

Irwin County Transit Development Plan

Prepared by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission



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Introduction

The Irwin County Transit Development Plan (TDP) was developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to be used as an informational guidebook. Currently, Irwin County does not have a public transit system, but this TDP can be used as a resource for Irwin County’s elected officials and staff when discussing and answering basic questions about rural public transit and Irwin County. This TDP is also shared with the Georgia Department of Transportation to keep them current on rural public transit characteristics in the community. Irwin County should use this report to guide the development of rural public transit and to enhance service delivery for the residents of the community. This TDP will explain the 5311 program, which is a possible funding source for Irwin County to help with the implementation of a rural transit program. This TDP will also compare and contrast the characteristics of Irwin County and three of its peer counties: Turner, Wilkes and Wilkinson, of which only Turner has a rural public transit systems.

The TDP covers an analysis of demographic characteristics of the area, transit related goals and objectives, a demand estimation and needs assessment, and a 5-year Capital and Operating Plan. This information will give officials a better understanding of the opportunities that a public transit system may create for Irwin County. When comparing demographic information as well as other Census information in this report, the US Census Bureau 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates will be utilized to show the current statistics for each county involved unless otherwise noted.

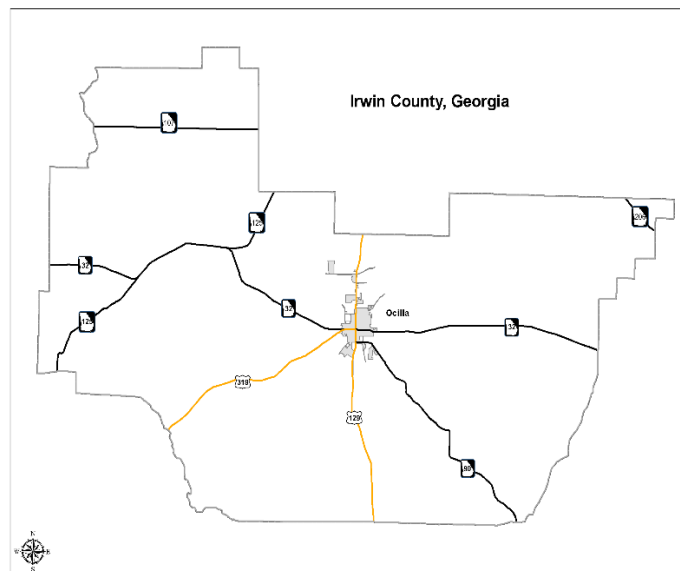


Figure 1 Map of Irwin County

Socioeconomic Characteristics

Many community factors contribute to the planning process or incorporation of public transit services into a community. Socioeconomic and demographic data supplies an overall view of the community and is broken down to understand the potential need for public transportation services. Based on the data provided, other pertinent information and professional opinions of those in the transportation field, an informed decision can be made concerning the need and potential use of public transit in Irwin County.

Population

Irwin County, Georgia is a largely rural county in Southern Georgia. The 2010 Census lists the population for Irwin County to be about 9,408 persons. Below is a table representing the population demographics for Irwin County and its peer counties.

Table 1 Population Demographics

	Irwin	Wilkes	Turner	Wilkinson
Total Population	9,408	9,805	8,030	9,104
Gender (%)				
Male	50.9%	50.3%	48.8%	50.4%
Female	49.1%	49.7%	51.2%	49.6%
Median Age	38.8	37.9	37.1	35.1
Population Over 60	21%	27%	23%	19%
Race (%)				
White	70.9%	54.6%	58.3%	58.8%
Black	27.0%	42.6%	39.3%	38.7%
American Indian/ Alaska Native	0.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%
Asian	0.8%	0.9%	0.7%	0.6%
Hispanic or Latino	3.5%	4.3%	4.7%	2.8%

Income

Income is one aspect of demographic information that plays a major role in the need and/or use of public transit services. Whether the community is urban or rural, income is often used as an indication of the need for public transit in a community. When comparing Irwin County to Wilkes, Turner, and Wilkinson Counties, it is noted that Irwin County has the second highest median income at \$34,156, which is nearly \$3,300 more or less than that of its peer counties.

Table 2 Economic Characteristics

	Irwin	Wilkes	Turner	Wilkinson
Median household income	\$34,156	\$32,727	\$31,806	\$38,485
Persons below the poverty level (%)	26.0%	22.9%	28.4%	20.9%

Poverty status is often an indication that a number of residents are in need of public transportation services and are more likely to have a greater reliance on public transit services. In Irwin County, an estimated 848 households are below the poverty level. This means that about 26.0% of the county’s population is in poverty under the federal definition. Even though there are a distinctive number of citizens below the poverty level, they are still finding ways to pay for and maintain transportation. Although there is no direct connection between transit ridership and access to vehicles in Irwin County, it may be inferred that if a public transit system is affordable and accessible to all residents, it may offset some of the costs of transportation for individuals at or below the federal poverty level.

