

Bacon County Transit Development Plan

Prepared by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission



327 West Savannah Avenue
Valdosta, Georgia 31601

www.sgrc.us

The contents in this publication reflect the views of the author(s), who is (are) responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The opinions, findings, and conclusions in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Transportation, State of Georgia, the Federal Highway Administration, or the Federal Transit Administration. This publication does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation.

This document is prepared in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.

Introduction

This Transit Development Plan (TDP) was developed by the Southern Georgia Regional Commission a guidebook for Bacon County elected officials and staff to answer basic questions about rural public transit in Bacon County. This TDP will also be shared with the Georgia Department of Transportation to inform them of the rural public transit characteristics in the community.

Bacon County, GDOT and the third-party operator (TPO) should use this report to guide the development of rural public transit to deliver the best service possible for the residents of the community.

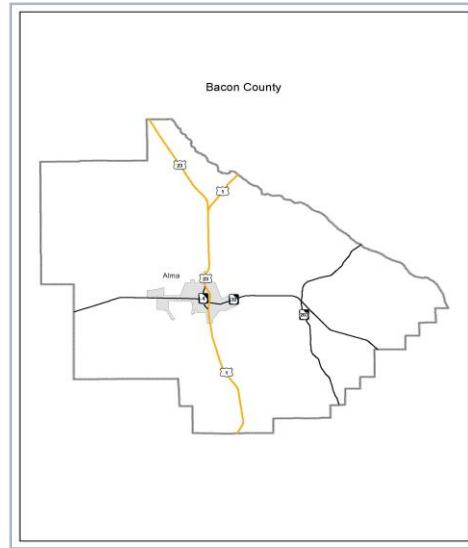


Figure 1 Bacon County, Georgia.

Demographic Analysis

Bacon County, Georgia is a largely rural county in Southern Georgia. The 2010 Census lists the population for Bacon County to be about 11,096 persons. However, the 2014 ACS estimated population for Bacon County is 11,196.



Alma City Services, Alma, GA
Source: Michael Rivera

Over 1,100 citizens commute from Bacon County to neighboring counties for work every day as shown in statistics from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 2010-2014¹. This is an indication that Bacon County is contributing workers to jobs in Waycross and Pierce Counties as well as providing jobs for workers from Pierce and Ware Counties. The moderate suburban population in Bacon County can have an impact on providing public transit service to the residents of this largely rural county, especially if they are seeking to travel to destinations in other communities.

Income is often an indication of the need for public transit in a community, either urban or rural. Of the peer counties of Turner, Ware and Cook Counties, Bacon County has the highest median income at \$37,698, which is nearly \$4,000 above the average of the other counties, at \$33,080. This means that the average pay in Bacon County is \$2,000-\$8,000 more than that of its' peer counties. Although Bacon County's median income is higher, 20% of Bacon County's population is below the poverty

¹ The ACS is a 5-year sampled survey of American households, the data may include large margins of error that may or may not be presented in this report.

For detailed information a detailed review of the ACS data is encouraged.

level. This information tends to be an indication that there might be a larger population of low income persons that might require the use of public transit. There are more than 4,500 workers in the county, and more than 1,100 or about 24% commute out of the county for work. This moderate number of commuters is indicative that this segment of the population is less likely to need public transit services as a primary means of transportation.

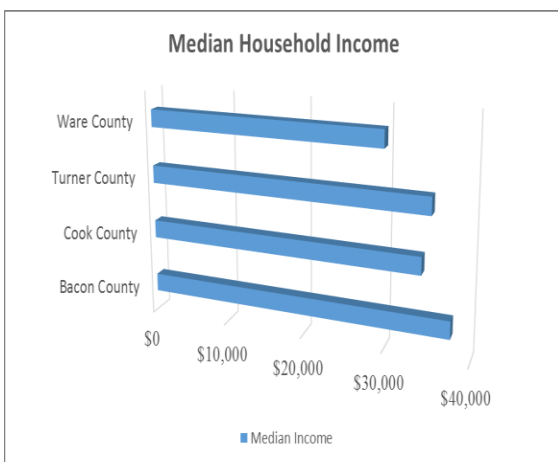


Figure 2. Median Income (2014) in Bacon County.

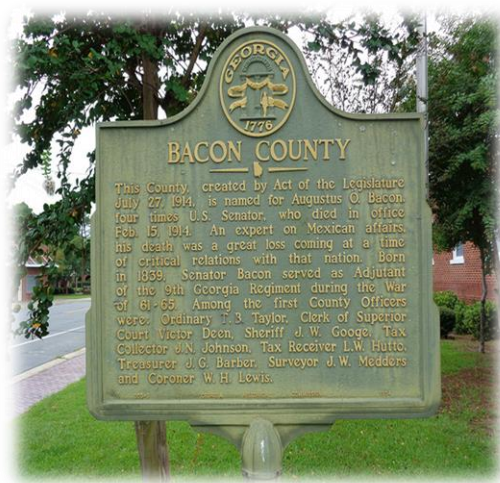
Poverty status is often an indication of the need for a greater reliance on public transit services. In Bacon County, an estimated 2,239 households are below the federal poverty level. This means that about 20% of the County's residents are in poverty under the federal definition.

Transportation can be a large part of any families' budget, but it has a significant impact on those families that are living in poverty. Of the approximately 4,445 workers 16 years of age and over, almost 2,723 persons have 1 or 2 vehicles available to use (2014 ACS estimate). Of the approximately 684 workers in poverty in Bacon County, 653 persons have at least 1 vehicle available to use. This indicates that while transportation is likely a higher portion of an

individuals' outlays, they are still finding 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. While there is no direct connection between transit ridership and access to vehicles in Bacon County, it may be inferred that if a public transit system is affordable and accessible to all residents that it may offset some of the costs of transportation for individuals at or below the federal poverty level.

In Bacon County, about 78.30% of workers commute to work via a single-occupancy car or truck, and about 18% commute in a carpool of at least two persons. The ACS data indicates that 120 persons used a bus or public transit or other modes of transportation in Bacon County. The large number of persons carpooling to work is indicative that this segment of the population is more likely to use or need public transit services.

Of the 4,402 workers living in Bacon County that do not work at home, a majority (71%) have a one to nineteen minute commute, while the mean commute time is 22.5 minutes from home to work.



Bacon County Historical Marker
Source: Google Maps

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 20% of the population of Bacon County is over the age of 60. This is higher than the state average, indicating a significant potential ridership base for a rural public transit system.



