://www.foodfitnessfirst.com/>. Taylor also received accolades for efforts to expand the number of participants served in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

Aging Director Scott Courson said, "In addition to providing oversight to contracts across the region and implementing Senior Hunger Coalition activities, Shawn willingly accepted more responsibility to also implement the Food Fitness First program. Her strong commitment to provide progressive and beneficial programming to our seniors is evident in all she does. We are incredibly grateful to have Shawn in the role she is in on the SGRC-AAA Aging team. Congratulations, Shawn!"



**Shawn Taylor, Lead Program Manager for the SGRC-AAA**



## SGRC-AAA Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) Holds Quarterly ADRC Advisory Council Meeting

On June 22, Marie Maxim, RN/Care Coordinator with Diversified Resources, Inc. was a special guest speaker at the quarterly ADRC Advisory Council Meeting at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging in Waycross. Marie discussed the Elderly and Disabled Waiver Program (EDWP) process. Maxim is pictured left with Kristi Hames, ADRC Specialist with the SGRC-AAA.

# Area Agency on Aging

## The SGRC-AAA Participates in Local Area Community Events



Aging Communication & Outreach Specialist Kimberly Rodgers represented the SGRC-AAA on June 3 at the Bacon County Senior Center Health Fair in Alma.



A Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program event was held on June 3 at the Bacon County Senior Center as well as a Health Fair in Alma.



ADRC Assistant Kacey Lee and ADRC Counselor Shelly Cason represented the SGRC-AAA on June 4 in Alma at the Georgia Blueberry Festival.



ADRC Specialist Kristi Hames represented the SGRC-AAA on June 4 at the Hahira PRIDE Festival.



# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Maps Nashville's Cemetery

The SGRC GIS program recently began construction on a web-based cemetery map and database for the City of Nashville. GIS has long been recognized for helping cities and counties make better decisions, but it's also a tool for the preservation of location information that will be prized by generations to come. SGRC-GIS Division Director Rachel Strom said, "Every now and then, we are asked to participate in a project that reminds us of the real value of the tools we provide. Not just to our local governments but to the citizens as well."

Over the years, the SGRC GIS Division has created various solutions for cemeteries of multiple sizes, and will apply that experience for the cemetery project in Nashville. Currently, owner, occupant, dates, and marker photos are being collected and stored in a database linked to the lot location on a GIS map. This information will aid in cemetery management, provide a resource to cemetery visitors, and assist those researching genealogy.

The website under construction features several tools for site visitors to locate the grave site of deceased. A search may be conducted via name, date range of death, or by military service. From the returned results of the searches, the user can select and zoom to any results matching the search criteria. In the historic section, users can see photographs of each of the grave markers and headstones.

The site will be accessible on a traditional PC computer, and also on a smartphone or tablet and the site will look the same on each device. It works with multiple operating systems (iOS, Android, Windows) and does not require that users download an App. Once complete, this information is easily accessed by cemetery staff and/or the general public via an interactive website. For questions about this project or how the SGRC GIS division can help businesses and government meet their goals, contact Rachel Strom at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us).