Modes of Transportation

Transportation typically tends to be a large part of any families’ budget due to monthly payments on a vehicle, insurance, maintenance, fuel and other factors. While many families do not feel a burden with the expense this mode of transportation can have, it has a significant impact on those families that are living in poverty. Of the approximately 3,083 workers in Irwin County 16 years of age and over commuting to work, 2,071 persons have 1 or 2 vehicles available for use. Approximately 881 workers 16 years and over have 3 vehicles available for use. To further break down this number, of the approximately 801 workers below the poverty line in Irwin County, 100

persons do not have a vehicle available to use. This indicates that while transportation is likely a higher portion of a household’s outlays, many are continuing to find a way to pay for a car, gasoline, and maintenance costs, or asking friends for transportation to work, appointments, and other trips which require a vehicle.

From asking friends and family for transportation to just walking to one’s destination, citizens are using various modes of transportation to get where they need to go. In Irwin County, 80.3% of workers commute to work via a single-occupancy car, truck, or van and about 14.3% commute in a carpool of at least two persons. 15 persons walked, and 150 persons used other modes of transportation, which include motorcycles, bicycles, taxicabs, and/or worked from home.

The number of persons carpooling, walking, and using other modes to commute to work is an indication that this percentage of the population is more likely to use or need public transit services.

Figure 2 Commuting Characteristics by Poverty and Vehicles Available

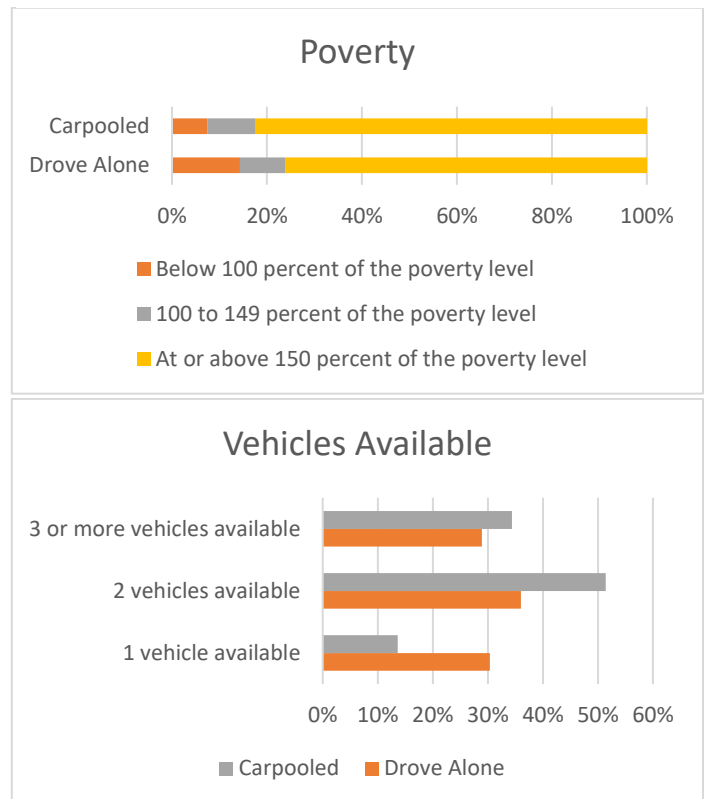


Figure 2 illustrates the commuting characteristics and number of vehicles available by poverty level, indicating that people are still finding ways to pay for and maintain transportation.

Age

Age can be a significant determining factor in rural public transit systems. Older residents are more likely to need transportation to and from medical appointments, shopping and other daily activities. A little over 16% of the population of Irwin County is over the age of 65. This is higher than the state average of 11%. Older residents often times forego driving their vehicle altogether, if they have one available, which can also increase the need of older residents to have a need for local public transportation services. The Irwin City of Ocilla Senior Center currently has 22 clients who use the DHS Coordinated Transportation services to access the center for daily congregate meals and special medical appointments on a daily basis.

Table 3 Residents 65 Years and Over & Vehicle Access

	Irwin	Wilkes	Turner	Wilkinson
Total	1,534	2,078	1,546	1,623
No Vehicle Available	73	193	44	75
1 + Vehicle Available	947	1,177	983	909

ADA Analysis

In Irwin County, 963 persons have an ambulatory difficulty, meaning they have difficulty moving about under their own power. The population 65 years and older accounts for 57% of those individuals with an ambulatory difficulty, however, this is just one type of disability and different disabilities should be considered so that the public transit system is accessible for everyone. Residents that have disabilities are more likely to need public transportation to get to doctor's appointments, or just go shopping, but this can prove difficult without ADA accessible vehicles.