Bacon Transit Vehicle
Source: SGRC

Title VI and LEP Analysis

As a recipient of federal funds, Bacon County must adhere to all federal laws and regulations regarding the delivery of public transit services. As part of this, 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. According to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Executive Orders covering Environmental Justice and Limited English-proficiency, among others. The Bacon County population breakdown is as follows. This information along with other factors can be helpful when estimating the demand for a public transit system.

FACTOR	POPULATION
TOTAL POPULATION	11,196
RACE	
WHITE	8,391
AFRICAN AMERICAN	1,755
OTHER	196
HISPANIC	854
# IN POVERTY	2,284

Four factors are used to determine if a public transit system must provide services to persons who have limited English-proficiency. The four factors are outlined here for Bacon County.

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 Bacon County is Spanish. It is estimated that there are a total of 842 persons, or 8% of the total population that speaks Spanish. This is significantly 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 Bacon County, 493 persons are linguistically isolated (LEP), meaning they do not speak English “very well.”

Estimate	493
Margin of Error	+/- 2.0
Bacon County %	4.7%
United States %	20.9%

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

Bacon County Transit does not have a history of LEP individuals who could not use the system. It is recommended that if needed Bacon 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 Bacon County to the LEP community.

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

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

To help ensure that potential riders with limited English are able to use Bacon County Transit Services, Bacon County should provide resources and materials in other languages. 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 www.sgrc.us, where a Google Translator can provide for basic information on the service to LEP individuals.

ADA Analysis

Oftentimes rural public transit services like the one in Bacon County provides meaningful transportation for those with ambulatory disabilities. In Bacon County, 1,044 persons have an ambulatory difficulty, meaning they have difficulty moving about under their own power. The population 65 years and older accounts for 45% of those individuals with an ambulatory difficulty. The Bacon County transit service is fully ADA accessible, providing vans with lifts and courteous drivers trained and willing to help riders get on and off the buses.



*Bacon Co. ADA Accessible Van
Source: SGRC*

Evaluation of Existing Services

Bacon County Transit is similar to that of other counties in the region. This section will examine how Bacon County Transit compares to surrounding communities and other communities of similar size. This section will look at the last five years (2008-2013) of available data on the operations of the Bacon County Transit Service. This data will allow us to look at trends and the future growth of Bacon County transit service.

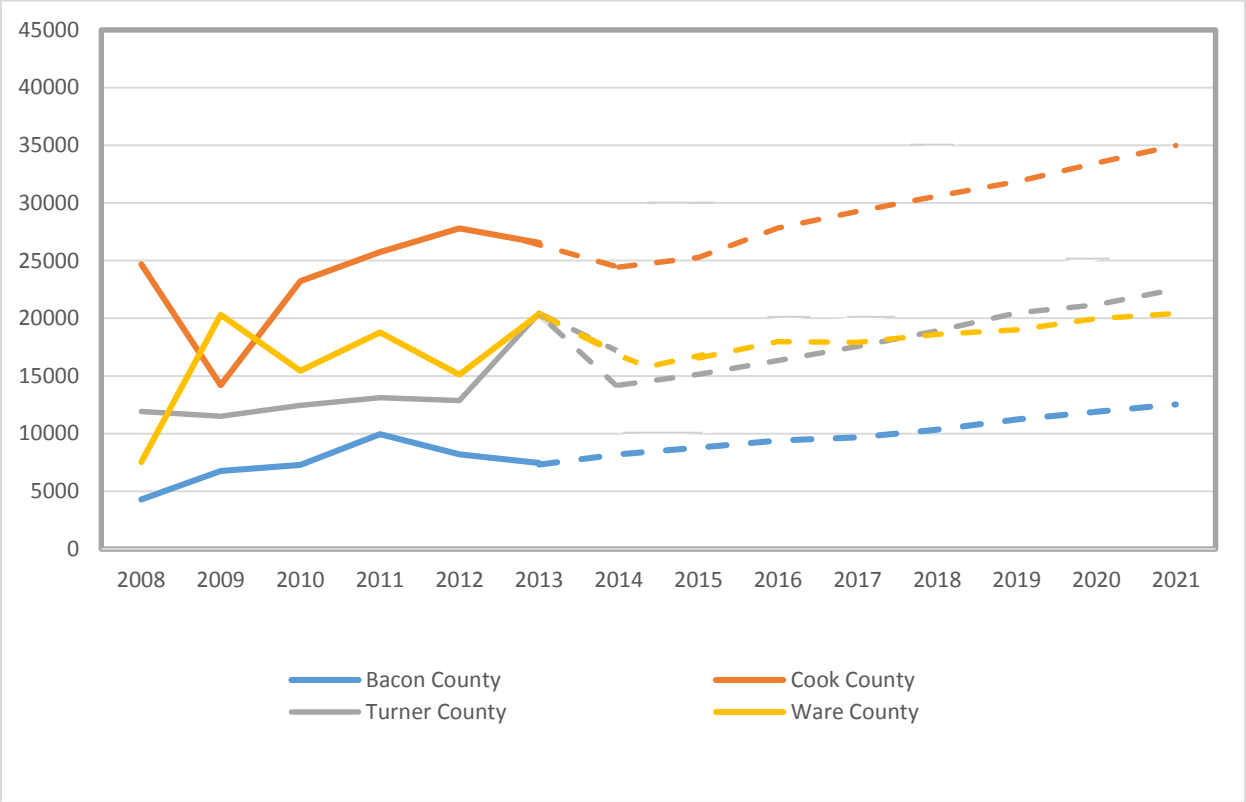


Figure 3. Past and Future Trend of Public Ridership in Regions Transit Systems, Bacon County is likely to see an overall steady, moderate increase in public ridership based on these trends.

Many of the transit systems in the region use purchase of service contracts (POS) to supplement the ridership and utilization of the public transit systems. This is no different in Bacon County, where over the past five years, coordinated transportation (POS) has accounted for, on average, 92% of all trips annually.

Bacon County currently provides an annual average of 7,931 trips in the last five years using two transit vehicles (one ADA accessible van, and one cutaway). Below are several charts that highlight the usage of vehicle fleets in transit systems through the region. Turner County has a fleet of 3 vehicles, Ware County has a fleet of 6 vehicles, and Cook County has a fleet of 6 vehicles.

When looking at all of the vehicle-based data as a whole, Bacon County is comparable with other counties in the region providing public and coordination transportation trips to residents. One way to look at how well the vehicles are being utilized is by the time remaining at the end of the year based on the operating hours of service. In Bacon County, there is difference of 1,208 hours that could be utilized throughout the year. These hours are reasonable considering that there are only two transit vehicles, although a few more trips could be handled based on these numbers.

