

Pataula Regional Transit Plan

Randolph, Stewart and Georgetown-Quitman Counties

**Prepared for the Georgia Department of Transportation
by the River Valley Regional Commission**

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Publication and Publicity

Disclaimer

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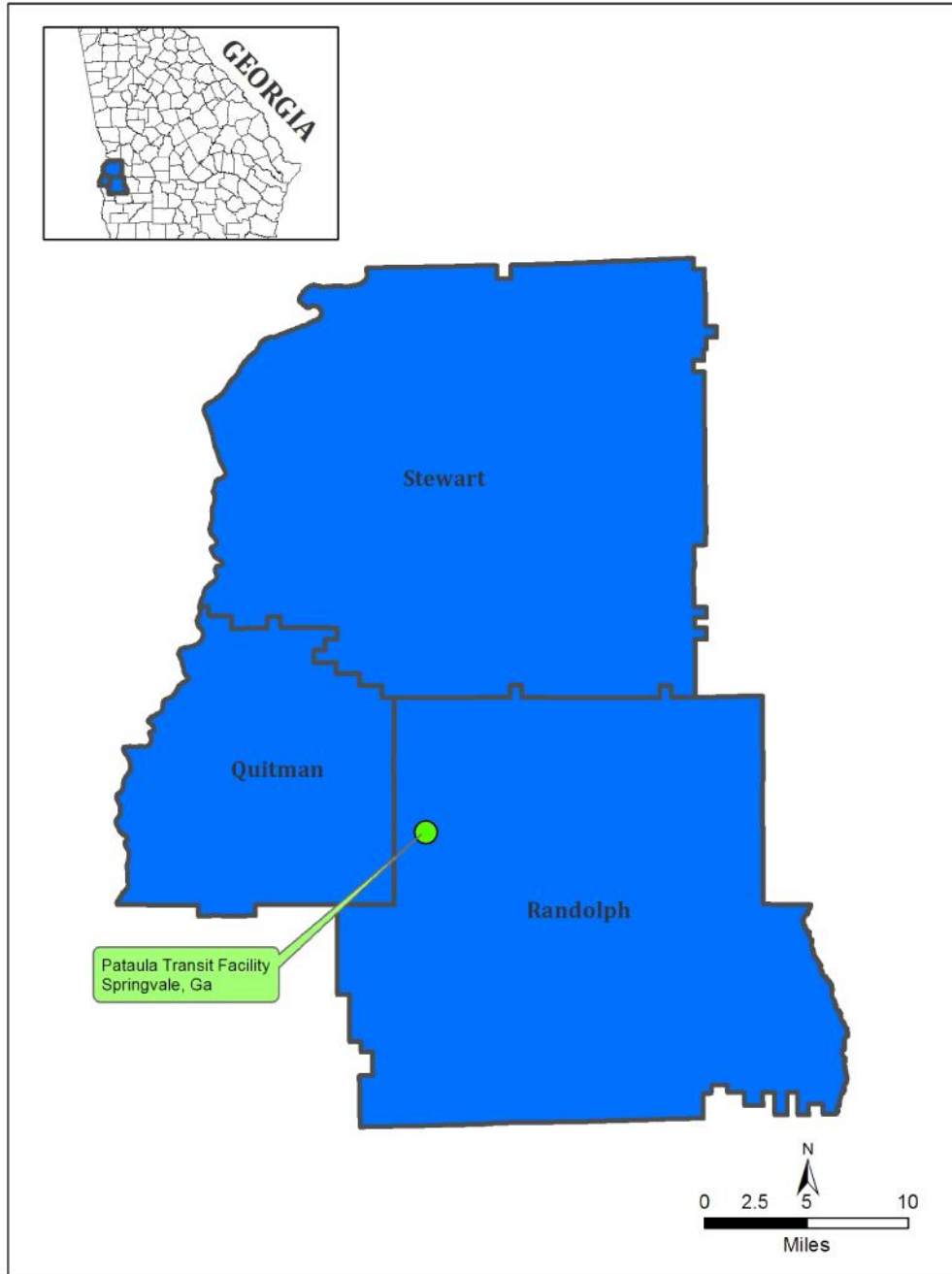
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Chapter One
INTRODUCTION

Pataula Transit Facility Site Location Map and Surrounding Counties



Executive Summary

Stewart, Georgetown-Quitman and Randolph Counties are located in west central Georgia and are within 50 miles south of Columbus, Georgia; 120 miles west of Macon, Georgia and 140 miles south of Atlanta, Georgia. From these three counties, Georgetown-Quitman is the only county with prior transit service; however, it only served Georgetown-Quitman residents. With the funding of the new 5311 Regional Rural Transit Facility built in 2011 in Randolph County, Georgetown-Quitman will relocate to this new facility and begin to serve Stewart, Georgetown-Quitman and Randolph County residents effective July 1, 2012, providing reliable and efficient regional transit service.

Key assessment findings are as follows:

Demographic Findings

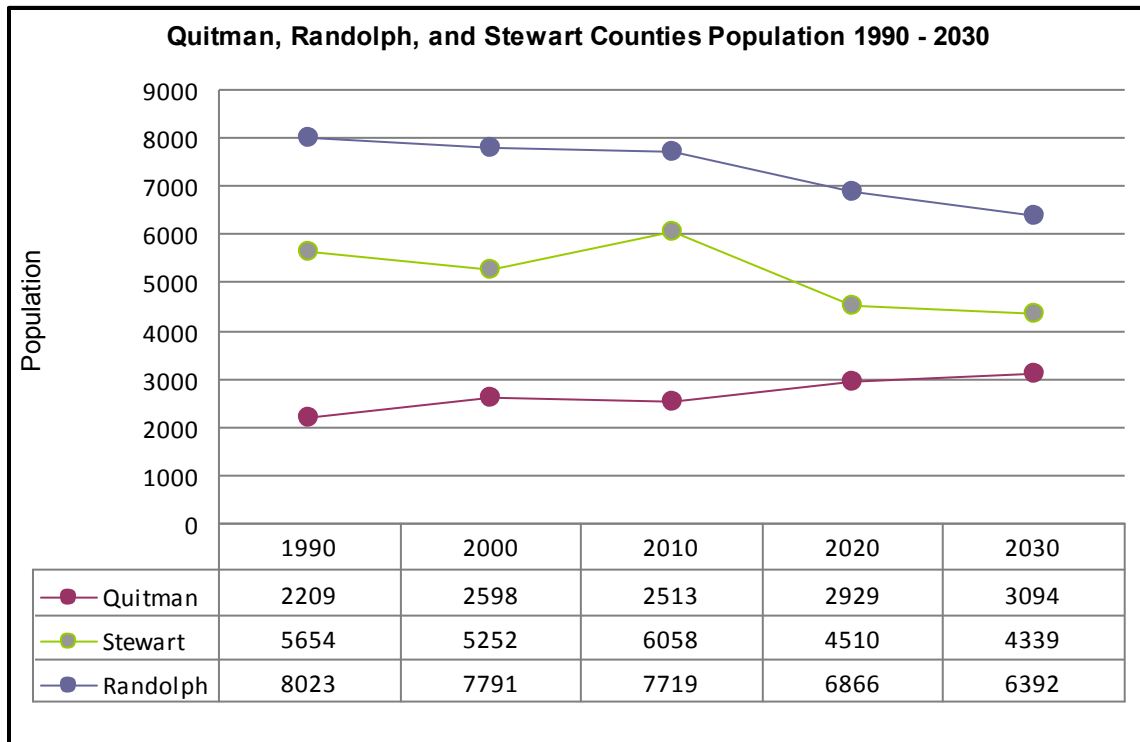


Table 1-2 Population Projected Growth

This table shows a decrease in Stewart and Randolph County's population and an increase in Quitman's since 1990.

As the population ages, those with a disability or those who are afraid to drive is expected to increase.

Household income is expected to lag behind both region and state levels. The percentage of those below the poverty level is expected to be higher than region and state.

Table 1-1: Projected regional transit users

	Stewart County	Georgetown-Quitman County	Randolph County
Plus 65 Population	858	554	1,378
Disability	1488	775	1945
Below Poverty Level (Individuals)	2252	712	2086
Households without Vehicles	396	117	565

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010

Objectives and Purpose

The objectives of the Pataula Transportation Development Plan (TDP) are three-fold: (1) to document the nature and scope of current public transit services; (2) to assess the adequacy of existing transit services and propose alternatives; and, (3) to provide justification for the FY 2012-2016 finance plan. The Plan is intended to provide the insights and justification necessary to develop a sound public transportation service and to serve as a guide for local, state and federal agencies.

The Pataula TDP establishes the region's existing conditions in terms of demographic and growth trends, current transit services and performance. It also presents a comprehensive summary of any current transit system, and compares system performance to a group of peer transit systems. The characteristics of the community and analysis of transit were provided by stakeholders during conversations held during May and June 2012. The Plan concludes with a series of recommended policies, strategies and performance standards for the system, which were developed from public input as well as technical analysis of system performance.

Plan Development and Organization

In September 2011, the Pataula TDP process began under the sponsorship of the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC), with funding from the Georgia Department of Transportation. The plan is organized in four sections. The first section provides a demographic overview of Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties. The second section provides an overview of transit operations, including transit services, financial and operating data and evaluations to peer systems. The third section provides a Needs Assessment. The final section details plan recommendations and financial plan for the Pataula TDP.