Table 4 Ambulatory Difficulty by Age Group

AGE	Total Population	Ambulatory Difficulty	Ambulatory Residents (%)
Under 5 years	552	0	0.0%
5 to 17 years	1,591	5	0.3%
18 to 34 years	1,731	3	0.2%
35 to 64 years	3,549	404	11.4%
65 to 74 years	879	265	30.1%
75 years and over	564	286	30.5%

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

Although there is no current public transit system in Irwin County, there is a need to know the laws of an entity receiving federal funds, should a public transit service be implemented. All federal laws and regulations regarding the delivery of public transit services must be adhered to; this means that any public transit service may not discriminate against a rider on the basis of race, color, sex or limited ability to speak the English language, among other traits. This is according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Executive Orders covering Environmental Justice and Limited English-proficiency, among others. This information along with other factors can be helpful when estimating the demand for a public transit system.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis

Four factors are used to determine the county's need to provide services for persons with Limited English Proficiency. The four factors are outlined here:

1. The number or proportion of LEP persons eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by the public transit service.

The second most common language spoken at home in Irwin County is Spanish. It is estimated that there are almost 100 persons, or 1% of the total population that speaks Spanish. This percentage is much lower than the national percentage of people that speak Spanish at home. The US Census Bureau estimates that of the persons 5 years and older in Irwin County, 57 people or 0.7% of persons who speak Spanish are linguistically isolated, meaning that they do not speak English very well.

Table 5 Percentage of Persons that Speak Spanish

Estimate	100
Margin of Error	+/- 63.1
Irwin County %	1.0%
United States %	21%

2. The frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with the transit service.

Irwin County does not have a history of LEP individuals who could not use the system. It is recommended that if needed, Irwin County utilize the website of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission where a Google Translator is available for potential riders to learn more about the system.

3. The nature and importance of the transit service provided by Irwin County to the LEP community.

Irwin County Transit would be provided as a service to riders in the county to access basic, non-emergency public transit services.

4. The resources available to Irwin County and overall costs.

Irwin County could provide materials in other languages for the potential riders should an Irwin County Transit system be implemented; however, based on the information provided here, there does not appear to be a great need at this time that would justify the overall costs of providing these services to residents. As noted previously, it is recommended that potential riders utilize the SGRC website at accessible vehicles to transport them. Oftentimes residents with disabilities have a greater reliance on someone else providing transportation for them. www.sgrc.us, where a Google Translator can provide for basic information on the service to LEP individuals

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission has also put together a Regional Transit Brochure that can be accessed on the SGRC website as well as in print form at various locations throughout the region.

Transportation Options in Southern Georgia

RULES/TIPS FOR RIDING TRANSIT

- Be sure to provide at least 24 hours notice to schedule a ride.
- Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Child car seats must be provided by an adult for children under the age of five.
- Wear seat belts at all times.
- Have exact cash payment ready when boarding.
- Be courteous and respectful to other riders by limiting personal items.
- No offensive language, gestures, threats, or violence will be tolerated.

REGULAS/AVISOS PARA MONTAR EN TRANSITO

- Asegúrese de proveer por lo menos 24 horas de aviso para coordinar un viaje.
- Los niños menores de 18 años deben estar acompañados por un padre o tutor. Los asientos para niños deben ser proporcionados por un adulto para niños menores de 5 años.
- Use los cinturones de seguridad en todo momento.
- Tenga listo el pago exacto en efectivo al abordar.
- Sea cortés y respetuoso con los otros pasajeros limitando artículos personales.
- No se tolerará ningún lenguaje ofensivo, gestos, amenazas o violencia.

PLANNING RESOURCES

The Southern Georgia Regional Commission, as requested by the Georgia Department of Transportation and local governments, prepares Transit Development Plans that explore new transit services and the expansion of current services. These plans are used as a guide for local governments and public transit planners to provide transportation throughout the region. Traveling thousands of miles across to job, medical appointments, shopping venues, and other opportunities. Please visit www.sgrc.us for SGRC's sponsored transit plans.

Southern Georgia Regional Commission
229-333-6277 — www.sgrc.us
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia Department of Human Services

TRANSIT IN SOUTHERN GEORGIA

- Human Services Coordinated Transportation
 - Department of Family and Children Services clients should contact their local county office listed at www.dhs.ga.gov/coordinated-11.
 - Department of Behavioral Health
 - 229-671-6174 (Lowndes); 229-896-4559 (Cook); 229-391-2301 (Tift); 912-449-7100 (Union clients).
 - If you believe you qualify for Area Agency on Aging transportation services, please call 1-888-732-4464.
- Medicaid Beneficiaries
 - To schedule transportation, call LogistiCare at 1-888-224-7955.
- County-Operated Public Transportation Systems Providers and Rates