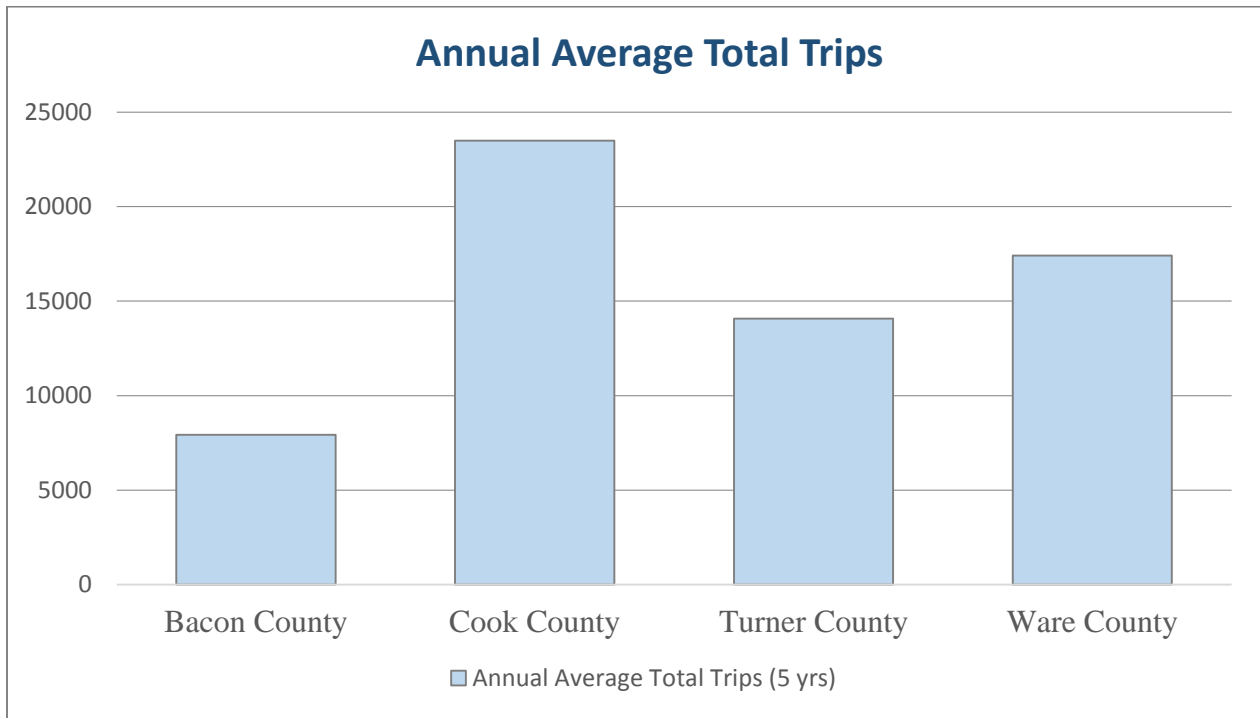


Figure 4. Annual Average Total Trips (5 years). Bacon County is significantly lower, which is likely due to the lower population.

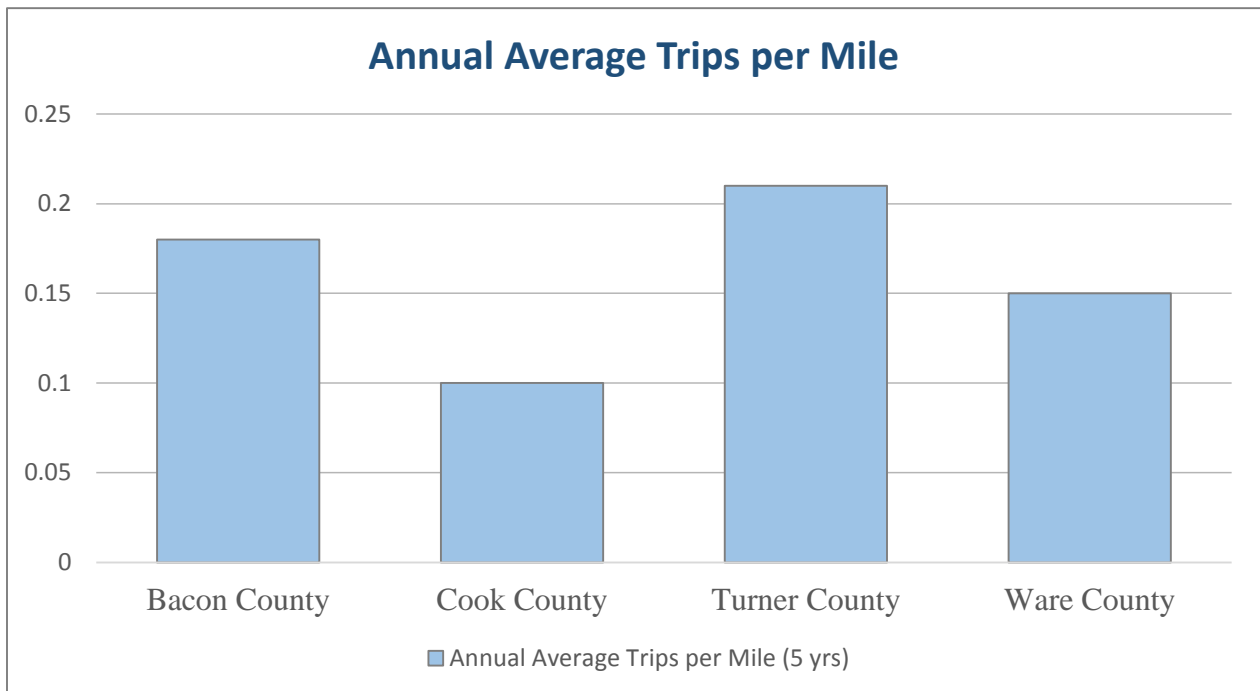


Figure 5. Annual Average Trips per Mile (5 years). Bacon County is in line with the other counties in the region when it comes to annual average trips. Bacon Counties' trips per mile are relatively high because the area is very rural.