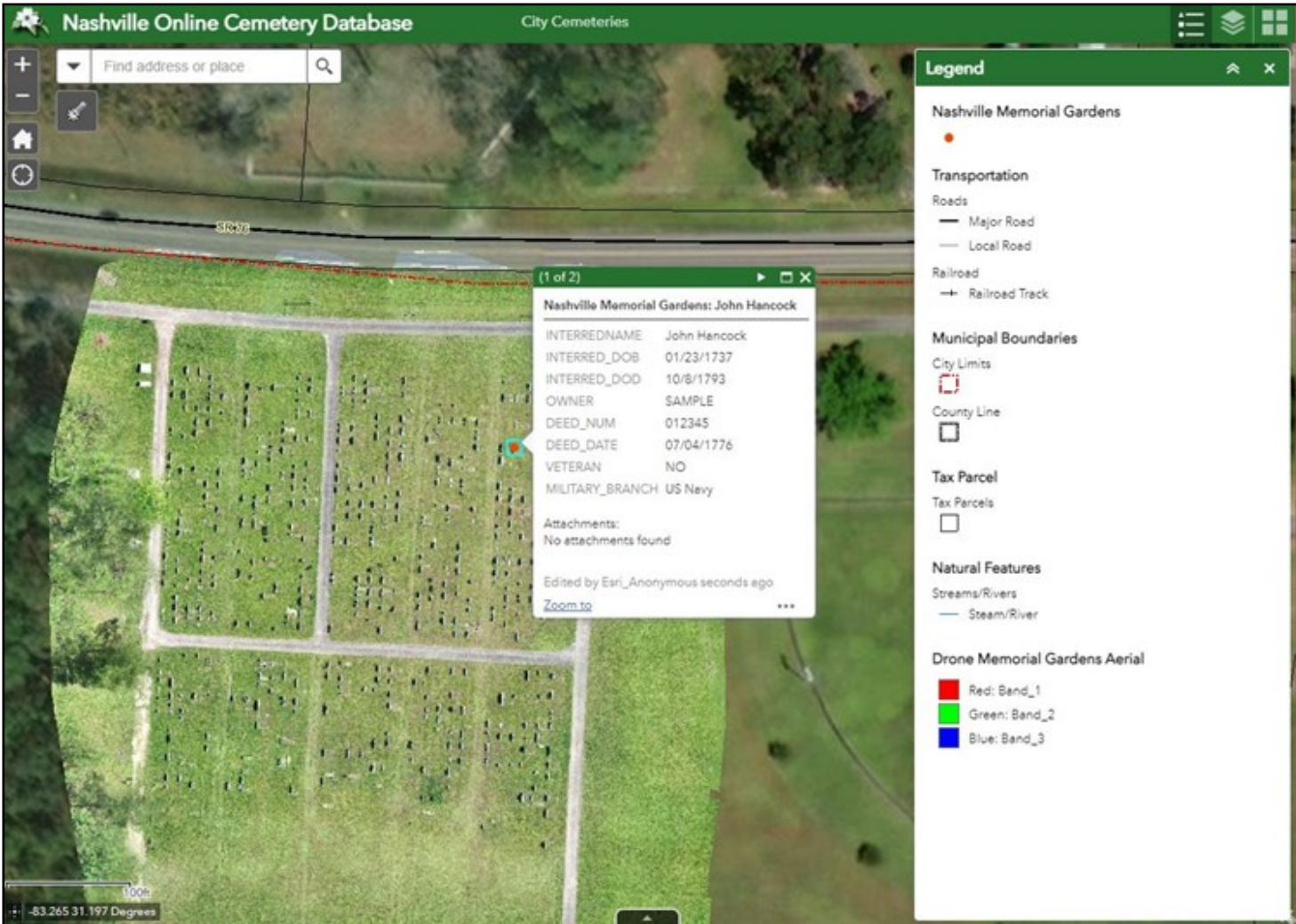
**SGRC Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) pilots in the field at Nashville Cemetery.**

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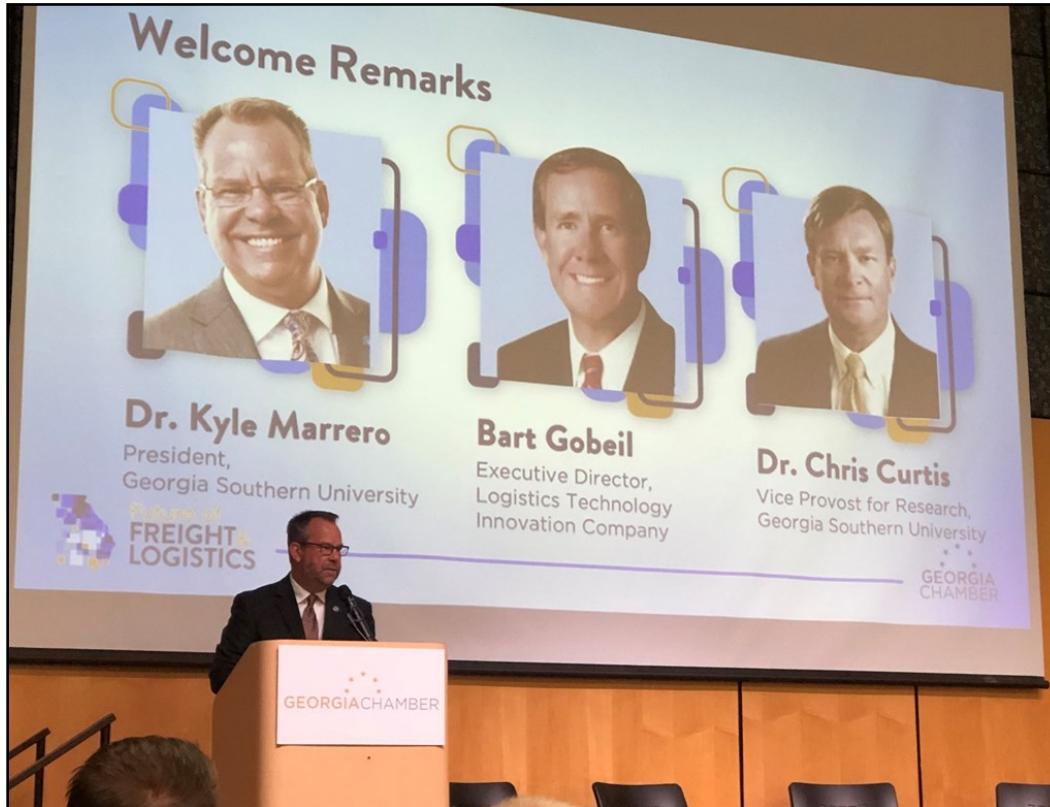
# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC-GIS Maps Nashville's Cemetery (continued)



