

# In the REGION

## Including Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Comprehensive Plan Updates

Electric vehicle charging infrastructure is necessary for all-electric cars to reach the final destination on trips that exceed the maximum range per vehicle. Generally, electric vehicles (EV's) are fully charged overnight at the vehicle owners' home and/or work. The vehicle may need to be charged again, on the way to a destination, if the total distance to the destination exceeds the maximum range per full charge of the vehicle. The chart on page two shows some of the ranges for 2020 model year all-electric cars.

The SGRC region has convenient traveling routes to beaches and amusement park areas in Georgia and Florida. There are also many ecological and agri-tourism destinations within the region that make day trips possible from major metropolitan areas such as Jacksonville, Macon, Albany, Tallahassee, and more. Owners of EV's must plan trips ahead of time to ensure that charging stations exist along the planned route.

Some localities install EV charging stations and do not charge a user fee. This benefit can be a powerful incentive to visitors and travelers to stop in those localities especially if EV owners notice restaurants, coffee shops, etc. to visit while stopping to charge their EV.



***Pictured above: Tesla EV charging stations in Tifton***

The desire to develop electric vehicle infrastructure into communities makes sense and should be included in comprehensive plan updates. This desire can be expressed in the goals, needs

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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.*

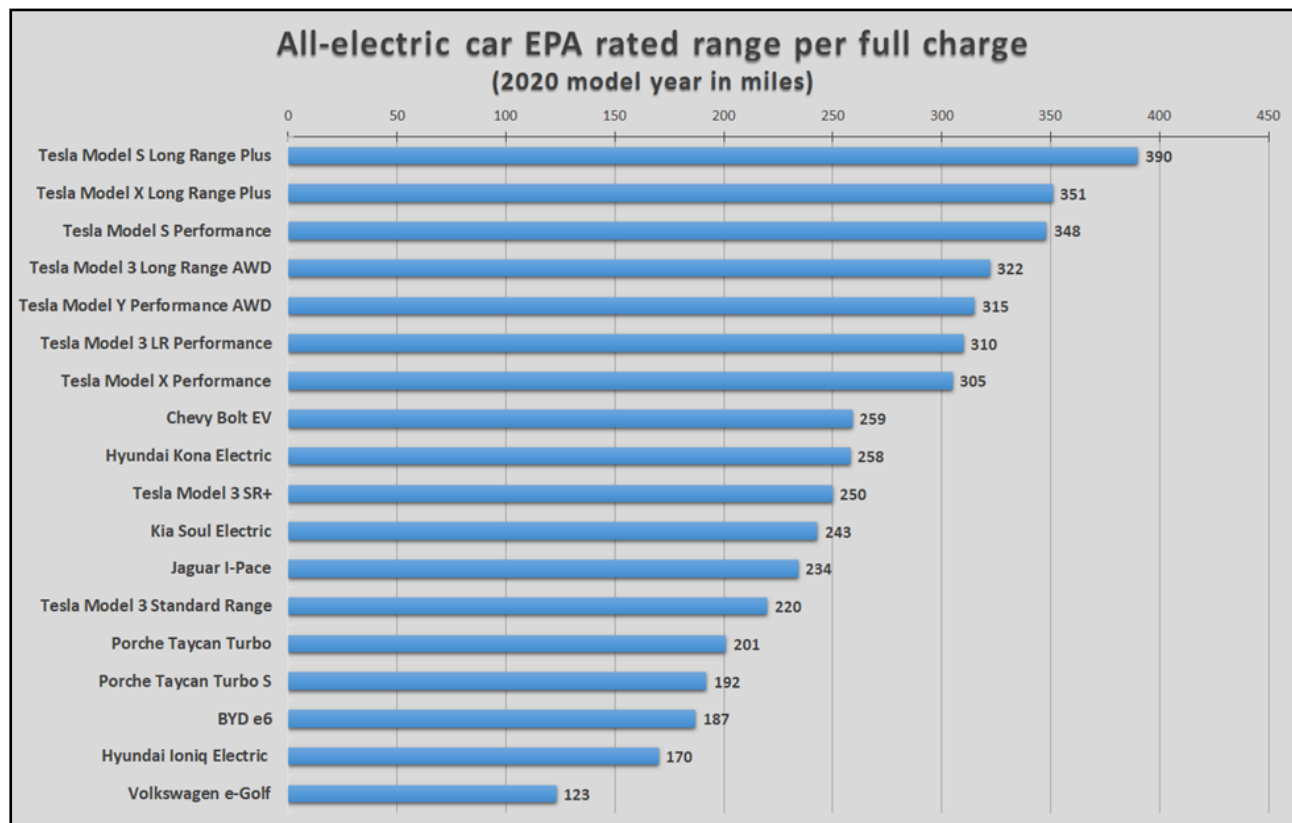
# Local Government Services

## Including Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Comprehensive Plan Updates (continued)

or opportunities, policies, and community work program sections of the comprehensive plan. Federal grant monies to develop EV infrastructure may be available in the near future. Grant applications have greater chances of success if the community clearly demonstrates visionary electric vehicle infrastructure planning in their comprehensive plan.

As demand for EV's rises, additional charging stations will be needed to meet the charging needs of the traveling public. Bloomberg New Energy Finance estimates that EV's will reach 10% of global passenger vehicle sales in 2025. EV's made up 3% of car sales globally in 2020. Battery technology is advancing, with charging speeds and EV ranges accelerating – leading to shorter wait times at charging stations with less frequent stops for charging.

Owners of EV's can access the locations of charging stations through multiple websites, including the example on page three from Google maps. This map shows the locations of several charging stations (by Electrify America, Tesla, and ChargePoint) in South Georgia.



*The chart above shows ranges for 2020 model year all-electric cars*

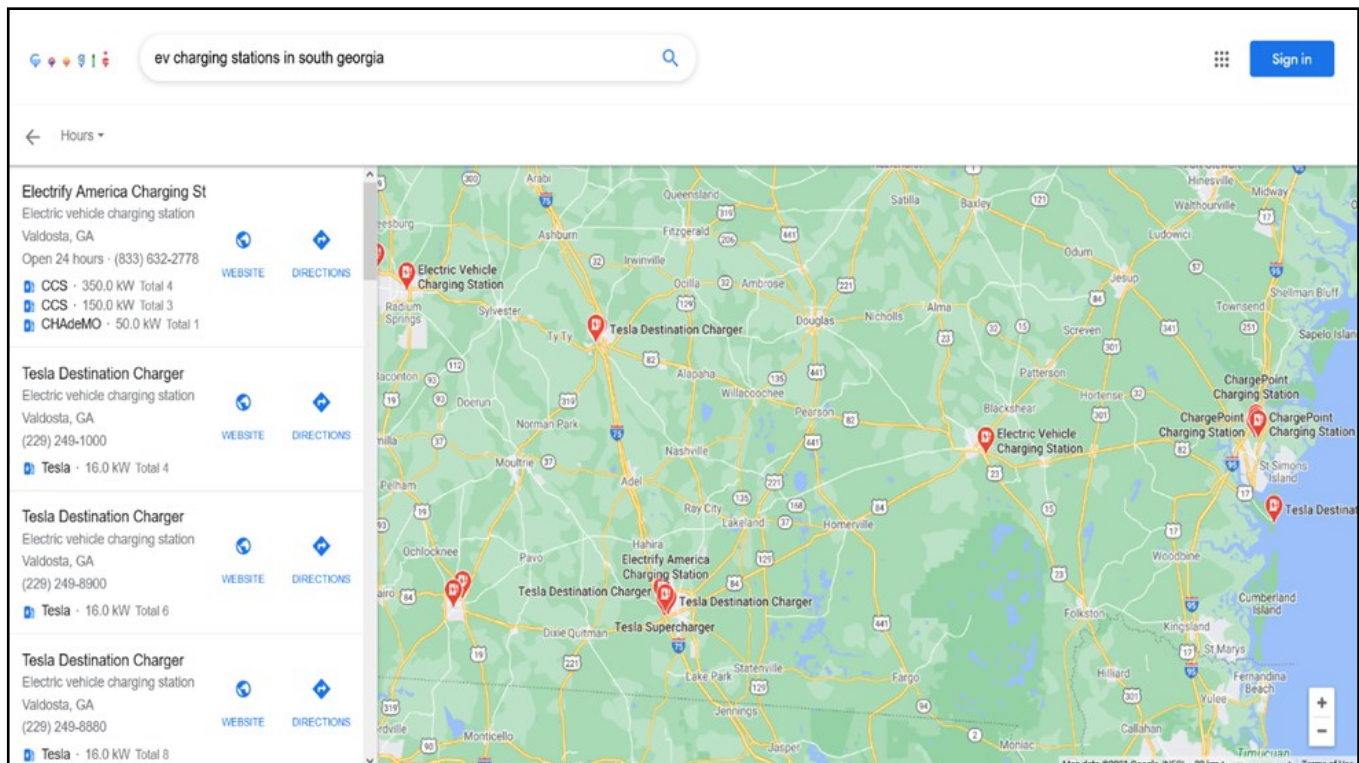
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# Local Government Services