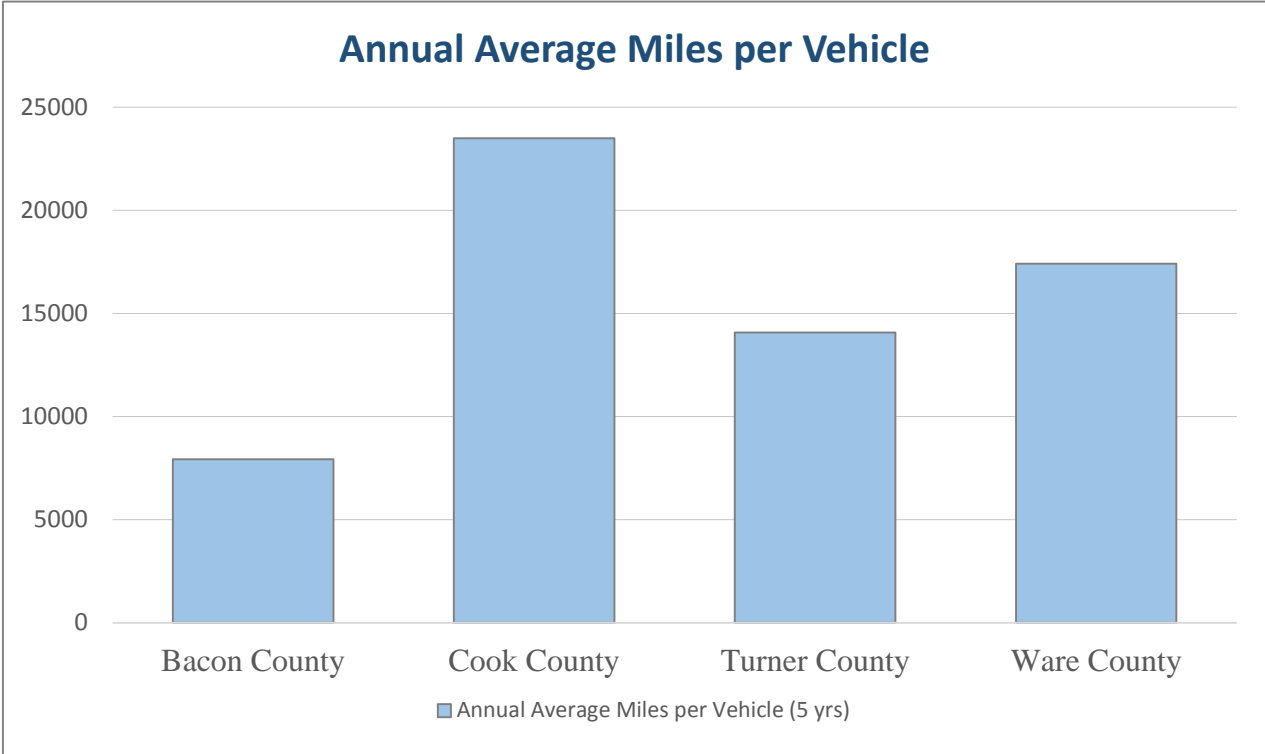


Figure 6. Annual Average Miles per Vehicle (5 years).

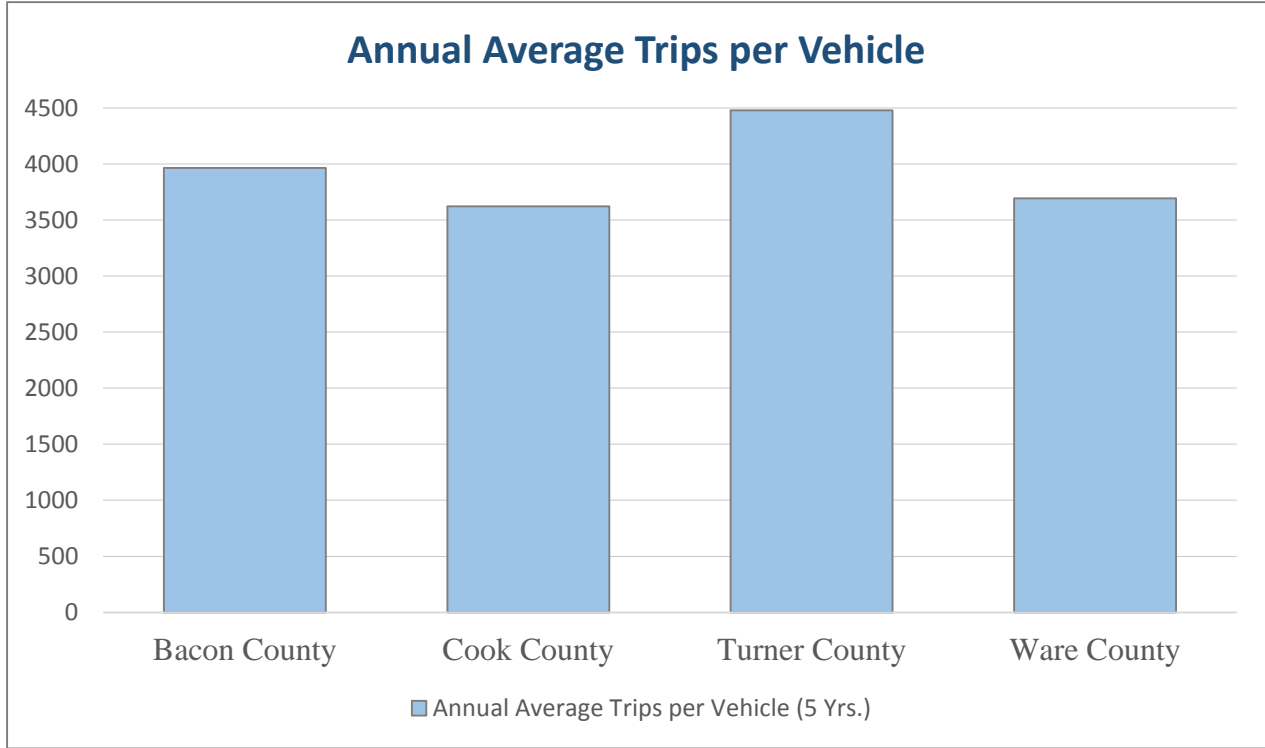


Figure 7. Annual Average Trips per Vehicle (5 years). Bacon County has more trips per vehicle on average than two of its larger peer counties, this is probably due to Bacon County having only two vehicles for use. This data should not be taken alone, rather looking at all of the data in this section together for an overall picture of what transit service delivery is like for Bacon County residents.