County	Provider	Phone	Cash Rate	Hours
Escon	MDS	912-632-6300	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Ben Hill	RMS	229-426-7433	\$3 each way	M-F 6:00a-6:00p
Benton	MDS	229-686-7433	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Brantley	MDS	912-462-8726	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Brooks	MDS	229-316-2153	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Cook	MDS	229-896-8726	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Lowndes	MDS	229-316-2153	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Pierce	MDS	912-449-1825	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Tift	Tift Co.	229-382-8438	\$2-3 mi; \$3 3-5 mi; \$4-5 mi	M-F 8:00a-5:00p
Turner	MDS	229-567-3400	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p
Ware	MDS	912-283-7800	\$3 up to 10 mi. + \$0.50/mi	M-F 7:30a-5:30p

For further questions or comments about transportation options in Southern Georgia, please contact the Regional Commission's Valdosta office at 229-333-6277.

TRANSPORTE EN EL SUR DE GEORGIA

- Servicios Humanos de Transporte Coordinado
 - Los clientes del Departamento de Servicios para Familias e Niños deben comunicarse con la oficina local del condado en www.dhs.ga.gov/coordinated-11.
 - Departamento de Salud del Compendio
 - 229-671-6174 (Lowndes); 229-896-4559 (Cook); 229-391-2301 (Tift); 912-449-7100 (Clientes Union).
 - Si usted cree que califica para los servicios de transporte de Agencia de Área para el Envejecimiento, llame al 1-888-732-4464.
- Beneficiarios de Medicaid
 - Para programar el transporte, llame a Logística al 1-888-224-7955.
- Sistemas de transporte público operados por el condado

La siguiente muestra el transporte público que está disponible en el sur de Georgia.

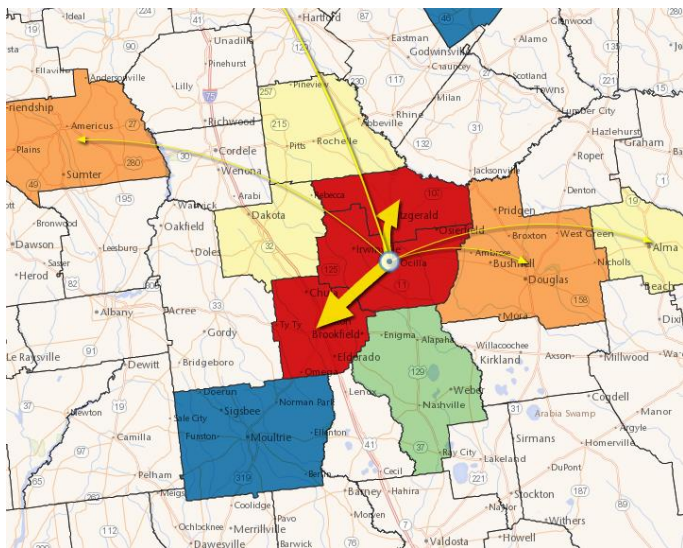
RECURSOS DE PLANIFICACIÓN

La Comisión Regional del Sur de Georgia, según lo solicitado por el Departamento de Transporte de Georgia y los gobiernos locales, prepara Planes de Desarrollo de Tránsito que exploran nuevas opciones de transporte en toda la región, lo que da a miles de jinetes acceso a empleos, citas médicas, lugares de compra y otras oportunidades. Visite www.sgrc.us para los planes de tránsito patrocinados por SGRC.

Commuting Patterns

In Irwin County, over 3,083 citizens commute to work daily. Of these workers, 52.6% of them, or nearly 1,400 commute to work outside Irwin County every day. This is an indication that Irwin County is contributing workers to jobs in surrounding counties. A majority of citizens, 52%, have a 1 to 19 minute commute, while 43% of them have between a 20 to 60 minute commute, and 4% commute more than 60 minutes to work. The mean commute time is 21.3 minutes from home to work. This moderate number of commuters could also suggest that this particular segment of the population is less likely to need public transit services as a primary means of transportation.

Figure 3 Commuting Outflow Patterns to surrounding Counties



Livability Impact

There are many factors that make a community more livable, such as the overall cost of living, accessibility and quality of healthcare, grocery stores, and other amenities. Many of these amenities, especially in rural areas, require a vehicle because they are not within a reasonable distance or lack the infrastructure for residents to walk or bike. For this reason, public transit services can be very important in increasing the livability of a community. Public transit along with bike and pedestrian infrastructure offers optimum results for a livable community. As the livability increases so will the quality of life and this will also create an atmosphere for growth and economic development because residents will have available transportation options. Public transportation services will also give those who do not own vehicles or have been asking friends and family for transportation more freedom and flexibility to reach their destination.