## Including Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure in Comprehensive Plan Updates (continued)

SGRC Planning Services and Transportation staff are available to assist with EV charging infrastructure planning and ordinance development. SGRC Community and Economic Development staff are available to assist with grant writing preparation and administration.

For additional details and assistance, SGRC staff are available at (229) 333-5277.



*Pictured above a Google Map of EV charging stations located in South Georgia*

### Resources:

BloombergNEF's Electric Vehicle Outlook 2020: <https://about.bnef.com/electric-vehicle-outlook/>

USDOT Federal Highway Administration Alternative Fuel Corridor Maps:

[https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative\\_fuel\\_corridors/maps/](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/alternative_fuel_corridors/maps/)

SGRC's EV Infrastructure Model Ordinance: <https://www.sgrc.us/model-ordinances.html>

assistance,.

# Geographic Information Services (GIS)

## SGRC GIS UAV\Drone Services Available

The SGRC-GIS offers aerial photos of specific sites through its Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)\Drone service. SGRC-GIS Director Rachel Strom said, “Drone services were not made to take the place of a county-wide flight, but if detailed pictures of a specific area are needed, the SGRC-GIS division can help by using a UAV/Drone.”

The following is a list of tasks that could be accomplished by using an UAV/Drone:

- view an area with thick scrub brush that is difficult to navigate
- view the top of a tall structure, such as water tower, without climbing the tower
- create a detailed map of a cemetery
- calculate the volume of debris or material
- create a three dimensional (3D) model of a project site

For more information on how the SGRC GIS UAV\drone pilots are available to help, please contact SGRC-GIS Director Rachel Strom at [rstrom@sgrc.us](mailto:rstrom@sgrc.us).



*Thomas County Sand Pit project: UAV aerial photo of sand pit.*

# Information Technology (IT)

## SGRC-IT Shares Information Regarding Differences Between Home and Work Computers

The SGRC-IT Division staff are often asked by small local government customers why some computers are so much more inexpensive than others. According to SGRC-IT Director Larry Adams, to better understand the price differences in computers, local governments should compare the grade, components, and operating systems of computers before simply choosing the lowest priced option.

The first step in comparing computers is to determine whether the computer being considered is a consumer grade or business grade. Many computer manufacturers offer what appears to be the same computer make and model in both the home and business divisions; however, the computers are not actually the same. The following are some differences between consumer grade and business grade computers that should be considered before a purchase is made.



Consumer grade computer components are usually purchased from the lowest priced supplier with little emphasis on quality or reliability over the extended time period that most small governments keep them. Since these components are actually the inner-workings of the computer, they are very important. Poorly made components will cause instability, poor performance, or overall failure of the computer and this could happen long before it is time to replace the computer.

In contrast, business grade computers are built with higher quality components that are tested more rigorously. These components are designed for business use, and more often include higher grade materials and name-brand parts. This emphasis on durability means that a business class laptop or desktop should last for several years. Obviously, a local government would most likely want to purchase business grade computers, as they are more reliable and last longer.

Finally, software and operating systems should be considered. A business grade computer may come with operating system and software releases more suitable to the work of a business or government, whereas consumer grade computers may not have adequate operating systems and software. Choosing the perfect machine is not always easy, but it is very easy to go wrong if the cost of the computer is the only concern.

For assistance deciding on the purchase of a computer and/or more information on assessing computer needs, contact Larry Adams by email at [ladams@sgrc.us](mailto:ladams@sgrc.us) or the SGRC-IT department by phone at (229) 333-5277.

