

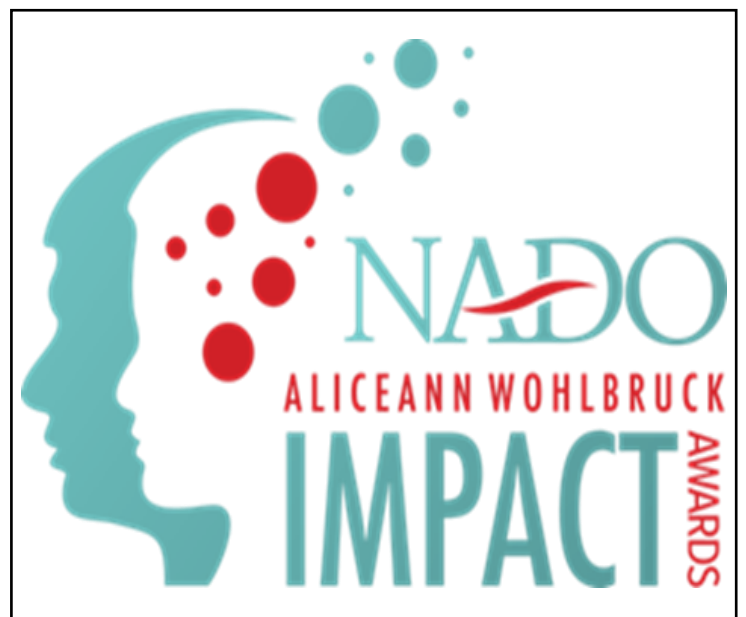
In the REGION

SGRC Receives 2021 NADO Impact Awards in Two Divisions

Each year, the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) honors members who have exhibited creative and innovative problem solving and/or program delivery practices that promote regional strategies, partnerships, and solutions to strengthen the economic competitiveness and quality of life across America's local communities.

The SGRC received two NADO Impact Awards; one award in the Geographic Information Services (GIS) Division and one in the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) Division. See pages 2-4 of this newsletter for information on each award.

The 2021 list of NADO award recipients included 102 projects from seventy organizations and spanned twenty-four states across the nation. In Georgia, six organizations received twelve NADO Impact Awards. A list of the 2021 NADO award recipients may be viewed at the following link: https://www.nado.org/2021_impactawards/.



NADO provides advocacy, education, resources, research, and training for the nation's regional development organizations. To learn more about NADO, visit the website found at: <https://www.nado.org>.

For more information on the SGRC, visit the website at <https://www.sgrc.us>.

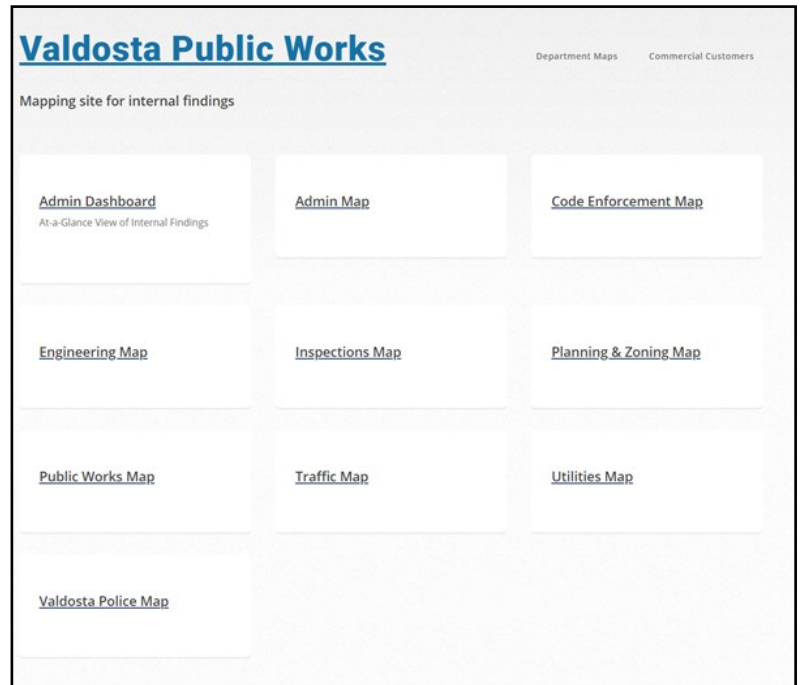
The Southern Georgia Regional Commission proudly serves Atkinson, Bacon, Ben Hill, Berrien, Brantley, Brooks, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Cook, Echols, Irwin, Lanier, Lowndes, Pierce, Tift, Turner, and Ware Counties.