Understanding 5311 Programs

Sometimes, the decision to implement a rural transit system in a county is stalled due to financial questions, such as: How can we pay for a rural transit system? This is where the 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program comes in. Any rural public transportation system in Irwin County would likely require funding from the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program. The Section 5311 Program offers local areas an opportunity to provide transit services, which in turn improves access to jobs, healthcare, recreational activities and other services that residents often use. The program is administered by the Georgia Department of Transportation in partnership with local communities to provide assistance for rural public transportation. Federal funds are allocated to the states on a formula basis, and can be used for capital assistance, operating assistance planning, and program administration. GDOT is the recipient of these funds, and it in turn provides Federal funding (and a limited amount of state capital funding) to local sub-recipients (counties) in Georgia.

Due to the administering of these funds by GDOT, the State of Georgia has established the following statewide goals for the Section 5311 program:

Goal: Basic Mobility to Serve All Georgians:

- serving those persons with the most critical needs for access and mobility, especially those without alternatives.
- providing service without any trip purpose restrictions or eligibility requirements including medical, social services, personal shopping, business, and employment trips.
- serving all areas with appropriate levels of service, subject to the required local or regional participation.
- addressing economic development—through employment trips, services to support local employment sites, new ones, etc.

Goal: Program Implementation:

- partnering with the FTA in the administration of the Section 5311 program, meeting all FTA program requirements.
- managing a program of excellence that provides timely management direction, guidance, and reimbursement to allow local entities to provide quality service.

- partnering with local or regional entities to plan services to meet locally identified needs.
- partnering with local or regional entities to operate the services.
- providing technical assistance to help local providers improve effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and quality of service.
- providing technical information, policy analyses, and program management data to support transit program development.

Goal: Efficiency and Effectiveness:

- while maximizing ridership, recognizing that there are significant differences in population density, trip characteristics, and client needs (accessibility, assistance, etc.) which will affect usage.
- subject to performance requirements appropriate to the area and type of service
- with the appropriate type of service—demand-responsive, subscription route, route deviation, or fixed-route.
- using the appropriate vehicle type—accessible if needed, sedan, van, small bus, large bus.

Goal: Safe, Secure Quality Service:

- operating equipment that is within its design life, inspected for safety and overall condition
- operated by staff meeting the highest qualifications—appropriate license (Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) if required), safe driving and criminal records checked, drug and alcohol tested, etc.
- operated by a staff that is trained to proficiency in all necessary skills: Defensive Driving, Passenger Assistance, First Aid and CPR.
- providing a safe and secure service to the riders.

Goal: Accessible Service—Usable by Persons with Disabilities:

- providing service that is accessible (adequate number of accessible lift- or ramp-equipped vehicles.
- using operators trained to proficiency in passenger assistance, lift use, restraints, mobility devices (folding, stowage, etc.).
- user information and outreach to ensure that persons needing the service are aware of it and can obtain information.

Goal: Coordinated Provision of Transportation in Rural Areas:

- coordinated policies at the state level through interagency coordination.
- coordinated at regional/local level—shared vehicles, shared ride, coordinated management—where it will result in more cost-effective, quality service that meets client and general public transit rider needs.

A rural transit system in Irwin County should promote these established goals by the State of Georgia. Should Irwin County implement a public transit system, meeting the above goals would not be difficult. Irwin County should carry out varying forms of public outreach to garner support and notify residents of the service. The Southern Georgia Regional Commission is also available to help with achieving certain goals, such as coordinated provision of transportation in rural areas and the effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

Likewise, GDOT has established minimum criteria for transit programs in GDOT’s Rural Public Transportation Service Policy. These include:

- Services should not be duplicative of other transportation services;
- Vehicles should be utilized to reach a goal of 500 one-way passenger trips per vehicle month **or** be operated 120 hours per month **or** 1,000 vehicle miles per month;
- Vehicles should be available for public transportation service on a daily basis;
- Vehicle trips for contract, charter or subscription service should recover fully allocated costs;
- The system should aim to recover a minimum of 20 percent of its public transportation costs as a goal from fare box revenues generated through regular public transportation operations, with a minimum of ten percent fare box recovery required. **The total of all purchase of service agreements should recover the fully allocated operating costs.**

Additionally, GDOT recommends that service should be funded to the maximum extent possible by the generation of fare box revenue.

Section 5311 funds can be used for capital and operational costs. These are two different types of costs incurred for

developing and continuing a rural transit system. Local funding for capital acquisition will at a minimum be ten percent of the costs. Capital expenses under Section 5311 can include:

1. Vehicles,
2. Communication equipment,
3. Wheelchair lifts,
4. Equipment installation costs,
5. Computer equipment and purchase of software (laptops are not an eligible expense and monthly software maintenance or lease fees are an operating expense), or
6. Office equipment,
7. Smart Card Reader,
8. Fare boxes

Ten percent of the public transportation operating costs must be provided from fare or other local dollars. The remaining 90 percent of the operating cost is considered the net operating deficit. Federal funding may be provided for up to 50 percent of the net operating deficit; the remaining 50 percent (or more) must be provided from local funds. Operating costs include, but are not limited to, driver, mechanic, and dispatcher salaries, licenses, vehicle insurance, drug and alcohol testing, uniforms, maintenance and repairs (includes oil, tire and parts) and fuel. Monthly service fees for cell phones and/or two way radio services are eligible operating expenses.