How to Use the Pataula Transportation Development Plan?

The Pataula TDP is a guide that is intended to serve as a reference point for potential users. A number of companion planning documents should be used in conjunction with the TDP. These include:

- Quitman County, Randolph County, and Stewart County's Comprehensive Plans
- Randolph County and the Cities of Cuthbert and Shellman Partial Comprehensive Plan Update 2009
- The Unified Government of Georgetown-Quitman County Partial Comprehensive Plan Update 2009
- Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County Budgets
- Rural Transportation Improvement Program
- Other Relevant State and Federal Plans and Regulatory Documents

Public Outreach

The TDP is intended to be a participatory process with the aim of developing an input-based plan that builds consensus from varied transit system users, providers, and local elected officials.

Stakeholders

A committee of stakeholders of the Pataula Regional Transit Plan – composed of representatives from various components of the Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County Board of Commissioners (staff and elected officials) the DHS, GDOT, the RVRC Area Agency on Aging and transit operators- was created to help guide the development of the Plan. The stakeholders were consulted to provide insight on transit issues, opportunities and client needs, and subsequently reviewed planning documents and evaluated implementation options. Stakeholders were also invaluable in providing data and contact information for public input.

Chapter Two

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Demographic Analysis

The 1990 - 2010 population numbers for Georgetown-Quitman, Stewart, and Randolph are highlighted in Table 2-1. Georgetown-Quitman County's population has increased by 40%, while Stewart County's population has decreased by 23% and Randolph County's, by 20.3%.

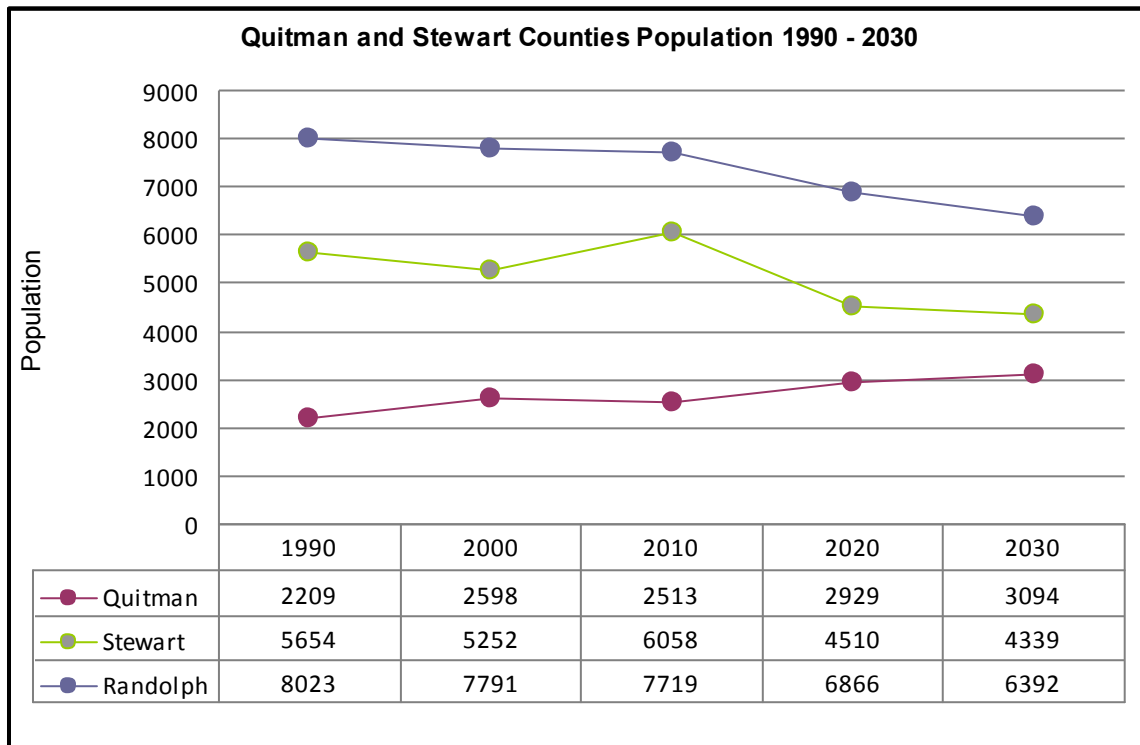
Population

Table 2-1: Pataula Transit's Regional County Population: 1990-2030

Quitman, Stewart, and Randolph County Population 1990 - 2030					
	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Georgetown-Quitman	2209	2598	2513	2929	3094
Stewart	5654	5252	6058	4510	4339
Randolph	8023	7791	7719	6866	6392

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

Table 2-2: Pataula Transit's Regional County Total Population Projections 1990-2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2020, , 2030

Age

Each county's age distribution from 1990-2010 is highlighted in Tables 2-3 thru 2-5. From 1990-2010 the 0-19 age group in Georgetown-Quitman County decreased by 7%; the 20-69 age groups increased by 21% and the 70-80 plus age groups increased by 41%.

Table 2-3: Quitman County Age Distribution 1990, 2000, 2010

Quitman County Age Distribution, 1990 – 2010						
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
0 - 9 Years Old	332	15.03%	339	13.05%	280	11.14%
10 - 19 Years Old	295	13.35%	348	13.39%	301	11.98%
20 - 29 Years Old	309	13.99%	231	8.89%	236	9.39%
30 - 39 Years Old	263	11.91%	319	12.28%	239	9.51%
40 - 49 Years Old	267	12.09%	351	13.51%	303	12.06%
50 - 59 Years Old	222	10.05%	364	14.01%	363	14.44%
60 - 69 Years Old	268	12.13%	305	11.74%	434	17.27%
70 - 79 Years Old	197	8.92%	229	8.81%	239	9.51%
80 + Years Old	56	2.54%	112	4.31%	118	4.70%
Total	2209	100.00%	2598	100.00%	2513	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

From 1990-2010 the 0-19 age group in Stewart County decreased by 36%; the 20-69 age group increased by 34% and the 70-80 plus age groups decreased by 14%.

Table 2-4: Stewart County Age Distribution 1990, 2000, 2010

Stewart County Age Distribution, 1990 – 2010						
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
0 - 9 Years Old	807	14.27%	720	13.71%	474	7.82%
10 - 19 Years Old	899	15.90%	732	13.94%	617	10.18%
20 - 29 Years Old	799	14.13%	559	10.64%	1151	19.00%
30 - 39 Years Old	826	14.61%	694	13.21%	1038	17.13%
40 - 49 Years Old	600	10.61%	737	14.03%	864	14.26%
50 - 59 Years Old	492	8.70%	618	11.77%	761	12.56%
60 - 69 Years Old	557	9.85%	457	8.70%	570	9.41%
70 - 79 Years Old	464	8.21%	420	8.00%	342	5.65%
80 + Years Old	210	3.71%	315	6.00%	241	3.98%
Total	5654	100.00%	5252	100.00%	6058	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

From 1990- 2010 the 0-19 age groups in Randolph County decreased by 27%; the 20-69 age groups increased by 11% and the 70- 80 plus age groups decreased by 4%.

Table 2-5: Randolph County Age Distribution 1990, 2000, 2010

Randolph County Age Distribution, 1990 – 2010						
	1990	%	2000	%	2010	%
0 - 9 Years Old	1244	15.51%	1134	14.56%	936	12.13%
10 - 19 Years Old	1478	18.42%	1365	17.52%	1054	13.65%
20 - 29 Years Old	1072	13.36%	859	11.03%	876	11.35%
30 - 39 Years Old	1052	13.11%	960	12.32%	774	10.03%
40 - 49 Years Old	785	9.78%	1083	13.90%	953	12.35%
50 - 59 Years Old	646	8.05%	835	10.72%	1204	15.60%
60 - 69 Years Old	734	9.15%	654	8.39%	947	12.27%
70 - 79 Years Old	687	8.56%	530	6.80%	577	7.48%
80 + Years Old	325	4.05%	371	4.76%	398	5.16%
Total	8023	100.00%	7791	100.00%	7719	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