Geographic Information Services (GIS)

SGRC-GIS receives a 2021 NADO Impact Award

The SGRC-GIS Division received a NADO Impact Award for its “City of Valdosta, Public Works Findings Solution” submission. This project supports an improved quality of life through information dissemination and increased response time by streamlining the communication of maintenance issues between the various city departments.

In addition to the Code Enforcement Department, the City of Valdosta’s Public Works Department employs an individual to canvas the city looking for issues, internally called “findings,” that may or may not have been reported by citizens. Prior to the GIS solution, the individual traveled around the city, took pictures of issues, made notes on a smart phone, and emailed the results to their own email address. Once back at the office, the individual created a spreadsheet, imported notes and pictures, and disseminated the information. Although the process may seem simple, it was time consuming.



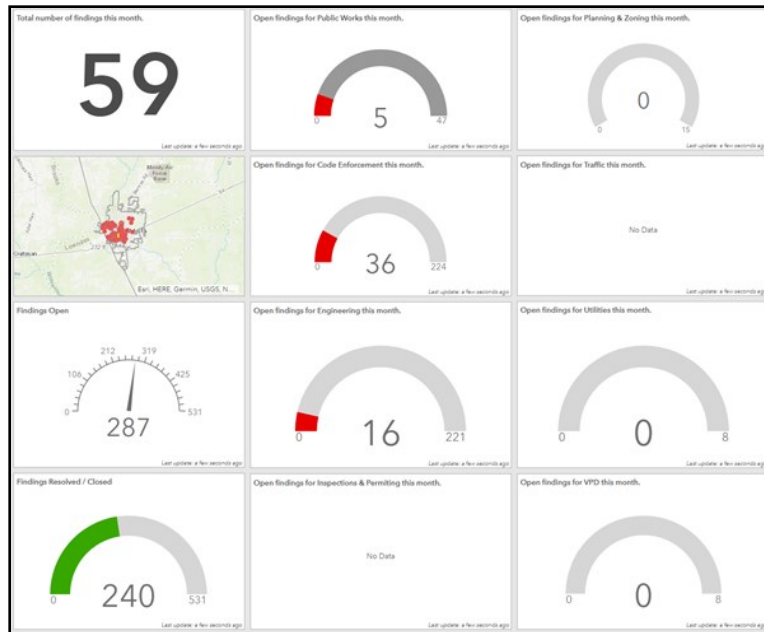
GIS solution main page with information links

According to SGRC-GIS Director Rachel Strom, GIS staff knew that there were other options and that a solution utilizing ArcGIS Online, and a field app called “Collector” would streamline the process and enable real-time information sharing across the city. The solution was created, and grew to include individual city department maps, an administrative dashboard, and even individual maps for each department – filtered only to the issues assigned to that department. A main page with links to all of the information sharing options was created to maintain organization as well.

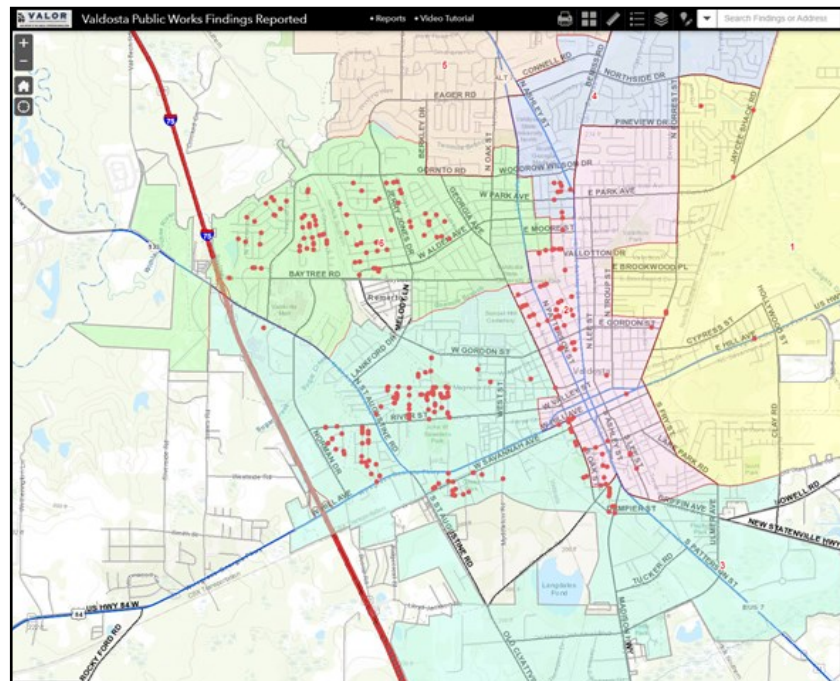
Please contact Rachel Strom at rstrom@sgrc.us or via phone at (229) 333-5277 for more information, questions related to this project, or other GIS solutions.