# Transportation and Environmental

## SGRC Awarded Georgia Adopt-A-Stream Watershed Award

The Georgia Adopt-A-Stream (AAS) Watershed Award recognizes regional government agencies that exceed standards in implementing the five Adopt-A-Stream goals. The goals of Georgia Adopt-A-Stream are: (1) increase public awareness of the State's nonpoint source pollution and water quality issues, (2) collect quality baseline water quality data, (3) gather observations, (4) encourage partnerships between citizens and their local government, and (5) provide citizens with tools and training to evaluate and protect their local waterways.

The SGRC Environmental Department was honored with this award in March 2021 during the Annual AAS Conference. Work through the New River Project and the Regional Water Quality Assessment Project has distinguished the SGRC among other organizations.



***Megan Parker***

Transportation and Environmental Director Corey Hull said of staff, regional partners, and volunteers, “We are grateful for your excitement, involvement, and contributions that led to this success. Thank you for all that you do!”

Hull said there were many challenges in 2020, but the team overcame those challenges to implement twelve Agricultural, nine Residential Septic, and two Urban Best Management Practices (BMPs). Additionally, the Transportation and Environmental division created pre- and post-BMP Monitoring and Contemporary Data Collection plans to use in the sampling methodology, which is used to educate volunteers and regional partners in the success of the projects.

The SGRC hosted five AAS Training Events to engage the public to take interest and protect local waterways. Six monitoring sites were established for the New River Project where ninety-three monitoring events occurred, and 170 sites were established through the Regional Water Quality Project where sampling started in Brooks County on April 5th, 2021. SGRC staff held six workshops for both currently active projects which included: covering topics related to feral swine eradication, water quality, natural resources, nonpoint source pollution, sustainable agriculture, and agricultural and environmental policy. Finally, through the Regional Water Quality Assessment Project, SGRC will work to create a list of priority sites by county and on the regional level to encourage BMP implementation to further improve the region's water quality. If you are interested in a water quality improvement program in your community, contact Megan Parker, Environmental Project Manager, at [mparker@sgrc.us](mailto:mparker@sgrc.us) or (229) 333-5277.

# Community and Economic Development

## Sycamore is Awarded EDA CARES Act Funding for Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements

In March, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded \$452,900 in CARES Act funding to the City of Sycamore for the construction of much needed improvements to the wastewater treatment facility, increasing its capacity and making it more resilient against future disaster events. The improvements will mitigate the potential for future economic injury by allowing the City to provide adequate and sustained sewer service, which will support economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic impacts. Once completed, the project will save jobs, spur private investment, and strengthen the regional economy.

The successful EDA grant application was written and submitted by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission. SGRC Community and Economic Development staff will administer the project.



*City of Sycamore Wastewater Treatment Facility*

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# Community and Economic Development

## Sycamore is Awarded EDA CARES Act Funding For Wastewater Treatment Facility Improvements (continued)



*City of Sycamore Wastewater Treatment Facility*



# Area Agency on Aging (AAA)

## SGRC-AAA Receives Certificate of Achievement For Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission's Area Agency on Aging (SGRC-AAA) was recently recognized with a Certificate of Achievement for its 100% Redemption Rate for Fiscal Year 2020. The certificate was presented by Doris Evans-Gates, Manager of the Georgia Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP). The SGRC-AAA administers the SFMNP through a partnership with the Georgia Department of Human Services - Division of Aging Services and the Georgia Department of Public Health.

The SGRC-AAA coordinates with local approved farmers to provide fresh produce to area seniors across the region through the SFMNP. Through this program, low-income seniors are provided vouchers to purchase fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables from certified Georgia farmers at local farmers' markets events in the area. The vouchers are distributed once per year during the peak Georgia fruit and vegetable growing season at participating senior centers throughout Georgia. The program also provides nutrition education on the importance of eating healthy fruits and vegetables.

The SGRC-AAA served 1,370 senior citizens in Fiscal Year 2020 in the SFMNP. Shawn Taylor, Lead Program Manager and Senior Hunger Coalition Coordinator for SGRC-AAA, is pictured (right) holding the Certificate of Achievement.