Nashville's Cemetery web map

# Workforce Development



**Pictured above is Chris Clark, President and CEO of the GA Chamber of Commerce**

## **SGRC Workforce Staff Attend Future of Freight and Logistics Event**

On Wednesday, June 29, Amy Jones, Business Services/Sector Partnership Coordinator, attended the Georgia Chamber of Commerce Future of Freight and Logistics event at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Ga. The event was held to bring regional leaders together to hear how South Georgia is preparing for the supply chain boom. Dr. Kyle Marrero, President of Georgia Southern University, welcomed attendees to the event. The day included many speakers and panels to include the Freight & Logistics Plan for infrastructure investment. Data shows there will be a population increase in Georgia of 34% by 2045 and the infrastructure needs to be ready. Additional discussions covered the Ports located in Brunswick and Savannah and how they are working with high schools to create direct hire programs to get students into sustainable careers right out of high school.

To find openings for road construction jobs visit the web at [www.georgiaroadjobs.com/en-us/](http://www.georgiaroadjobs.com/en-us/)

For questions or more information, contact the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at 912-285-6097 or Amy Jones at [ajones@sgrc.us](mailto:ajones@sgrc.us).

# Local Government Services

## SGRC Planning Staff to Host Model Ordinance Workshop

On Tuesday, August 30, the Governmental Services Planning Department will conduct a workshop to present several model ordinances. The workshop will be held at the Southern Georgia Regional Commission Office in Valdosta, Georgia, located at 1937 Carlton Adams Drive, from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. There is no fee for this workshop and the SGRC will seek AICP credit for attendees.

The following model ordinance will be presented at the meeting:

- Preservation of Historic Resources
- Telecommunications Towers
- Solar Farms
- Tiny Houses and Tiny House Developments
- Manufactured Housing
- Cryptocurrency Mining and Data Centers
- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure
- Outdoor Restaurant Seating



**Model Ordinance Workshop held in Valdosta on February 19**

The model ordinances, along with associated guidance will be provided for all participants. Time will be reserved for questions and discussion. Please contact Elizabeth Backe, Planning & Transportation Director, for more details or to register for this event. Backe may be reached at 229-333-5277 or via email at [ebacke@sgrc.us](mailto:ebacke@sgrc.us). Staff will also reach out to local communities' Planning and Zoning contacts with an email invitation to the meeting.



# Contact the SGRC

## SGRC Council 2022 Meeting Schedule Meeting Locations TBD

August 25, 2022 – 11:00 am

September 22, 2022 – 11:00 am

No Meeting - October

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner -  
October 11, 2022  
(subject to change)

November – No meeting (combined with  
December meeting)

December 8, 2022 – 11:00 am  
(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

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Web Address:  
**[www.sgrc.us](http://www.sgrc.us)**

Facebook:  
**[https://www.facebook.com/  
SouthernGeorgiaRC](https://www.facebook.com/SouthernGeorgiaRC)**



An advertisement for SGRC Regional Transit. At the top, it says 'want Getting you where you need to go.' with 'need' crossed out. Below is a map of Georgia with 15 counties highlighted in various colors and labeled: Turner, Ben Hill, Irwin, Coffee, Bacon, Tift, Berrien, Atkinson, Pierce, Brantley, Cook, Lanier, Ware, Charlton, Brooks, Lowndes, Clinch, and Echols. Surrounding the map are four circular images: a white transit bus, a person in a wheelchair being assisted, a woman smiling, and a group of people eating. At the bottom, it says 'sgrc REGIONAL TRANSIT' and 'Call 855-360-7475 to schedule your ride today! www.letsridesouthga.org'.