Geographic Information Services (GIS)

SGRC GIS receives a 2021 NADO Impact Award (continued)



GIS solution administrative dashboard



GIS solution city map

Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

SGRC-AAA receives 2021 NADO Impact Award for Certified AARP Age-Friendly States and Communities Status

The SGRC-AAA Division received a NADO Impact Award for its certification as an AARP Georgia and World Health Organization's (WHO) Age-Friendly Community. SGRC Aging Division Director Scott Courson was the project lead on the NADO Impact Award and will guide the AARP Age-Friendly States and Communities initiative. The implementation of the AARP initiative will also involve staff in other SGRC divisions: Planning and Local Government, Transportation and Environmental, Community and Economic Development, and Workforce Development.



The AARP Age-Friendly Network encourages states, counties, cities, towns, and rural areas to prepare for the rapid aging of the nation's population. The network encourages elected officials and local leaders to focus on and strengthen the features and services that help to make communities livable for residents of all ages, from the cradle through retirement. Through the age-friendly program, AARP assists participating communities in becoming more livable and age-friendly through various domains such as creating safer and more walkable streets, more housing and transportation options, better access to key services, and opportunities for residents to participate in community activities.

Aging Director Scott Courson said, "While we are doing much of this work already, the AARP Age-Friendly Status will multiply that effect and focus our efforts based on the needs of our area. Senior hunger is a top priority for Georgia and access to grocery stores is an issue. If we find ways to get nutritious food into these communities, then that would benefit not only older adults but everyone."

Courson also said that he is grateful to be working with other divisions of the SGRC on this project and he believes that the energy and expertise that they bring to the initiative will result in an even greater level of successful implementation. For more information on AARP Livable Communities go to <https://states.aarp.org/georgia/section/livable-communities>.

For more information on the SGRC-AAA, visit the website at www.sgrc.us/aaa.html.

Community and Economic Development

Grants Specialist Lindsay Ray Completes Georgia Academy for Economic Development Essentials Program

SGRC Grants Specialist Lindsay Ray has completed the Georgia Academy for Economic Development's *The Essentials* program that was held in Moultrie on September 8th. Participants of the program included community and economic development professionals, elected officials, public servants, business leaders, educators, and engaged citizens from across Georgia. *The Essentials* program provided attendees an opportunity to gain a unique understanding of the complexities of economic and community development on the local, regional, and state levels.

Created in 1993, the Academy assembles a cross-section of experts, research-based curriculum, and resources necessary for building a vibrant economy. The Board of Directors of the Academy represent public and private economic development organizations and agencies across Georgia. Georgia EMC and Georgia Power provide facilitators for the program on behalf of their members and stakeholders. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides staff and resources to execute the program statewide. Since its inception, the Academy has provided training for thousands of Georgians.

For more information on the Georgia Academy for Economic Development: *The Essentials*, visit www.GeorgiaAcademy.org.



Lindsay Ray, SGRC Grants Specialist



Trips to a local COVID-19 vaccination site are free to individuals age 60 and older.

Call the Area Agency on Aging at 1-888-732-4464

Local Government Services

Business Incentives Within an Enterprise Zone

Governments often recognize a need for revitalization and in response may implement enterprise zones within a designated Urban Redevelopment Area to encourage investments. Incentives are only available in the designated redevelopment area. Enterprise Zones are tools to drive economic development within a community. The General Assembly enacted the Enterprise Zone Employment Act in 1997.

Enterprise zones are designed to stimulate business growth and new job creation in an economically distressed community, where market forces have not worked to stimulate growth. The core benefits are tax credits for capital investment, research and development, new jobs, and the hiring of additional local workers.