***Shawn Taylor, Lead Program Manager and Senior Hunger Coalition Coordinator for SGRC-AAA***

Scott Courson, Director of Aging Services for SGRC-AAA said, “We are incredibly happy to be involved in this partnership to offer the SFMNP to senior citizens of our area and we are grateful for the recognition and certificate. Such great success would not be possible without the tireless efforts and strong commitment of our staff to fight senior hunger.”

For more information on the SFMNP and/or the Senior Hunger Coalition for Southern Georgia, please contact Shawn Taylor at (912) 285-6097 or via email at [staylor@sgrc.us](mailto:staylor@sgrc.us).

# Workforce Development



*Pictured above are participants in the recent Region 11 Chamber Check-In event, held via Zoom.*

## Southern Georgia WorkSource Hosts Monthly Region 11 Chamber Check-In Event

Amy Jones, Business Services/Sector Partnership Coordinator, hosted the monthly Region 11 Chamber Check-In event to connect Chamber's of Commerce in the local area. Merrill Wilcox, Sector Partnership Coordinator for the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, shared information from working with the Rural Learning Network. This community work is multi-sector focused and designed to disseminate and amplify best practices in addressing issues concerning educational attainment and economic development, especially in Georgia's hardest to reach communities.

While education is not the primary focus of a Chamber of Commerce, it has long been recognized that students of today make up the workforce of tomorrow. By focusing on education networks, Chamber's of Commerce can engage local leaders from education, business, and the community to help build local capacity and partnerships to address opportunities and challenges. To learn more about the monthly Chamber Check-Ins or how to get involved in the partnerships, contact Amy Jones at [ajones@sgrc.us](mailto:ajones@sgrc.us).

# Small Business Lending

## SGRC Small Business Lending Program Assists Bed'r Mattress, Inc. with SBA 504 Loan

Bed'r Mattress has been operating successfully in Valdosta since 2001. For over fifteen years, the mission at Bed'r Mattress has been to offer the very best quality at affordable prices to meet the budget demands of their customers. According to a spokesperson, the business does this simply by using professionally trained staff to demonstrate to customers ways to improve the quality of sleep.

Jay Lewis has managed the Valdosta location with this same mentality since 2012. Lewis purchased the business in 2016 from the previous owners with the help of a SBA 7a loan and Commercial Banking Company (CBC). He brought a team-oriented approach to his staff and implemented several programs and initiatives to better serve customers. When the opportunity came this year to purchase the building and expand to better utilize space, he was anxious to pursue it.

Lewis sought funding to enable him to purchase the building. Because of his previous relationship with the SGRC and CBC, he returned for guidance to pursue a SBA 504 loan for financing. SBA approved financing on April 7, 2021, and will provide 40% of the funds at a low, fixed rate for twenty-five years, while CBC will provide 50% of the funds in participation. Lewis will contribute 10% as a down payment. With

this project, Bed'r Mattress will create five more jobs. For more information on the business, the store is located at 1604 Norman Drive in Valdosta.

For more information on SBA Lending or any other assistance available to small businesses, contact the SGRC Lending Division at [rdorsey@sgrc.us](mailto:rdorsey@sgrc.us).



# Contact the SGRC

## SGRC Council 2021 Meeting Schedule

Meeting Locations TBD

May 27, 2021 – 11:00 am

June 24, 2021 – 11:00 am

**July - No Meeting**

August 26, 2021 – 11:00 am

September 23, 2021 – 11:00 am

**October - No Meeting**

October 28, 2021 -

**Area Officials Appreciation Dinner**  
(subject to change)

**November – No meeting**  
(combined with December meeting)

December 9, 2021 – 11:00 am  
(subject to change)



**SOUTHERN GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION**

## Valdosta Office

1937 Carlton Adams Drive  
Valdosta, GA 31601

You can reach us by phone:  
**(229) 333-5277**

You can reach us by fax:  
**(229) 333-5312**



## Waycross Office

1725 South Georgia Parkway West  
Waycross, GA 31503

You can reach us by phone:  
**(912) 285-6097**

You can reach us by fax:  
**(912) 285-6126**

Email:

**[sgrc@sgrc.us](mailto:sgrc@sgrc.us)**

Web Address:

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

Facebook:

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