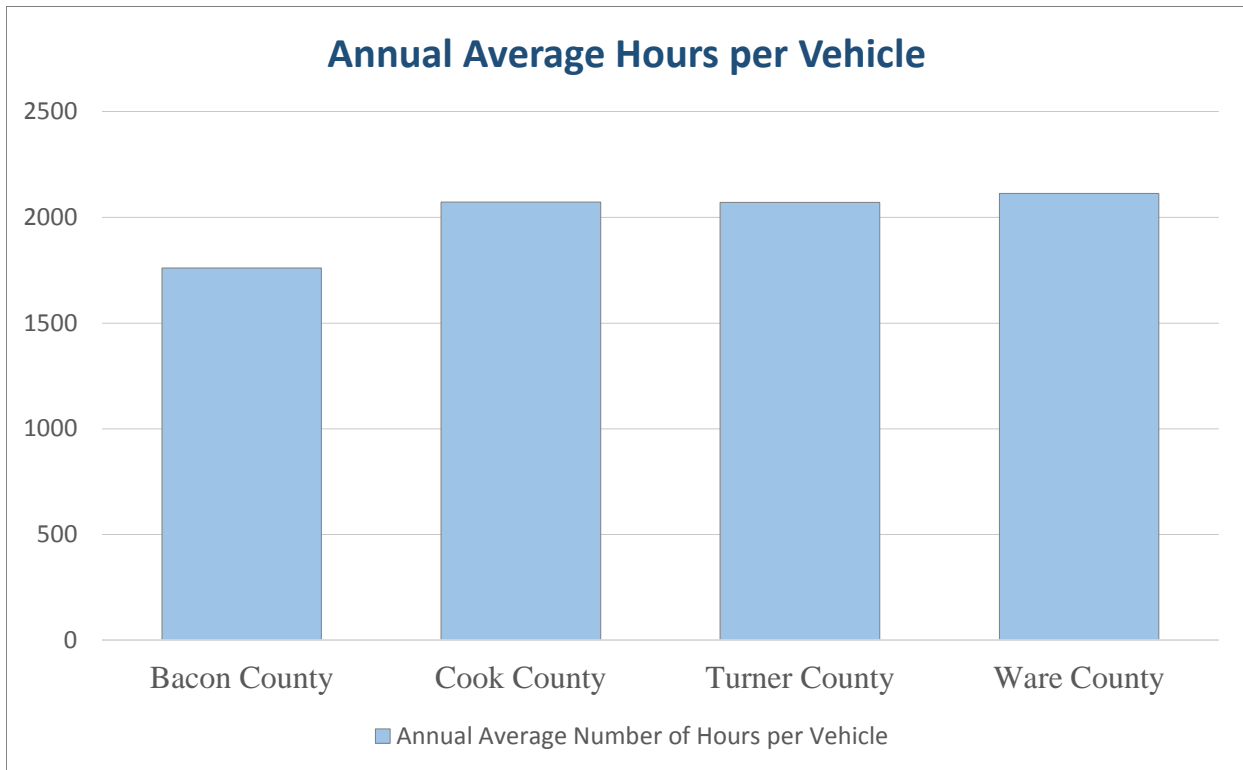


Figure 8. Annual Average Hours per Vehicle (5 years). The rural, low density development in Bacon County means that transit trips are typically longer and more time is spent per vehicle and per trip travelling to each destination. Bacon County has 2 service vehicles which allows for more hours per vehicle in comparison to the other counties.

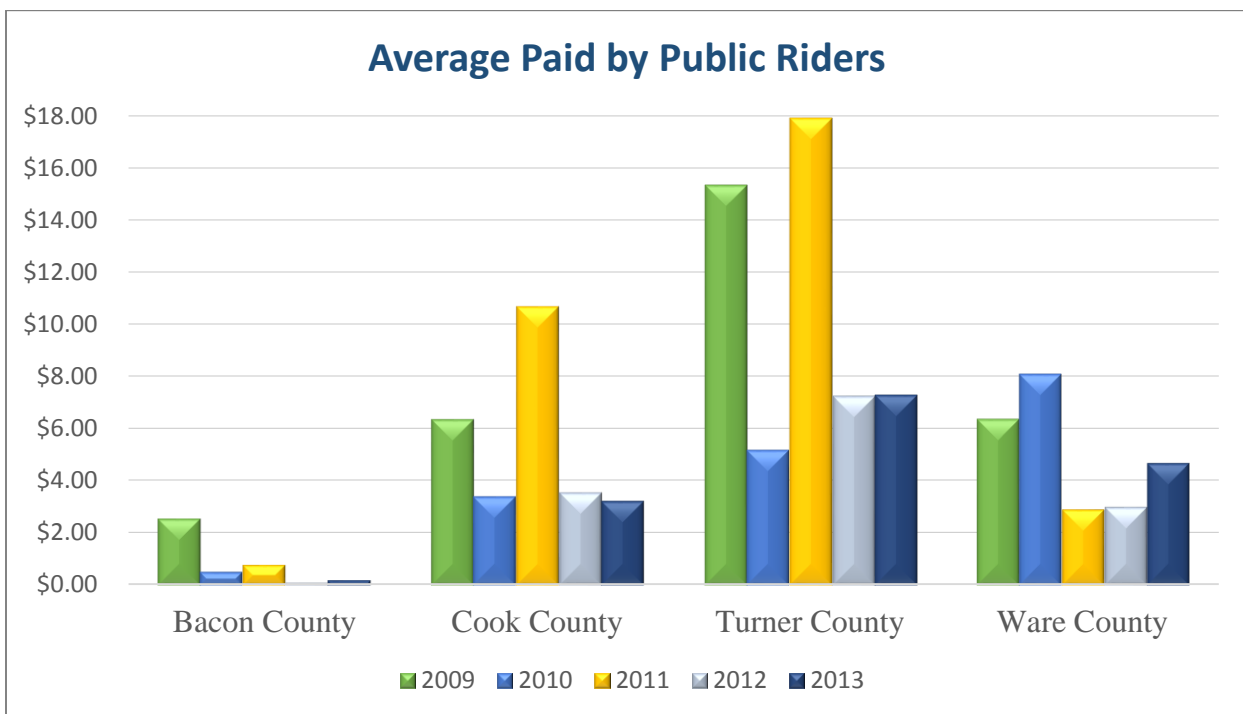


Figure 9. Average Paid by Public Riders per Trip. In Bacon County data from the National Transit Database indicates that the avg. paid by public riders is much lower compared to other counties.