There are additional incentive options for having an enterprise zone. They can also allow businesses to apply for state loans, property tax credits, investment tax credits, tax increment financing, public infrastructure and services improvements, venture capital funding, and income tax credits. The aggregate tax break makes a big difference to business startups and expansions, often requiring large capital expenditures that would otherwise be difficult to afford.

Enterprise Zones enable the community to leverage incentives for businesses locating or expanding within the targeted areas. Within an area designated as an Enterprise Zone, the City/County may waive or reduce local regulatory fees, such as occupation taxes, license fees, and building inspection and/or permitting fees for qualifying businesses. Exemptions for ad valorem tax are also available in the designated Enterprise Zone; however, tax exemptions must not exceed the schedule provided under the Enterprise Zone Employment Act. These abatements apply to residential and commercial properties but exclude sales and use taxes and taxes imposed by the State, County, and school districts. Enterprise Zone designation remains effective for ten years. Of note, businesses that qualify for the tax exemption may receive the entire ten-year exemption schedule regardless of when the Enterprise Zone designation sunsets.

The following recommended incentives may apply to any new qualifying business that locates its primary business within a designated Enterprise Zone and increases employment by five or more new full-time jobs. These businesses may be a new business or the expansion/reinvestment of an existing business and include retail, manufacturing, distribution, processing, telecom, tourism, research and development, new residential construction/rehabilitation businesses, finance, insurance, real estate, and other listed companies as mentioned in Code 36-88-4.

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Local Government Services

Business Incentives within an Enterprise Zone (continued)

In addition, whenever possible, 10% of the new employees should be low-income or moderate-income individuals.

Qualifying businesses may receive the exemption schedule pictured below, which results in the following tax payments: for the first five years, a business pays 0% of the ad valorem tax; during the sixth and seventh year, the business pays 20% of the ad valorem tax; during the eighth-year, the business pays 40% of the ad valorem tax; during the ninth year the business pays 60% of the ad valorem tax; during the tenth year the business pays 70% of the ad valorem tax. After the tenth and final year, the business's ad valorem tax is paid at 100%.

In addition to other incentives, the governing authority creating the enterprise zone may include in the ordinance an exemption or abatement from occupational taxes, regulatory fees, building inspection fees, and other fees that would otherwise have been imposed on a qualifying business.

Contact the SGRC Planning Staff at (229)333-5277 for further information on Urban Redevelopment Plans and Enterprise Zones.

Local property tax exemption schedule recommendation

Ad Valorem Property Tax Exemption Schedule For Qualifying Businesses within an Enterprise Zone									
First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year	Fifth Year	Sixth Year	Seventh Year	Eighth Year	Ninth Year	Tenth Year
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	80%	60%	40%	30%

Workforce Development

Focus on Healthcare – Sector Strategy Partnership in Action

The SGRC Workforce Development Division (WorkSource Southern Georgia) and the South Georgia Healthcare Group are pleased to share the first in a series of educational videos that will highlight healthcare employers and occupations in our region.

In 2017, the Workforce Development Division was awarded grant funding to explore and begin development on Sector Strategy partnerships that encompassed employers, post-secondary education, secondary education, workforce and other partner agencies. The initial focus was on healthcare, one of the area's most in-demand industry sectors. The partnership has now been branded as the South Georgia Healthcare Group.



Dorminy Medical Center's Rehab Facility

The series of videos was identified as a tool that could be used to educate secondary and post-secondary students on the employers and careers available in the region. The goal is to help youth identify healthcare as a potential career pathway, which will result in a larger labor pool for regional healthcare employers. The videos will be posted on the SGRC website as well as available for use by the SGRC's education partners.

The first video introduces Dorminy Medical Center's Rehabilitation Facility. The facility works with patients (birth to adult) who have had an orthopedic injury, orthopedic surgery, or who have neurological disorders. Those services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy.

SGRC Workforce Director Roberta Lovett said, "We encourage everyone to view the video on the WorkSource Southern Georgia Facebook page and while you are there, be sure to like and follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/WorkSourceSouthernGeorgia/videos/3011170229129634>."

For more information on careers at Dorminy Medical Center visit: <https://www.dorminymedical.org/careers>.