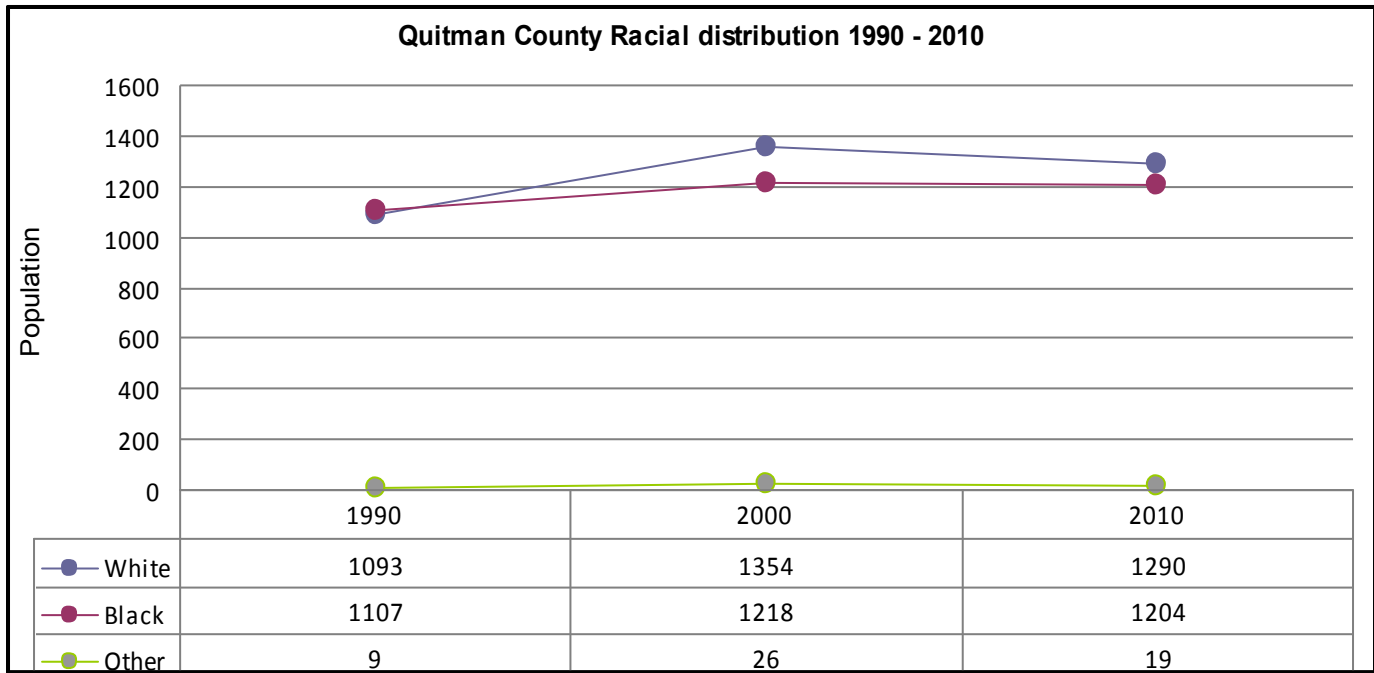
The following tables indicate the racial composition of all three counties and its municipalities. The racial mix of each county is shown below in tables 2-6 thru 2-8.

In 1990, Georgetown-Quitman County’s racial mix was 49% white, 50% black, and .04% other. In 2010, there was an 18% increase in the white population, 8% increase in black population, and a 1% increase in other race populations.

Table 2-6: Quitman County Race and Ethnic Origin 1990-2010

Quitman County Racial Distribution 1990 – 2010			
	1990	2000	2010
White	1093	1354	1290
Black	1107	1218	1204
Other	9	26	19

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

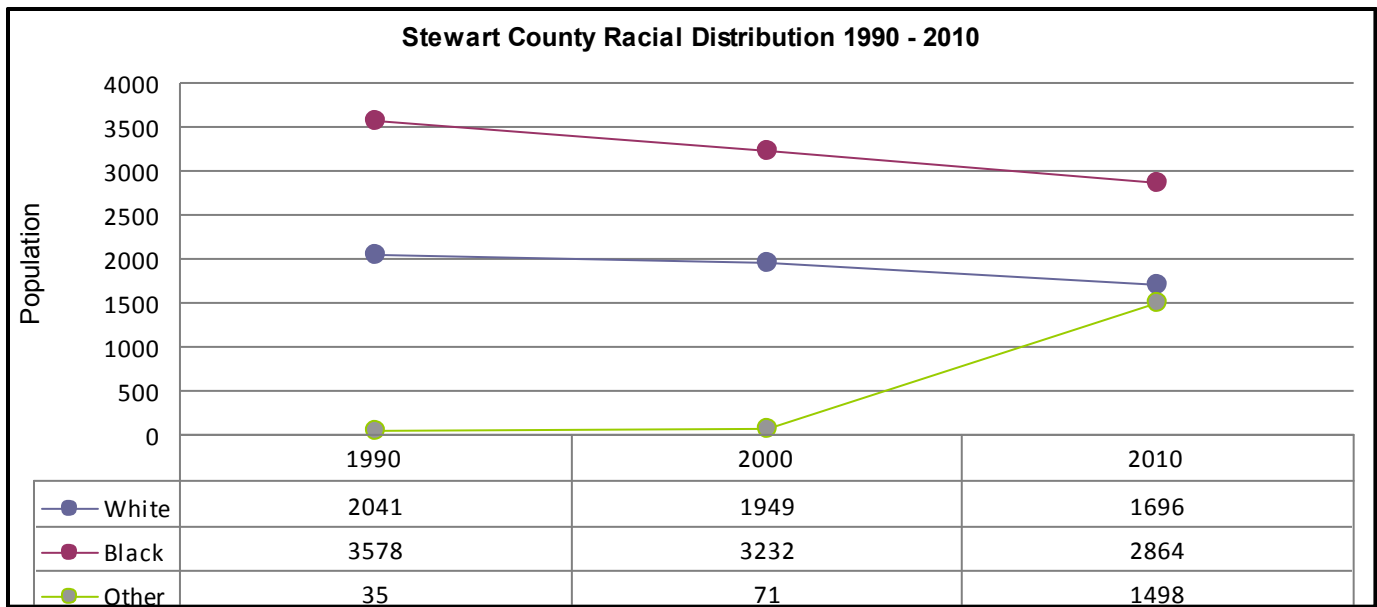


In 1990, Stewart County’s racial mix was 36% white, 63% black, and .06% other. From 1990- 2010 there was a decrease in white and black populations but an increase in other by 41%.

Table 2-7 Stewart County Race and Ethnic Origin 1990-2010

Stewart County Racial Distribution 1990 – 2010			
	1990	2000	2010
White	2041	1949	1696
Black	3578	3232	2864
Other	35	71	1498

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010

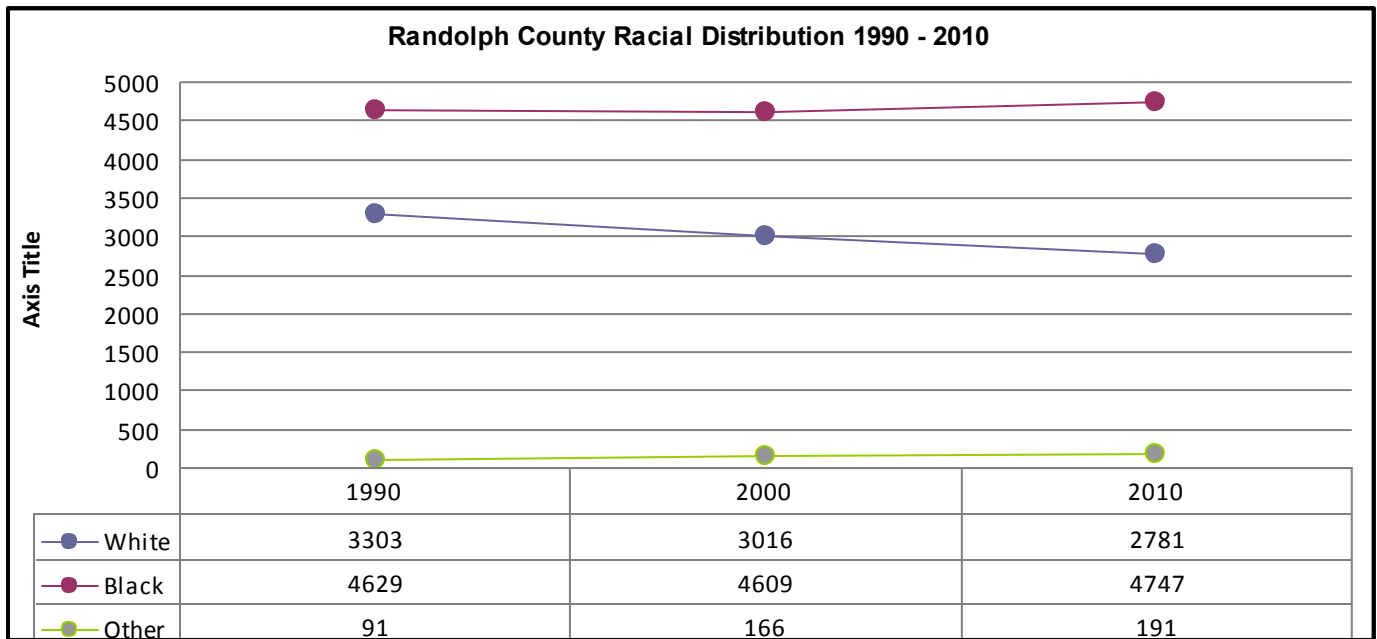


Randolph County's racial mix in 1990 was 41% white, 58% black, and 1% other. In 2010, the racial mix of the county changed to 36% white, 61% black, and 2% other.