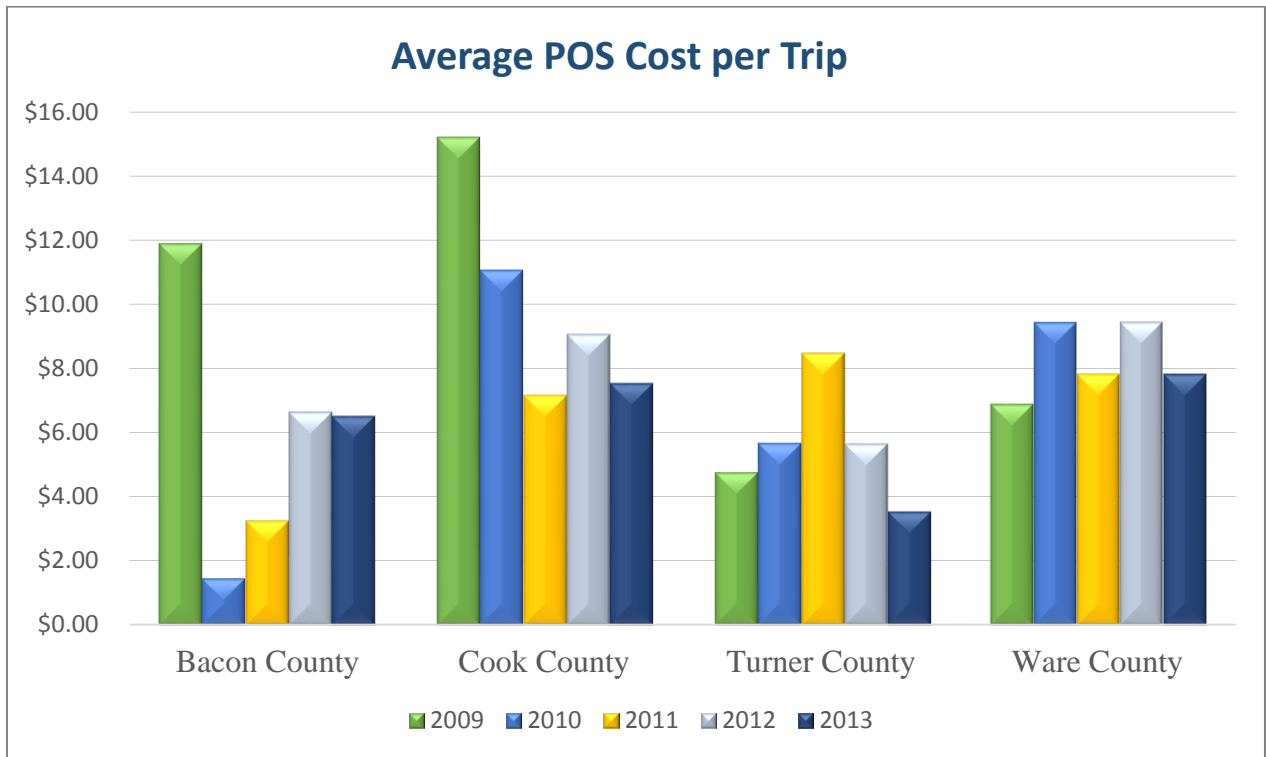


Figure 10. Average POS Cost per Trip. Bacon County supplements its local match of federal funds with POS or Purchase of Service Contracts from local human service agencies and other partners. This results in the county typically have no local expenditures.

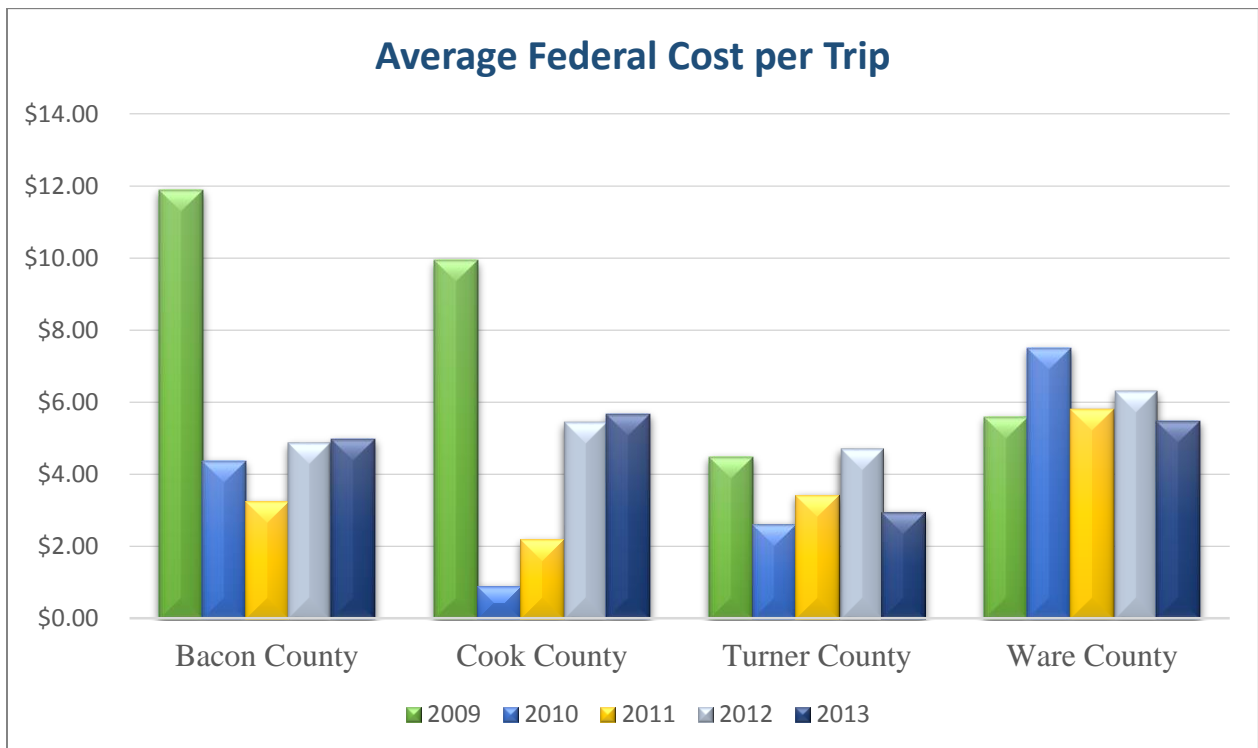


Figure 11 Average Federal Cost per Trip. Under the 5311 Rural Transit Program the Federal Transit Administration Pays up to 50% of the net operating deficit after face box revenue. Bacon County had a significantly higher cost than the other counties in 2009.