In the Southern Georgia region, many counties that have a rural transit system contract with a third party operator. Third party operators are experienced transit providers that are able to provide transit service effectively and efficiently. These counties use the Section 5311 funds to purchase capital equipment and contract with the third party operator for operation of the system. According to MIDS Transportation, Inc., the most utilized third party operator in the Southern Georgia region, local governments generally only pay for vehicle insurance and operational expenses. It should be noted that operational expenses do not include capital costs. All other operational expenses are handled by the third party operator.

Currently, peer counties usually charge \$3 for trips that are less than ten miles, \$5 for trips that are over 10 miles with the destination still being in the county, if the destination is outside of the county, an extra \$0.50 per mile is charged.

Evaluation of Existing Services

Currently, there are no public transportation systems in place in Irwin County. However, there are some other services within the county that provide public transit for clients, they include the Department of Human Services and Medicaid which currently provide approximately 8,000 trips per year. Although, this is a form of public transit, the services are limited to pre-qualified clients receiving specific public assistance. Based on the data previously mentioned, Irwin County could benefit from a demand-response style public transit system, because current services are not wide-ranging and are specific for the clients of the Human Service Providers. This form of transportation system excludes much needed transportation services for the citizens of Irwin County for general needs.

When considering rural transit for Irwin County, the following types of service are appropriate for rural public transportation programs and the funding provided for them, 5311 funds, will potentially offset or completely cover the local match required by Irwin County:

Demand-response or route deviation service. Demand-response is a type of service where individual passengers can request door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation from a specific location to another specific location at a certain time. A technology –based ordering service similar to the one that Uber uses would help incorporate technology into ordering service possibly making it more efficient.

Route deviation service operates along a public way on a fixed-route, but which may deviate from the route occasionally in response to take a passenger to a destination or pick one up from an origin, after which it returns to the regular route, however, due to the large size of Irwin County and its' rural nature this service would not be the best choice.

Contract and subscription service.

Subscription service is a type of demand response service in which routes and schedules are pre-arranged to meet the travel needs of riders who sign up for the service in advance. Often these riders are clients of human service agencies, who contract with the transportation operator to provide the service on behalf of the agency. This type of service may be provided by a Section 5311 program only to the extent that it does not violate FTA Charter Bus restrictions.

Transit Need and Demand Analysis

For many families, it can be a tough challenge for them to meet their transportation needs even if they have one or even two vehicles. These families face the challenge of long trips to work and to businesses that put many miles on vehicles that may or may not be pre-owned and already worn down. Likewise, a family that only has one mode of transportation faces just the challenge of meeting the transportation needs for the whole family. This analysis consists of these factors and others to estimate the possible demand for rural public transit trips within Irwin County. The information is based on the use of transit systems information from peer counties that are similar in size and population.

Using the Transportation Research Board's *TCRP Report 161: Methods for Forecasting Demand and Quantifying Need for Rural Passenger Transportation: Final Workbook and Final Spreadsheet Tool*, the SGRC was able to produce the following estimates of rural public transit need and demand for Irwin County.

Overall, there is an estimated need for 72,100 trips annually in Irwin County based on the communities' mobility gap. This number is high because it factors in the many potential riders that find alternative means of transportation, like getting a ride with friends or family, walking, riding a bicycle, etc. Further analysis shows that there is an estimated demand for 7,400 trips annually for the general rural public transit (not including POS trips). Once POS trips are inserted into the equation, there is a total demand of nearly 9,500 trips annually for the general public. Currently Irwin County provides about 21,400 Human Service Provider (DFCS, Aging, and DBHDD) trips annually.

Table 6 Output Screen from Rural Transit Demand Tool

RURAL TRANSIT NEED/DEMAND ESTIMATION - OUTPUT TABLE		
Service Area:	Irwin County, Ga	
Analysis Description:	Irwin County, Ga	
Additional Description:		
Estimation of Transit Need		
Total need for passenger transportation service:	3,000	Persons
Total households without access to a vehicle:	231	Households
State Mobility Gap:	1.3	Daily 1-Way Psgr.-Trips per Household
Total need based on mobility gap:	300	Daily 1-Way Passenger-Trips
	72,100	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
General Public Rural Non-Program Demand		
<i>Estimate of demand for general public rural transportation</i>		
Rural transit trips:	7,400	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
General Public Rural Passenger Transportation		
<i>Estimate of demand for rural transportation</i>		
Total Rural Non-Program Demand	9,500	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Small City Fixed Route		
Annual Ridership:		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Demand - Commuter by Transit to an Urban Center		
Proportion of Commuters using Transit:		
Commuter trips by transit between counties:		Daily 1-Way Passenger Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Rural Program Demand		
<i>Annual Program Trip Estimation</i>		
Irwin County DFCS	3,400	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Irwin County Senior	3,500	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Sunny Dale Service Center DD	14,500	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
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		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
		Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips
Total Rural Program Demand	21,400	Annual 1-Way Passenger-Trips

Table 7 Peer Transit Systems Comparison Worksheet

The input data in the yellow cells are averages for a potential Public Transit System in Irwin County, they are based on peer county data.