To learn more about WorkSource Southern Georgia and the South Georgia Healthcare Group contact Amy Jones, Business Services Coordinator at (912) 285-6097 or by email at ajones@sgrc.us.

Continued on the next page

Workforce Development

Focus on Healthcare – Sector Strategy Partnership in Action (continued)



**Jane Reece, Occupational Therapist
Director of Dorminy Medical Rehab Services**



General Rehab Equipment



Rehab Equipment for Children



Physical Therapy



Speech Therapy Swallowing Dysfunction

Transportation and Environmental

Southern Georgia Region Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Update

In 2017, the SGRC's Council directed staff to carry out the project selection process in coordination with the Georgia Department of Transportation for a regional transportation sales tax referendum. Upon completion of the SGRC's work, voters in the Southern Georgia Region passed a referendum to enact a regional transportation sales tax which began collections in October 2018.



Through July 2021, the region collected over \$167 million, 20% above the amount projected to be collected at that time. \$125 million has been allocated to 151 projects included on the regional project list (see projects here: <http://www.ga-tia.com/Project>) and nearly \$42 million has been allocated to local governments for local discretionary transportation uses. Of the 151 regional projects, forty-nine have been completed and at least twenty-seven projects are currently under construction.

Local governments have chosen to use discretionary funds for a variety of purposes, including paving roads, purchasing pipe and other supplies for road maintenance, and purchasing road graders for dirt road maintenance and other uses.

Due to robust collections in the SGRC region, the Southern Georgia TIA Citizen's Review Panel discussed the future of this funding source in the region. Currently, it is estimated that increased collections will result in the sales tax ending 24-36 months early. The SGRC staff are currently examining potential dates for a referendum that will continue the regional sales tax in either 2025 or 2026.

While in the process of compiling a new regional project list, the SGRC staff is also developing methodologies to assist local governments to identify future projects for submission. Additional information is forthcoming on this effort.

Anyone with questions about the Southern Georgia TIA program may contact Amy Martin at amartin@sgrc.us or (229)333-5277.



Road grading equipment purchased by a local government

Small Business Lending

SGRC Small Business Lending Welcomes New Member to Loan Board of Directors

The Small Business Lending Department would like to welcome Morris Tankersley, the newest member of the Loan Board of Directors for the Southern Georgia Area Resource Development Agency (SGARDA) and the Southern Georgia Area Development Corporation (SGADC). Mr. Tankersley replaces board member Dereck Sumner, who served for the last four years. Mr. Tankersley was nominated by the Loan Board at the August 24, 2021 meeting and appointed by the SGRC Council at the August 26, 2021 Council Meeting.

Mr. Morris Tankersley is the Tifton Market President for Commercial Banking Company. He has been with CBC in Tifton since 2015 and has been in the commercial lending and banking industry for over 20 years.

Mr. Tankersley is a graduate of Georgia Southwestern State University with a degree in Business Administration. He also holds an Associate's Degree from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and is a graduate of the University of Georgia Banking School. He is a native of the Tift County area and is actively involved in the community. He is a member of the Tifton Rotary Club and serves on several committees with First Baptist Church.

Director of the SGRC Small Business Lending Division Rex Dorsey said, "We'd like to thank Mr. Tankersley for his willingness to serve and welcome him to the Loan Board of Directors. We look forward to the expertise and contributions he will bring to the board and its mission to promote the growth of small businesses throughout the region." For more information on Small Business Lending call the SGRC Lending Division at (229) 333-5277.



Morris Tankersley



Contact the SGRC

SGRC Council 2021

Meeting Schedule

Meeting Locations TBD

October - No Meeting

October 26, 2021 -

Area Officials Appreciation Dinner

November – No meeting

(combined with December meeting)

December 9, 2021 – 11:00 am

(subject to change)



SOUTHERN GEORGIA
REGIONAL COMMISSION

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(229) 333-5277

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(229) 333-5312

SGRC Welcomes New Employee



*Cameron Chavarria,
Transportation Planner*

Chavarria was born and raised in South Georgia and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Leadership with minors in Political Science and Public Administration. He is currently a graduate student at Valdosta State University in the Master of Public Administration Program. Chavarria said, "I believe my background and public relation skills will allow me to work well on developing transportation plans for the region. Some of my first assignments included developing a public participation plan and a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, both for the new Valdosta On-Demand Transit System." Welcome, Cameron!

Waycross Office

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