Table 2-8: Randolph Race and Ethnic Origin 1990-2010

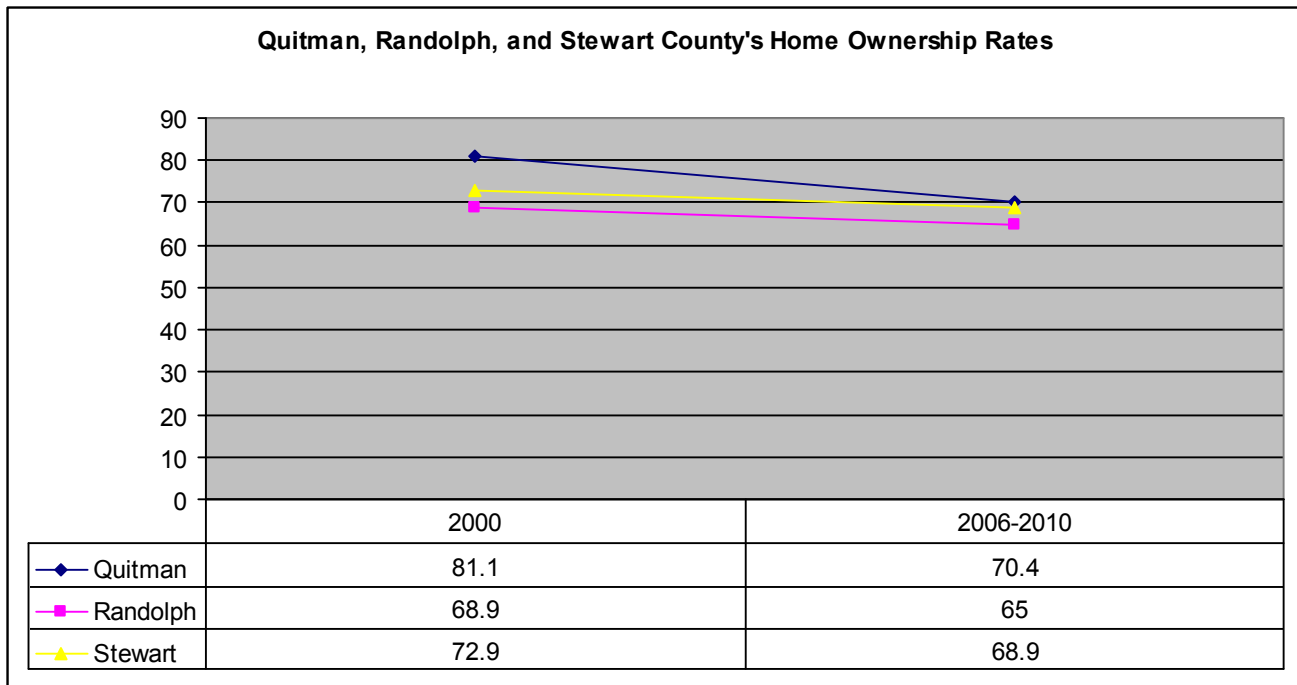
Randolph County Racial Distribution 1990 – 2010			
	1990	2000	2010
White	3303	3016	2781
Black	4629	4609	4747
Other	91	166	191

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, 2010



Housing

The counties have historically maintained a high homeownership rate, but the most recent census data indicate that the rate is dropping steadily. Documented homeownership rates for 2000 and 2010 for Quitman County show a drop from 81.1% to 70.4%; for Randolph County, from 68.9% to 65%, and for Stewart County, from 72.9% to 68.9%.



Occupancy

Each county has seen an increase in housing from 2000 to 2010, in varying degrees (Georgetown-Quitman County, 49%; Randolph County, 30%; and Stewart County, 16%), with Georgetown-Quitman County experiencing the greatest increase. These counties also saw an increase in vacant housing as well (Quitman, 27%; Randolph, 49%; and Stewart, 33%), with Randolph County experiencing the greatest increase.

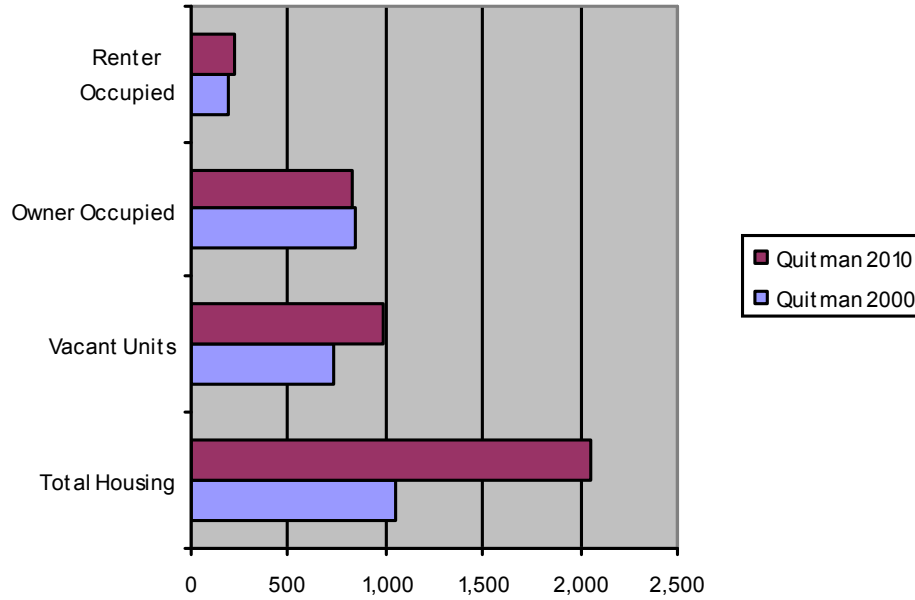
Georgetown-Quitman County saw a decrease in their owner-occupied units and an increase in their rentals since 2000. Randolph County saw an increase in both; while, Stewart County saw a decrease in both.

Table 2-9: Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County Occupancy Characteristics

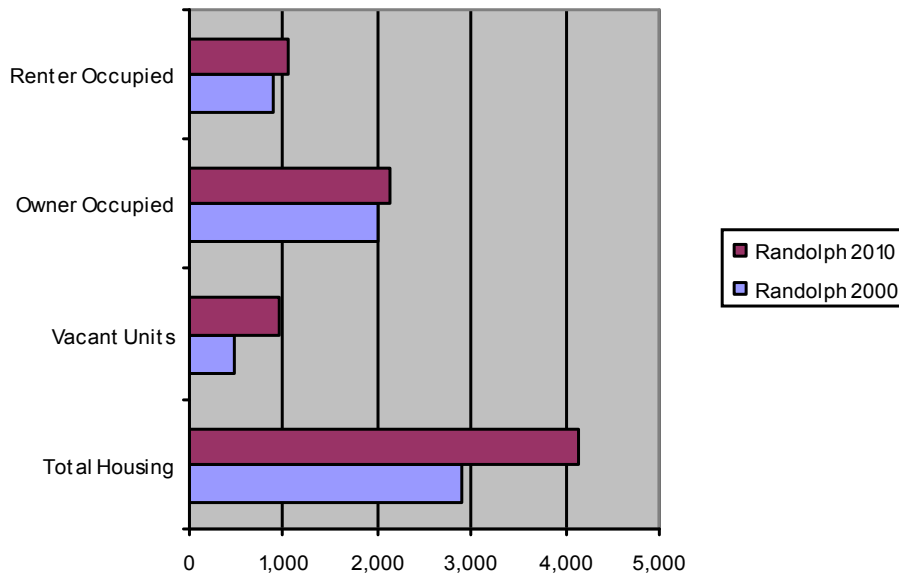
Units	Quitman			Randolph			Stewart		
	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change	2000	2010	% Change
Total Housing	1,047	2,047	48.85%	2,909	4,153	29.95%	2,007	2,383	15.78%
Vacant Units	726	994	26.96%	493	966	48.96%	347	521	33.40%
Owner Occupied	849	826	-2.78%	2,003	2,133	6.09%	1,464	1,341	-9.17%
Renter Occupied	198	227	12.78%	906	1054	14.04%	543	521	-4.22%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010

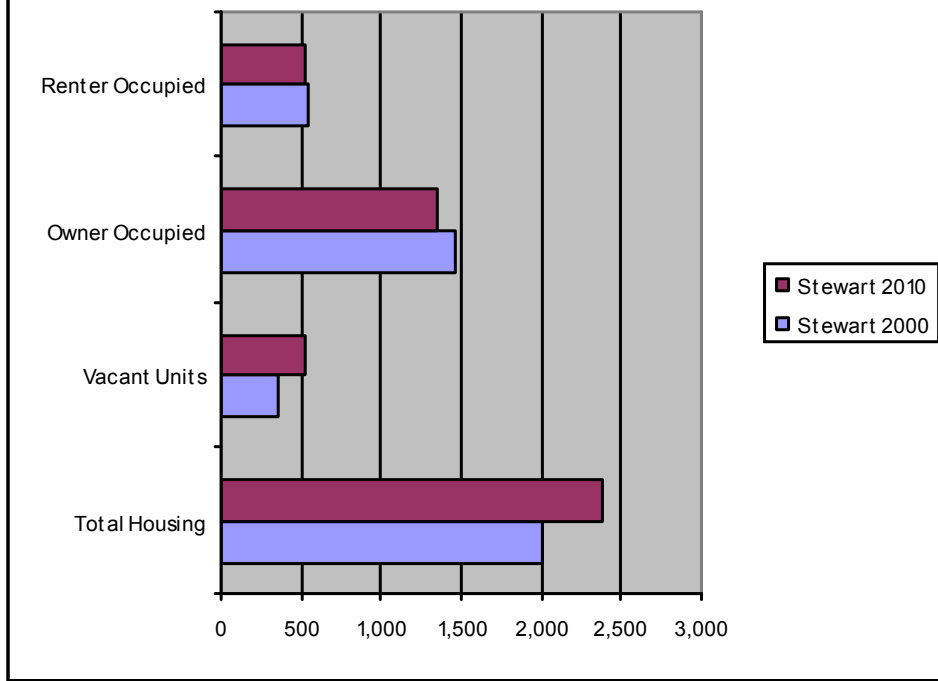
Quitman County Occupancy Characteristics