Peer Data Worksheet

Input Data from Peer Transit Systems or Existing Transit Service					
Name of Peer System		Wilkes	Turner	Wilkinson	
Population of Area		9,805	8,030	9,104	
Size of Area Served (Square Miles)		474	290	452	
Annual Vehicle-Miles of Service Provided		106,729	84,638	99,625	
Annual Vehicle-Hours of Service Provided		5,529	6,813	6,663	
Route-Deviation, Demand-Response)		Demand-Response	Demand-Response	Demand-Response	
Number of One-Way Trips Served per Year		15,271	12,700	9,401	
Other Carriers (Low, Medium, High)		Low	Low	Low	

Results of Peer Data Comparison		Annual Vehicle-vehicles-hours		
		Population	miles	
Input Data for My System:		9,422	96,997	6,335
Observed Trip Rates		Demand Estimate Based On:		
Peer Values		Population	Annual Vehicle-miles	Annual vehicles-hours
Trips per Capita				
Maximum	1.6	15,075		
Average	1.4	13,191		
Median	1.6	15,075		
Minimum	1.0	9,422		
Trips per Vehicle-Mile				
Maximum	0.2		19,399	
Average	0.1		9,700	
Median	0.1		9,700	
Minimum	0.1		9,700	
Trips per Vehicle-Hour				
Maximum	2.8			17,738
Average	2.0			12,670
Median	1.9			12,037
Minimum	1.4			8,869
Values expected for my system				
Maximum		15,075	19,399	17,738.0
Average		13,191	9,700	12,670.0
Median		15,075	9,700	12,037.0
Minimum		9,422	9,700	8,869.0

Capital Equipment Cost and 5-Year Budget Estimates

A rural transit system includes capital expenses and operating expenses. Table 8 shows the estimated expenses for several vehicles that would be included in capital expenses. Given the growth of Irwin County's population and the above Transit Need/Demand Analysis, 3 vehicles may be enough to operate a public transit system. However, if demand significantly increased in a short time period, 4 vehicles may need to be considered for purchase to improve efficiency. Irwin County would also need to consider purchasing a mobile radio or phone, a computer, a printer, and essential software as well.

Necessary capital equipment is eligible for funding under the Section 5311 grant program. There is a 10% local funding minimum required for qualified capital equipment. However, this amount may be higher depending on the availability of state and federal funds. The chart below provides the average cost of Demand Response Vehicles based on the GDOT FY17 Rural Transit Budget worksheet.

Table 8 Capital Equipment Cost Estimates

Capital Equipment	2017
Shuttle Van	\$41,066.92
Shuttle Van w/ Lift	\$44,712.92
Shuttle Bus	\$46,528.92
Shuttle Bus w/ Lift	\$48,947.92
Mobile Radio	\$2,000.00
Computer, Printer and Software	\$3,200.00

The following 5-Year Capital and Operating Budget estimates are based on current costs of services with an inflation rate of 2.32% per year in order to give an approximate value of what public transit services may cost in the next few years. Irwin County does not currently have public transit so the estimates provided are based on the Transit Need/Demand Analysis for Turner County, as well as, Wilkes and Wilkinson County data, which is comparable to Irwin County in population and other demographic areas.

There are two different budget options presented in the figures below, the first represents public transit service operated without Purchase of Service (POS) funds and the second, represents public transit service with POS funds. Both options begin with 3 vehicles during the first three years, and adds one more vehicle in the 4th year of service. The budget summary shows that the local contribution can range from \$3,000 per year (with POS contracts) in the 2018 fiscal year to \$195,000 per year without POS contracts in the 2021 fiscal year.