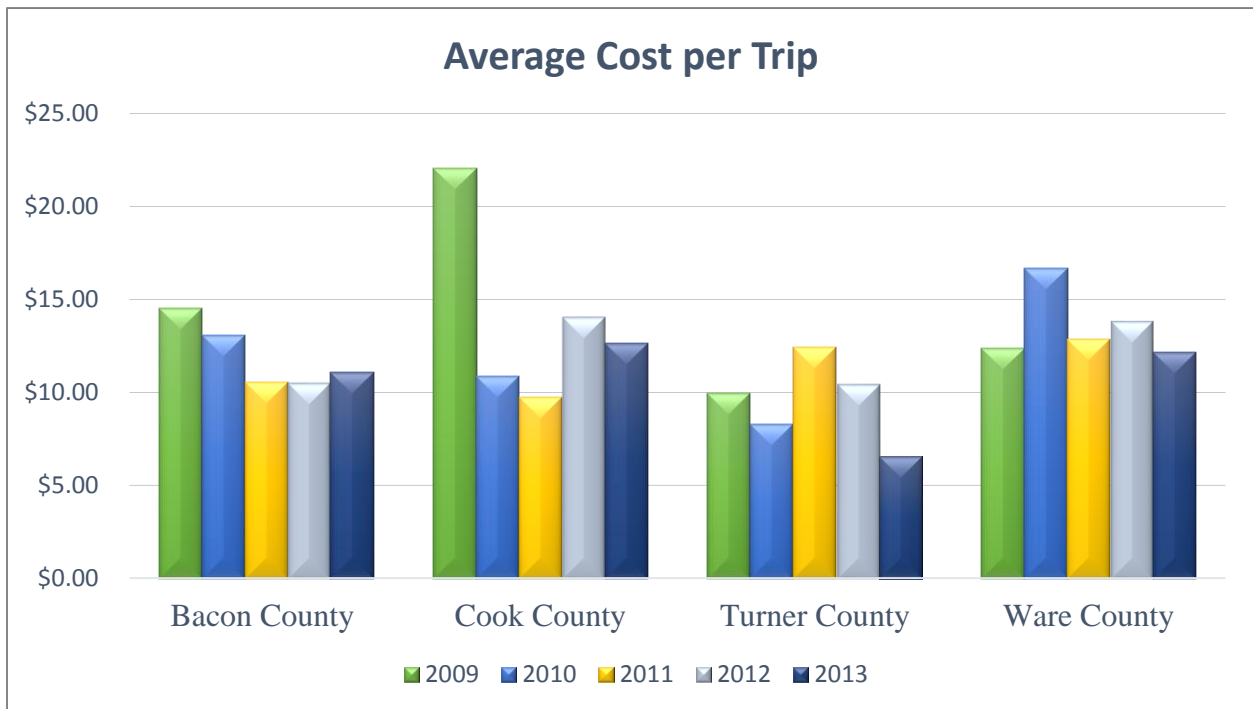


Figure 12 Average Cost per Trip (Public & POS) . .

Goals and Objectives for Transit

GDOT lays out several goals and objectives for rural public transit in Georgia. Many of them are straight forward and are discussed here. The SGRC and the Valdosta-Lowndes MPO have additional goals that impact rural public transit in Bacon County. The Bacon County Comprehensive Plan does not include any goals for public transit. In this section the goals and objectives will be discussed as well as how Bacon County Transit is currently meeting them.

1. Basic Mobility to Serve All Georgians

In Bacon County the transit service is open to all residents. Many of the current riders are seniors who have some personal mobility issues. The Bacon County transit service contracts with the Southern Georgia Regional Commission to provide coordinated human service transportation for seniors and other clients on a daily basis for trip destinations such as jobs, medical appointments and shopping trips.

2. Program Implementation

Bacon County administers the 5311 rural public transit program through coordination with GDOT and its TPO, MIDS, Inc, meeting or exceeding the FTA program requirements. As is demonstrated through the performance criteria noted before, the Bacon County Transit Service meets or exceeds most of these criteria on a daily basis.

The SGRC works with Bacon County and GDOT to provide technical assistance and analysis of the transit service delivery to better inform local and state officials.

3. Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Bacon County Transit System is operated in an efficient and effective manner by the county at its TPO. Utilizing POS contracts the TPO is able to utilize these funds to match the federal funds used to supplement the public riders. The TPO and Bacon County effectively work with GDOT to provide an efficient transit system for the residents of the county.



*Bacon Co. Transit Vehicle
Source: SGRC*

4. Safe, Secure Quality Service

The Bacon County Transit System is safe and secure, utilizing a proven training program for drivers and dispatchers. Bacon County and its TPO maintain safety and driver records that provide for a safe and secure environment for the riders.

5. Accessible Service—Usable by Persons with Disabilities

Bacon County Transit is committed to meet the needs of all users of the system. All vehicles are lift equipped to assist riders in wheelchairs. All drivers have been trained how to operate the lifts, assist riders and make sure each rider is safely secured aboard the vehicles.

Working with MIDS, Inc. and the SGRC, Bacon County Transit provides coordinated transit services for human service agency clients throughout the community, recovering the fully allocated costs of these trips and assisting in meeting the federal match requirements for the rural public transit program.

The SGRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy or (CEDS) includes a goal that seeks to ‘Ensure that the region’s transportation systems are intact to facilitate growth.’ The CEDS covers a broad region of 18-counties and encourages each local government to address transportation concerns at a local level, including the establishment of public transit systems.

The SGRC also produces a Regional Comprehensive Plan, similar to local, county-level Comprehensive Planning efforts. A goal in this plan includes the need to determine the transportation needs of seniors and an aging population. This impacts the mobility of the regional population and how communities develop and implement their land use policies.

Overall, Bacon County is meeting the goals and objectives set out by GDOT and other entities. Bacon County should work to include public transportation in its next comprehensive plan update and continue to actively participate in regional transportation and land use planning efforts with the SGRC..

Transit Need and Demand

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 needs and demand for Bacon County.

The analysis shows there is demand for more rural public transit in Bacon County (not POS - Purchase of Service trips). Overall, there is an estimated need for 81,400 trips annually for public riders in Bacon County based on the communities' mobility gap. This number is high because of factors in the many potential riders that find alternative means of transportation, like getting a ride with friends, family, walking, riding a bicycle, etc. Further analysis shows that there is actual demand for 8,800 trips annually (not including POS trips). Once POS trips are inserted into the equation, there is a total demand of 9,500 trips annually for the general public after the POS trips are met. Currently Bacon County provides about 8,000 total trips annually, indicating an unmet demand for rural public transit trips of nearly 1,500 trips per year. More specifically, an estimated demand of 19,400 more POS trips could be ordered by the two Human Service Providers (HSPs) operating in Bacon County.

The 1,500 unmet trips do not necessarily indicate an immediate demand for rural public transportation. However, this along with other data (such as hours of service availability) should be used before determining whether or not to invest in capital or operational improvements to the transit system (i.e. more buses, or extended hours of service).