Randolph County Occupancy Characteristics

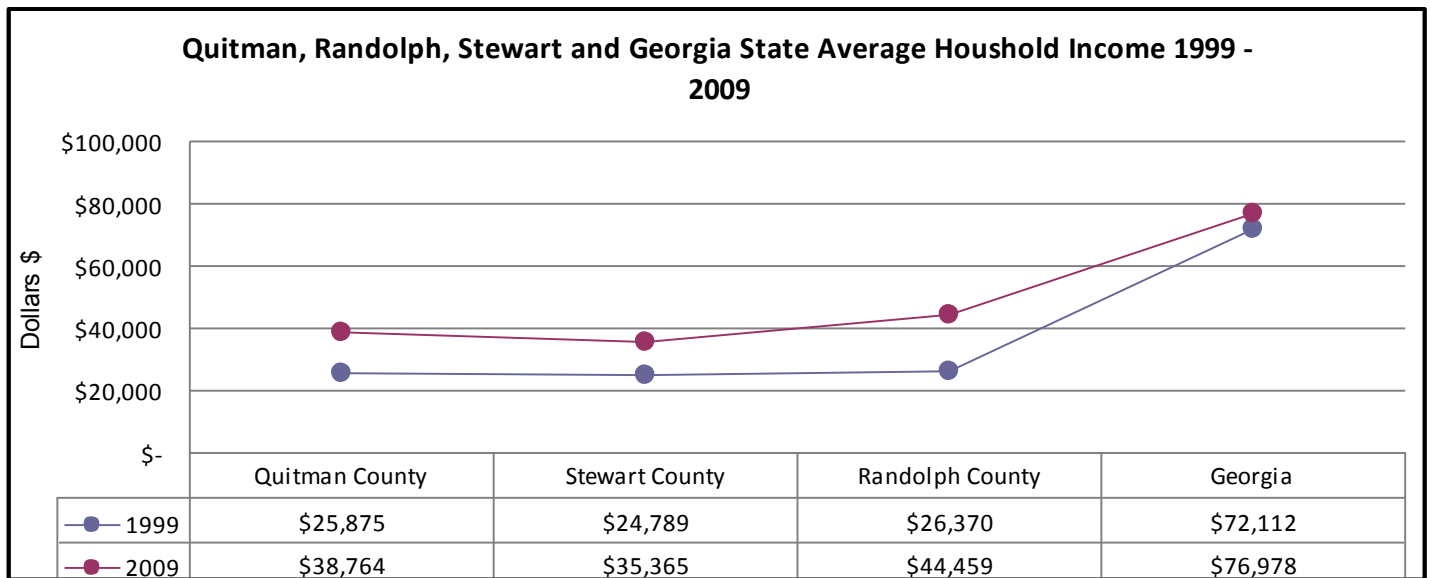


Stewart County Occupancy Characteristics

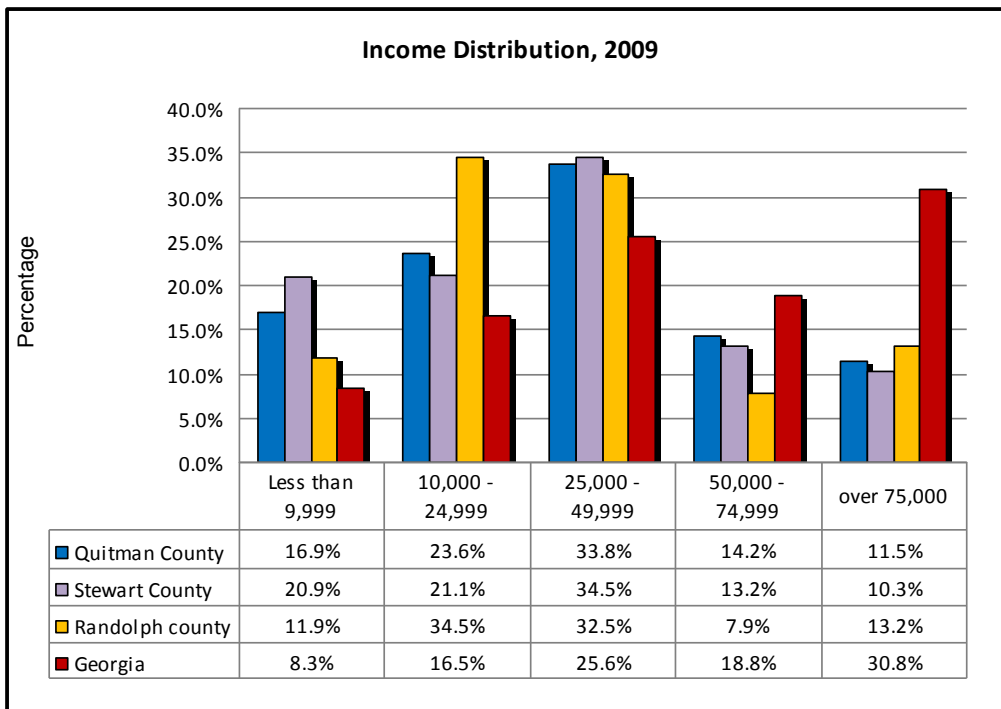


Income

The average household income of the three counties has been and is still well below the 2009 state average of \$76,978. Their average incomes range from Stewart County's \$35,365 to Randolph County's \$44,459 (approximately \$37,000 below the state average).



Source: American community survey & Georgia County Guide



Source: American community survey & Georgia County Guide

The yearly income distribution in Randolph County fell in the \$10,000-\$24,999 range, while Stewart and Georgetown-Quitman Counties' income fell within the \$25,000-\$49,999 range.

Employment Rates

Annual unemployment data compiled by the Georgia Department of Labor reveals that as of April, Randolph County's rate was the highest at 13%, followed by Stewart County's at 11.1% and Georgetown-Quitman County's at 10.7%. All three counties' unemployment rates were higher than the State of Georgia (10.11%).

Table 2-17: April 2012 Unemployment Rates

Jurisdiction	April 2012
Georgetown-Quitman County	10.70
Randolph County	13.00
Stewart County	11.10
RVRC Region	10.11
State of Georgia	8.90

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Census, Labor Statistics, and Economic Analysis; generated by STATS America.

Chapter Three
TRANSIT SYSTEM AND SERVICES

Overview of Existing and Proposed Transit System and Services

This section presents an overview of the current transit services available in Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties, followed by the proposed system which will begin operation in July 2013. The overview includes data on the current system in terms of service levels, fare structure and ridership, as well as operating statistics and financial data. These descriptions provide a baseline for understanding the current transit system, and the changes and improvements which will occur when the regional system goes into operation. The current third party operator (TPO), RMS Transit, will continue to operate the regional system.

Existing Transit Services

Public transportation in Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties is currently offered by the following agencies:

- *Quitman County Transit* (operated by Resource Management Systems [RMS]): county run service is financed with local funds and GDOT operating and capital assistance for general public transit. *(This system has ceased its operations and will be part of the Pataula Regional Transit effective July 1, 2012)*
- *Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS)*: Coordinated program through purchased services with Area Agency of Aging and DFCS.
- Logisticare provides services to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries in all three counties.

No taxi service or other forms of public transportation are currently available in these counties.

Quitman County Transit (QCT) – (no longer in operation, will resume service as Pataula Transit on July 1, 2012)

Quitman County, Georgia operated a public transportation system serving the City of Georgetown and the rural portions of Quitman County. The QCT's role was to provide transportation for Quitman County citizens. QCT provided contract services with payment received from various agencies for Quitman County Seniors, Mental and Physical Disabilities Clients, Department of Family and Children Services, and private citizen's call for services. The QCT was operated by a Third Party Operator - Resource Management Systems, Inc. (RMS) by contract agreements. RMS is owned and operated by Tim Pinson, CEO, Company Headquarters at 150 U.S. Hwy 19 South, P O Box 777 Camilla, GA 31730, (229) 336-1600. RMS also has an administrative office in the new transit facility at 4467 U. S. Highway 82 West, Springvale, Georgia, which will begin running the regional Pataula Transit system from in July 2012.

Vision/Goal

It is the vision RMS staff to work with QCT clients and area transit providers to expand upon and grow the transportation services in Quitman County in a coordinated effort to better serve the citizens of Quitman County. Their goal is to "provide safe, reliable and courteous transportation to the clients in our service area and strive to be the Third Party Operator that every other TPO would want to emulate."

RMS accomplishes this by offering on-demand transportation services to all residents and by having trained, skilled, caring drivers and support staff that are knowledgeable of their responsibilities to transit clients.