Table 9 5-Year Capital and Operating Cost with No POS Estimates

Operator: Irwin County/TPO
Date: 5/5/2017

With No POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2017-2018		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 79,150.00	20%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 317,825.00	80%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 396,975.00	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 396,975.00	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 39,697.50	
Net Operating Total	\$ 357,277.50	

Vehicles	3
Average Trips Per Vehicle	4,430
Total Trips Projected	13,291
Percentage of Public Trips	0.00%
POS Trips	
POS Amount	
Rate Per Trip	#DIV/0!
POS Fully Allocated Costs	#DIV/0!
Total Public Trips	13,291
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 22.73
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 2.99

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 357,277.50	\$ 178,638.75	\$ -	\$ 178,638.75
POS Local Funds		\$ -	\$ -	
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ 154,407.00	\$ 123,525.60	\$ 15,440.70	\$ 15,440.70
Budget Grand Total	\$ 511,684.50	\$ 302,164.35	\$ 15,440.70	\$ 194,079.45

FY2021-2022		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 86,754.71	20%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 348,361.52	80%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 435,116.23	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 435,116.23	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 43,511.62	
Net Operating Total	\$ 391,604.61	

Vehicles	4
Average Trips Per Vehicle	3,722.75
Total Trips Projected	14,891
Percentage of Public Trips	0.00%
POS Trips	-
POS Amount	
Rate Per Trip	#DIV/0!
POS Fully Allocated Costs	#DIV/0!
Total Public Trips	14,891
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 13.15
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 2.92

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 391,604.61	\$ 195,802.30	\$ -	\$ 195,802.30
POS Local Funds		\$ -	\$ -	
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Grand Total	\$ 391,604.61	\$ 195,802.30	\$ -	\$ 195,802.30

Table 10 5-Year Capital and Operating Cost with POS Estimates

Operator: Irwin County/TPO
Date: 5/5/2017

With POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2017-2018		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 31,263.55	19%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 135,286.60	81%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 166,550.14	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 16,655.01	
Net Operating Total	\$ 149,895.13	

Vehicles	3
Average Trips Per Vehicle	4,430
Total Trips Projected	13,291
Percentage of Public Trips	3.29%
POS Trips	12,853
POS Amount	\$ 78,534.70
Rate Per Trip	\$ 6.11
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 11.66
Total Public Trips	437
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 420.29
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 38.11

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 149,895.13	\$ 74,947.56	\$ -	\$ 74,947.56
POS Local Funds	\$ 78,534.70	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78,534.70
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ 135,900.00	\$ 108,720.00	\$ 20,385.00	\$ 6,795.00
Budget Grand Total	\$ 207,260.43	\$ 183,667.56	\$ 20,385.00	\$ 3,207.86

FY2021-2022		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 34,267.34	19%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 148,284.89	81%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 182,552.23	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 18,255.22	
Net Operating Total	\$ 164,297.00	

Vehicles	4
Average Trips Per Vehicle	3,722.75
Total Trips Projected	14,891
Percentage of Public Trips	3.29%
POS Trips	14,077
POS Amount	\$ 86,013.00
Rate Per Trip	\$ 6.11
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 11.67
Total Public Trips	479
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 247.16
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 38.11

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 164,297.00	\$ 82,148.50	\$ -	\$ 82,148.50
POS Local Funds	\$ 86,013.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 86,013.00
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ 45,300.00	\$ 36,240.00	\$ 6,795.00	\$ 2,265.00
Budget Grand Total	\$ 123,584.00	\$ 118,388.50	\$ 6,795.00	\$ (1,599.50)

Recommendations

Based on the research and data collected and analyzed within this Transportation Development Plan, the staff of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission recommend that Irwin County give full consideration to implementing a demand response rural public transit system.

There are two service delivery options for a demand response rural transit system, and choosing what works best for Irwin County (by evaluating the options) will ensure the success of the system. The first option is having the system managed by the county. This service delivery option would allow Irwin County to manage the public transit service and everything related to the transit system, including rate and hours of service. Tift County uses this option for public transit services. The second service delivery option would allow Irwin County to contract with a third party transit operator, a private company that administers the operation of the transit system. Many of the counties with public transit systems have chosen this option and contracted with the company MIDS Transportation Inc. In counties where the transit system is operated by MIDS, one must call 24 hours in advance to schedule a ride, the rate is \$3.00 for local area (0-10 miles) per stop. If the trip is local but 11 miles and over, it will cost the base rate of (\$3.00) + \$0.50 per mile. They also offer a 50% discount to Seniors 65 and over and to children 5 and younger.

A third option or hybrid option for Irwin County to consider, would be to create a mini-regional transit system with a surrounding county or counties. Given the daily outflow of workers to nearby counties, a mini-regional system may provide an affordable commuting option for residents with no vehicle access or limited mobility. A Third Party Operator (TPO) has expressed interest to GDOT, and obtained the necessary letters of approval to apply for 5311 funding to operate a regional rural transit system.

A demand response rural public transit system would greatly impact the quality of life for Irwin County residents by creating access to employment, healthcare services, shopping, and other general needs. Implementing a public transit system may also help with economic outcomes by increasing the number of trips made daily to healthcare services, grocery stores, retail outlets, etc.

If Irwin County would like more information about implementing a demand response rural public transit system please contact the Southern Georgia Regional Commission at (229) 333-5277.