Figure 13 Input screen from Rural Transit Demand Tool

SERVICE AREA CHARACTERISTICS INPUT TABLE -- Fill In All Unshaded Boxes									
Service Area:	Bacon County, Ga								
Analysis Description:	Bacon County, Ga								
Additional Description:									
Transit Need Inputs			Program Demand Inputs						
Number of persons residing in households with income below the poverty level:	2,177		Program Name	Program Type	Number of Program Participants	Number of Events per Week	Percentage of Participants who attend on an AVERAGE day	Percentage of Participants who are Transit Dependent or Likely to Use Transit	Number of Weeks Program is Offered (Annually)
Number of households residing in households owning no vehicles:	Households	Persons	Bacon County DFCS	Developmental Services: Case Management	4	7	90%	100%	52
1-Person households:	173	173	Bacon County Senior	Senior Nutrition	36	5	90%	100%	52
2-Person households:	35	70							
3-Person households:	8	24							
4-or-more-Person households:	45	180							
Mobility Gap:									
Enter State (from drop-down list):	GA								
General Public Rural Non-Program			American Community Survey Table Number						
Population Age 60+	2,315	B01001							
Population Age 18 - 64 with a Mobility Limitation	573	S1810							
Persons Living in Households with No Vehicle Available	447	B08201							
General Public Rural Passenger Transportation									
Need:	Referenced from Mobility Gap analysis								
Annual Vehicle-miles of Service:	43,576	Annual Revenue-Miles							
Small City Fixed Route Inputs									
Population of City:		Persons							
College and University Enrollment (Total):		Students							
Annual Revenue-Hours of Service:		Annual Revenue-Hours							
Demand - Commuter by Transit to an Urban Center									
Workers Commuting from Rural County to Urban Center		Miles							
Distance from Rural County to Urban Center									
Is the Urban Center a State Capital?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check Box for Yes							
<p>The preferred source of demographic data is the American Community Survey, available at: http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsfpages/index.xhtml</p> <p>At that website enter the referenced Table Number in the appropriate box. Some table numbers may not be available for communities under</p>									

Figure 15 Peer Community Comparison from Rural Transit Demand Tool

Peer Data Worksheet									
Input Data from Peer Transit Systems or Existing Transit Service									
Name of Peer System		Cook County	Turner County	Ware County					
Population of Area		17,212	8,930	36,312					
Size of Area Served (Square Miles)		227	290	316					
Annual Vehicle-Miles of Service Provided		247,216	67,234	127,857					
Annual Vehicle-Hours of Service Provided		13,527	6,546	10,349					
Service Type (Fixed Route, Route-Deviation, Demand-Response)		Demand-Response	Demand-Response	Demand-Response					
Number of One-Way Trips Served per Year		23,500	14,076	17,418					
Degree of Coordination with Other Carriers (Low, Medium, High)		Low	Low	Low					

Results of Peer Data Comparison		Population	Annual vehicle-miles	Annual vehicle-hours
Input Data for My System:		19,286	98,914	5,046
Observed Trip Rates		Demand Estimate Based On:		
Peer Values		Population	Annual Vehicle-miles	Annual vehicle-hours
Trips per Capita				
Maximum	1.6	30,858		
Average	1.1	21,215		
Median	1.4	27,000		
Minimum	0.5	9,643		
Trips per Vehicle-Mile				
Maximum	0.2		19,783	
Average	0.1		9,891	
Median	0.1		9,891	
Minimum	0.1		9,891	
Trips per Vehicle-Hour				
Maximum	2.2			11,101
Average	1.9			9,587
Median	1.7			8,578
Minimum	1.7			8,578
Values expected for my system				
Maximum		30,858	19,783	11,101.0
Average		21,215	9,891	9,587.0
Median		27,000	9,891	8,578.0
Minimum		9,643	9,891	8,578.0

Transit Recommendations

Based on the research in this report it is the recommendation of the Southern Georgia Regional Commission that Bacon County continue to operate transit services to accommodate more riders and trips as needed. The demographic and transit demand analysis show there is a gap in unmet demand and need in Bacon County and with expanded marketing and outreach Bacon County Transit could help meet the needs of residents better. This report indicates there may even be an unmet capacity of the existing system, and the county and its TPO should consider expanding marketing efforts to ensure residents know this service is available to the general public.

In cooperation with other local governments which provide transit and the SGRC, Bacon County should work to develop regional flyers and brochures that better inform the public, social service agencies, and etc. of the availability and affordability of Bacon County Transit.

5-year Capital and Operating Plan

Included in this section are the capital and operation budget plans for a five-year period, FY2017-2022. These should only be used as guidance.

Operator: Bacon County/ TPO
Date: 5/27/2016

With POS
2.32% Inflation Rate

FY2017-2018		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 24,113.75	21%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 92,563.93	79%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 116,677.68	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 116,677.68	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 11,667.77	
Net Operating Total	\$ 105,009.91	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	330
Total Trips Projected	11561
Percentage of Public Trips	17.00%
POS Trips	7593
POS Amount	\$ 49,114.82
Rate Per Trip	\$ 6.47
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 13.83
Total Public Trips	1965
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 26.72
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 5.94

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 105,009.91	\$ 52,504.96	\$ -	\$ 52,504.96
POS Local Funds	\$ 49,114.82	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 49,114.82
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Grand Total	\$ 55,895.09	\$ 52,504.96	\$ -	\$ 3,390.14

FY2021-2022		
Net Operating Summary		
Administrative Total / Ratio	\$ 44,703.27	28%
Operating Total / Ratio	\$ 114,038.76	72%
Total Operating Budget	\$ 158,742.03	
LESS: POS Revenue	\$ -	
LESS: Non-5311 Expenses	\$ -	
Public Transportation Budget	\$ 158,742.03	
LESS: 10% Fare Revenue	\$ 15,874.20	
Net Operating Total	\$ 142,867.83	

Vehicles	2
Average Trips Per Vehicle	400
Total Trips Projected	14820
Percentage of Public Trips	17.00%
POS Trips	12301
POS Amount	\$ 53,372.25
Rate Per Trip	\$ 4.34
POS Fully Allocated Costs	\$ 11.61
Total Public Trips	2519
Subsidized Revenue Per Public Trip	\$ 28.36
Expected Farebox Per Trip	\$ 6.30

Budget Summary	Totals	Federal	State	Local
Operating Budget Total	\$ 142,867.83	\$ 71,433.91	\$ -	\$ 71,433.91
POS Local Funds	\$ 53,372.25	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53,372.25
Excess POS Local Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Capital Budget Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Budget Grand Total	\$ 89,495.58	\$ 71,433.91	\$ -	\$ 18,061.66