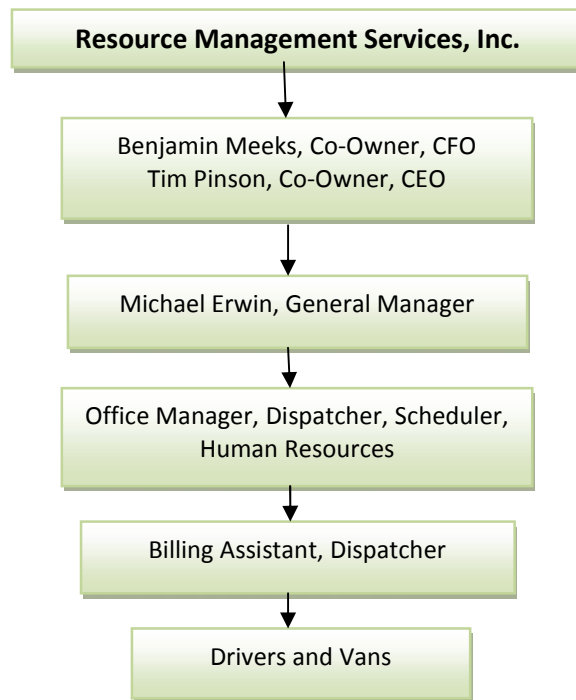
Organizational Structure

Figure 3-1 details RMS's organizational structure. RMS's Quitman County Transit consisted of a supervisor, a bookkeeper, a dispatcher, and four drivers. The transit system was supervised by the Georgetown-Quitman County Board of Commissioners and County Manager.

Transportation staff was managed by the supervisor on a daily basis to review schedules and changes to subscription service trips or scheduled response trips, as well as relaying any changes in policy. The supervisor was responsible for coordinating the 5311 program, scheduling passenger trips, dispatching vehicles, preparing budgeting, financial reports.

On-site evaluations are completed yearly. Drivers have completed certification for the Passenger Service and Safety (Pass) and Red Cross CPR/First Aid Training.

Figure 3-1: Quitman County Transit Organizational Structure



Fleet Inventory

The QCT vehicle fleet consists of five (4) shuttle buses or vans.

Table 3-1: Quitman County Transit Vehicle Fleet

Make and Model	Condition	Seating Capacity	ADA
Shuttle Bus with Lift	Good	16	Yes
Shuttle Conversion Van with Lift	Good	16	Yes
Shuttle Bus with Lift	Good	16	Yes
Shuttle Van	Good	16	Yes

Source: Quitman County Transit

Service Area, Schedule, and Fare Structure

The service area for transit service refers to the geographic area in which QCT had agreed, under contract or by policy, to provide public transportation services. Coverage area included:

- any destination within Georgetown-Quitman County;
- destination into the surrounding area, upon request, where there are services that Quitman County residents desire but are not available within the limits of the County; and
- trips to Columbus, Georgia.

Table 3-2: Quitman County Transit Fare Structure FY 2012

Destination	Cost
0-10 Miles (in county)	\$3.00
Over 10 miles (in county)	\$5.00
Outside County	\$5.00 + \$.50/mile over 10 miles

QCT operated 5 days a week, Monday-Friday. The service operated between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Staff began pick-up at 8:00 a.m. and began drop-off at 2:00 p.m. A 30-minute pickup and delivery window is permitted (15 minutes before pickup and 15 minutes past pick up time). In the event of non-avoidable delays, customers are notified. Source: Quitman County Transit, 2012

Fares refer to the payment or fee required for passage on a public transit vehicle. Trips are purchased in cash by individuals who are not recipients of any of the state-funded programs listed in the preceding section. Fares for FY 2012 are listed in Table 3-2. The basic fare for passengers utilizing service ranges from \$3.00 for a 10-mile trip within the County to \$5.00 for trips over 10 miles or outside the County. Passengers traveling outside the County are charged an additional \$.50 per mile for trips over 10 miles. QCT offered discounted fares to senior citizens and frequent riders.

The QCT administrative offices and transit facility will continue to be located at 4467 US Hwy 82 W, Springvale, Georgia, in central Randolph County. This central location provides an easily accessible location in preparation for the beginning operation of the regional system in July 2012, which will serve Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County residents. Currently, there is adequate parking for employees and maintenance staff.

Public Relations

Quitman County transit staff coordinated with county and area organizations, such as church groups, civic clubs, private and non-profit organizations to best serve its residents. Such coordination helped promote QCT services. Word of mouth is the primary way to promote public transportation. Quitman County staff did however wish to expand upon its current marketing efforts and coordination efforts.

Service Agreements

QCT has entered into two service agreements with state agencies, listed in Table 3-3. Service agreements with GDOT (general transportation trips) and DHS (senior trips) account for all public transit trips on QCT vehicles. DHS trips are part of a coordinated system implemented by the agency and split among QCT and private providers.

Table 3-3: Summary of TCT and Private Contractor Service Agreements

Trip Type	Responsible Agency	Provider
General Transportation Trips	GDOT	Quitman County Transit
Senior Site Trips	DHS	Quitman County Transit
Aging Trips	Area Agency On Aging	Quitman County Transit
Ambulatory Trips	DHS	Quitman County Transit
Trips	DFCS	Quitman County Transit
Non-emergency Medical Trips	DHS	LogistiCare
Medicaid Trips	DHS	LogistiCare

Source: Quitman County Transit, 2012

General Public Transportation Trips

General public transportation trips are available to all Georgetown-Quitman County residents at pre-determined rates. Residents contact QCT, which arranged for passenger pick up to destinations in Georgetown-Quitman County.

General transportation trips were financed on a 50-50 basis between Quitman County and federal section 5311 funds, minus any farebox revenue. Administered by the Federal Transit Administration, Section 5311 Non-urbanized Area Formula Program funds can be used for planning, capital, operating and administrative assistance to state agencies, operators of public transportation in non-urbanized areas with populations less than 50,000. The purposes of Section 5311 are to:

- o Enhance access of people in non-urbanized area to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services and recreation;
- o Assist in the maintenance, development, improvement and use of public transportation in rural and small-urban areas;
- o Encourage and facilitate the most efficient use of all federal funds used to provide passenger transportation in non-urbanized area through the coordination of programs and services;
- o Assist in the development and support of intercity bus transportation;
- o Provide for the participation of private transportation providers in non-urbanized transportation to the maximum feasible extent.

Senior Center Trips

Quitman County transit staff contracted with the Quitman County Senior Center to provide round trip service for Senior Center members from their homes to the Senior Center and back to their residence. On occasion QCT will also provide transit to Senior Center members to destinations other than the Senior Center.

Aging Service Trips

DHS's Aging Division administers a statewide system of services for older Georgians. Most of these services are administered at the regional level by Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). The RVRC/AAA contracted with Quitman County to provide transportation service to eligible persons to and from community facilities and resources with the goal of reducing isolation, or otherwise promoting independent living.

Seniors trips are part of the DHS coordinated client transportation system, which is designed to meet the specialized transportation needs of the elderly, mentally/physically disabled persons and low income individuals accessing jobs. The system transports a variety of customers together in order to meet everyone's needs in the most cost-effective way. By doing so, the system was able to serve more people. Coordinated transportation is planned, with trips scheduled in advance so that transportation providers can look at the needs and determine the most efficient routes for transporting all passengers.

The system provided services to clients of the Division of Aging, and the Division of Family and Children's Services (DFCS) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs.

The Coordinated Transportation System contracts to provide services via purchase of service agreements within each region. Transportation providers are a mix of governmental entities, for profit companies, and private non-profit organizations. The RVRC provides overall contract management. Actual transportation services are provided by subcontractors of the RVRC.

Senior trips may be ordered by the following scheduling types:

- Fixed route (subscription services)
- A limited number of demand response
- Scheduled response

Occasional group charter trips may be ordered when special trips are scheduled. The boarding type for the trips is curb-to-curb or door-to-door.

Points of Origins and Destinations include:

- From senior adult homes to Senior Citizen Center and return.
- From Senior Citizen Center or residences to field trip locations and out of the county of residence and return.
- From Senior Citizen Center or residences to shopping districts and return.
- From Senior Citizen Center or residences to service access points (social service agencies) in community.
- From Senior Citizen Center or residences to health services and return.

Eligible participants are individuals age 60 or older with priority given to those with the greatest social or economic need, such as persons that are of low-income, minority, limited English speaking, rural and or functionally impaired.

Family and Children Services Trips (DFCS)

DFACS offices administer social service programs, support services for employment and financial assistance to families with problems caused by poverty, neglect or lack of education. Quitman County DFCS did not provide any transportation services or participate in any transportation programs. Quitman County DFCS contracted with Quitman County Transit to provide a transit service to their clients. Trips can be ordered by the following scheduling types:

- Demand response
- Subscription response
- Curb-to-curb

Points of origins and destinations vary between participants and can include:

- Residential addresses

- New Horizons
- Mental health Groups
- Substance Abuse Groups
- Children’s Groups
- Doctor Appointments

Eligible passengers primarily include Medicaid recipients and their children.

Quitman County Transit Financial & Operating Data/System Trends

This section examines the operating and revenue data of the Quitman County Transit from 2008 to its end in 2012.

In a few instances expenditures or revenues were estimated due to the lack of information. This historical evaluation is useful to identify trends in Quitman County transit system operations as well to compare system data to other rural transit agencies.

Systems Expenses

GDOT transit system expense reporting forms are divided into three categories; administrative, operating and capital.

Administrative cost are associated with daily transit office operations including but not limited to marketing, staff salaries, telephone, etc.

Operating expenses are cost associated with passenger bus/shuttle operations. Operating expenses include driver salary, bus/shuttle maintenance, vehicle insurance and fuel. Operating expenses tend to be variable cost.

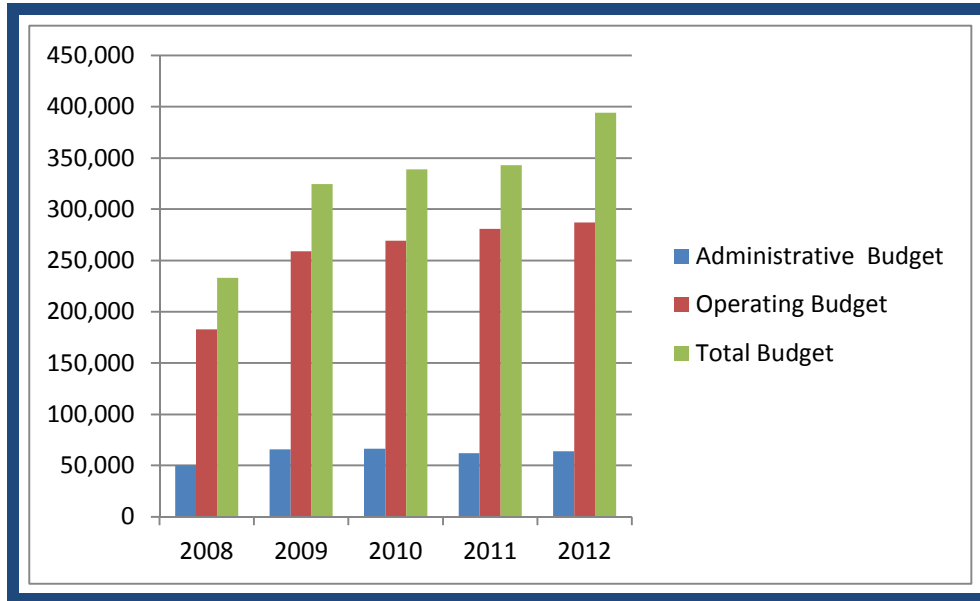
Capital cost is a onetime cost of a major asset such as a vehicle or the construction of a transit facility after which there maybe recurring operational or running cost. Operating cost tend to be variable in nature.

Table 3-4: Quitman County Transit Expenditures by Fiscal Year

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Administrative Budget	50,100	65,730	66,400	62,050	63,950
Operating Budget	182,867	258,900	269,375	280,875	286,901
Total Budget	232,967	324,630	339,075	342,925	394,151

Source: Quitman County Transit GDOT – Year End Financial Reporting Form

Figure 3-2: Quitman County Expenditures by Fiscal Year



Source: Quitman County Transit GDOT – Year End Financial Reporting Form

Operating cost for Quitman County Transit is displayed in Table 3-4 and Figure 3-2. In FY 2008 QCT’s total administrative and operational expenditure was \$232,967. In FY 2012 total administrative and operational expenditure was \$394,151; which is an increase of \$ 161, 184. Total operating cost increased by over \$100,000 from FY2008 to FY2012.

Table 3-5: Breakdown of the Expected Administrative Budget Cost 2013

Item	Amount	Percentage
Directory Salary	31,500	21.58%
Supervisor Salary	44,800	30.69%
Bookkeeper Salary	21,325	14.61%
Secretary Salary	12,600	8.63%
Training Expenses	1,995	1.37%
Marketing	1,050	0.72%
Telephone	8,295	5.68%
Office Supplies	8,085	5.54%
Rental Expenses	6,000	4.11%
Standard Overhead	0	0.00%
Computer Software	4,305	2.95%
Audit	6,000	4.11%
Other:	0	0.00%
Subtotal Administrative	145,955	100.00%

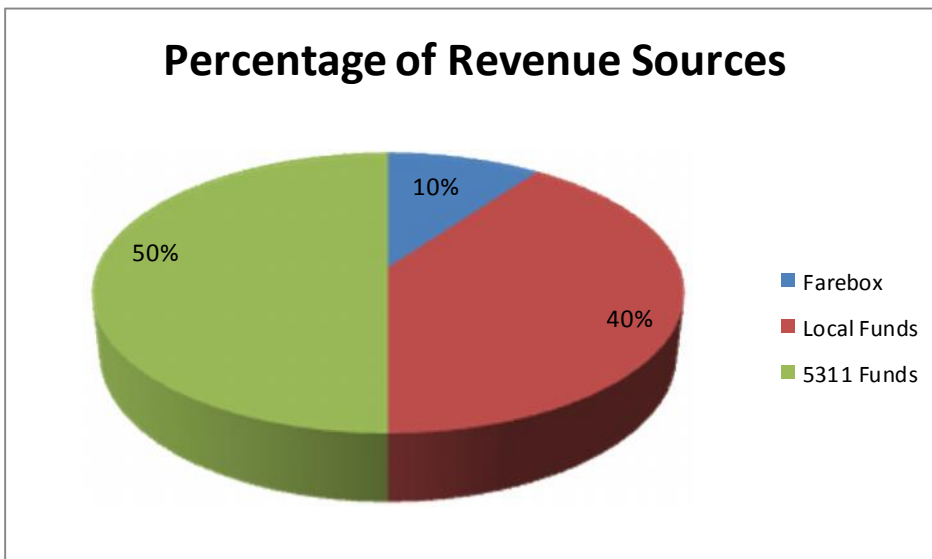
Table 3-6: Breakdown of the Expected Operating Budget Cost, 2013

Item	Amount	Percentage
Driver Salary	322,500	48.84%
Dispatch Salary	49,350	7.47%
Mechanic Salary	11,025	1.67%
Fuel	154,455	23.39%
Maintenance and Repair	31,000	4.69%
Vehicle Insurance	43,800	6.63%
Drug/Alcohol Testing	1,050	0.16%
License	420	0.06%
Uniforms	1,050	0.16%
Communications (Radio)	19,550	2.96%
Fringe benefits	23,000	3.48%
Utilities	3,150	0.48%
Subtotal Operations	660,350	100.00%

Source: Quitman County Transit GDOT – Year End Financial Reporting Form
 Source: GDOT Reimbursement Ledger

System Revenues (By Source)

Quitman County Transit relied on 5311 funds, Quitman County local match, and fare box revenue to cover annual expenses. Section 5311 and local funds provide 90% of GCT’s revenues, and fare box revenue accounting for 10% of funds.



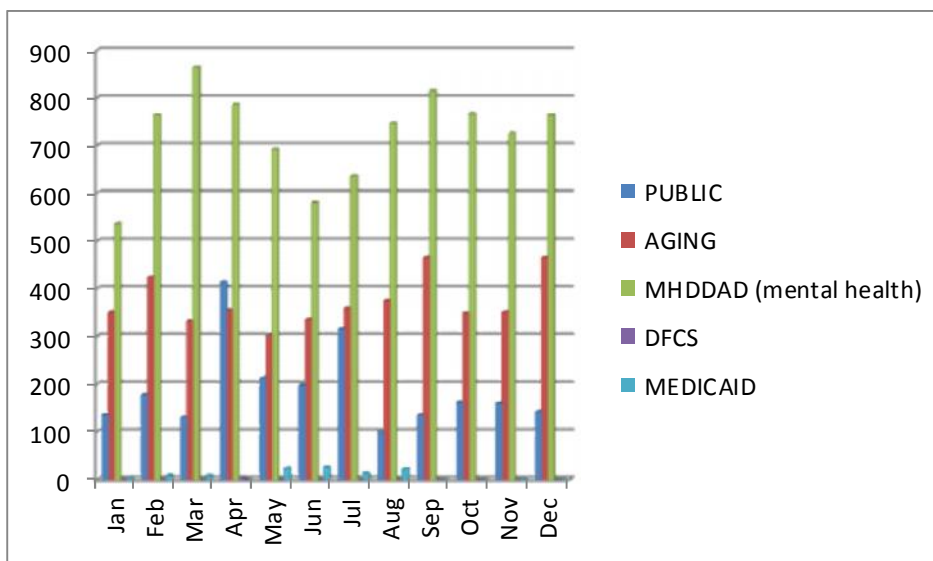
Transit Operations and Ridership

Historical trip data for QCT is presented in Table 3-6 and Figure 3-5. QCT accommodated 15,557 trips from July 2010-June 2011.

Table 3-6. Quitman County Transit FY 2011 Trips

Trips	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
PUBLIC	136	179	131	415	213	199	316	101	137	163	161	143	2,294
AGING	352	424	333	356	303	336	360	376	466	350	352	466	4,483
MHDDAD (mental health)	537	765	865	787	693	581	637	747	815	767	726	765	8,685
DFCS	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
MEDICAID	4	9	8	0	24	26	14	23	0	0	2	1	111
Total Trips	1029	1377	1337	1562	1233	1142	1327	1247	1418	1280	1241	1375	15,577

Figure 3-5. Quitman County Transit FY 2011 Trips



Source: Quitman Transit FY 2011 Monthly Revenue and Statistics Reports

System Performance Review

The Pataula Regional Transit will begin to operate effective July 1, 2012. There are no other multi-county transit systems within the River Valley Region; therefore, no peer review was administered to this plan.

Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency

Resource Management Systems, Inc. (RMS) is the private contractor which will be responsible for the operations, financials and logistics of the Pataula Transit System. According to their financial calculations, the cost per trip for a typical month is as follows:

Total cost per month	\$29,269
Total miles traveled	20,270
Total hours	918
Total trips	1,233

Cost Breakdown

Cost per trips	\$23.71
Cost per hour	\$31.88
Cost per mile	\$1.44

Private Contractor Transit Trips

The Georgia Department of Community Health (DCH) operates a number of home and community-based services and non-emergency transportation. In Georgia, Medicaid serves more than 1.4 million enrollees, including over 800,000 children from low income families and over 350,000 elderly and disabled individuals, which approaches \$7 billion annually in state and federal dollars (*Georgia Budget and Policy Institute*).

The Non-Emergency Transportation program (NET) provides a way for Medicaid recipients to get transportation needed to receive medical services covered by Medicaid. The NET program was modeled after managed care, with two regional brokers providing statewide service. Service is demand-response and eligible recipients must contact a transportation broker three days in advance to schedule transportation. Each broker has a toll-free telephone number to schedule transportation services, and are available weekdays (Monday-Friday) from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Urgent care situations and a few other exceptions can be arranged more quickly.

The following is a breakdown of the entities providing rides in each county:

Georgetown-Quitman County:

- 1) Public Transportation: used to operate its own transit system. Effective July 1, 2012, it will participate in the Pataula Transit system.
- 2) Department of Human Services (DHS): rides do not occur regularly but have been provided in the past.
- 3) Medicaid: On Time.

Randolph County:

- 1) Public Transportation: does not currently have a public transit, but plans to participate in the Pataula Transit System.
- 2) Department of Human Services: no services were provided in this county.
- 3) Medicaid: On Time

Stewart County:

- 1) Does not currently have public transit. However, it will be participating in the Pataula Transit System.
- 2) Department of Human Resources: RMS.
- 3) Medicaid: On Time

Chapter Four
NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Transit Needs Assessment

The information presented in this section provides the context for identifying transit needs within Georgetown-Quitman, Randolph County, and Stewart County. Task information, including evaluating county-wide socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, is presented. In addition, stakeholder and user interviews were performed to identify and assess potential transit needs.

A range of transit services are provided throughout these three counties; but does the system meet all the mobility needs of residents? In order to understand the potential needs for public transportation, it is necessary to examine available community demographics and transportation facilities and services. This information is critical in determining whether there are population groups within these counties who are presently not served by public transit (and need it) and those population groups that may be underserved by existing transit services.

Service Area

The Pataula Transit System will begin to operate on July 1, 2012. This transit system will service residents from Randolph, Stewart and Georgetown-Quitman Counties.

Data Sources

Data sources used to complete the needs assessment were derived from the U.S. Decennial Census 1990, 2000, and 2010, and the River Valley Regional Commission.

Demographic characteristics that are particularly useful for assessing transit needs include:

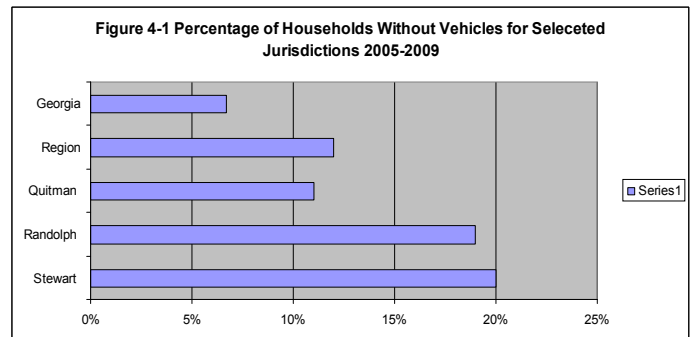
- households without access to an automobile,
- the disabled population,
- the elderly population, and
- low-income population.

Transit Demand

This analysis provides a review of those population segments that are currently or potentially transit dependent within Randolph, Stewart and Georgetown-Quitman Counties. Potential transit dependent population are those segments of the population that, because of demographic characteristics, such as, age, disability, income, or lack of automotive availability, may potentially require transit services to meet their mobility needs.

Households without Access to Automobiles

Households without access to an automobile are particularly important in identifying existing and potential transit needs. Without an automobile available to them, persons in these households must rely on alternative modes of transportation such as public transit for travel to work, school and medical care.



The percentage of households without access to a vehicle is detailed in Figure 4-1. Approximately 19 percent for Randolph County, 11 percent for Georgetown-Quitman, and 20 percent of Stewart County households do not have access to an automobile, a rate significantly higher than the RVRC (10.63 percent) and state (6.7 percent) average.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; River Valley Calculations by RVRC

Elderly Population

The elderly are also frequent users of public transit services, either because of mobility limitations or low incomes. Elderly as defined by the US Census Bureau are those persons 65 and over. In Quitman County, 4,474 residents or 29 percent of the population that rode transit in FY2011 was 65+ (Figure 4-2).

Disabled Persons

Disabled persons are defined as those with sensory, physical, mental and self-care disabilities. This segment of the population is typically very dependent on transit and could potentially be a strong user of a transit system. The percentage of disabled persons for selected jurisdictions is detailed in Figure 4-3. Fifty-six (56%) of Quitman County residents that rode transit in FY2011 had disabilities.

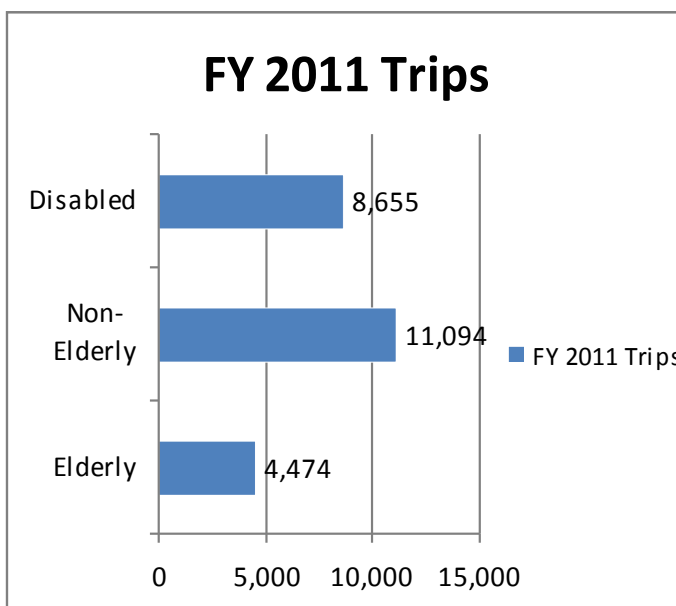


Figure 4-2 Source: Quitman County Transit 2011

Household Income and Poverty Status

Household income is a major determinant of transit and is detailed in Figure 4-3. In 2009, the average median household income for Randolph, Stewart, and Georgetown-Quitman Counties residents as provided by the US Census Bureau in 2010 was \$35,529, slightly above the RVRC area (\$31,229) and state significantly below averages (\$47,469).

Figure 4-3 Average Household Income

Clay, Quitman, Stewart Counties and Georgia State Average Household Income 1999 - 2009				
	Quitman County	Stewart County	Randolph County	Georgia
1999	\$ 25,875	\$ 24,789	\$ 26,370	\$ 72,112
2009	\$ 38,764	\$ 35,365	\$ 44,459	\$ 76,978

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2005-2009 ACSS 5-Year Estimates; River Valley Calculations by RVRC

Assessment of Census Data Findings

The data derived from the U.S. Census of the Census indicates that there is a significant market for potential transit ridership within Randolph, Stewart and Georgetown-Quitman Counties. When analyzing the prior Quitman County Transit trip, as well as stakeholder information, it becomes apparent that a small number of the potential transit market is being captured.

Transit Destinations

Another component of the needs assessment is to identify major trip destinations including major employers, shopping centers, schools, and medical facilities. A discussion of each type of destination is provided below.

Major Employers

As rural counties, the Pataula Transit has few major employers and is dependent on neighboring counties for employment. Major employers by counties include:

Randolph County: Randolph County Board of Commission, City of Cuthbert, City of Shellman, Andrew College, Georgia Feed Products, Huddle House, New Horizons, Community Service Board, and the Randolph County Hospital Authority.

Stewart County: Farmer’s State Bank, Flex-Tec Inc, Four County Health Care LLC, Stewart-Webster Hospital LLC, Stewart-Webster Rural Health Board, Stewart County Board of Commission, City of Lumpkin and City of Richland.

Georgetown-Quitman County: Bennett Lodging Company, Benny Whitehead Inc., D&J Plastics, Michelle’s Restaurant, Randall’s Butcher Shop and Grocery, Quitman County Board of Commission, Quitman Board of Education.

Several large employers with 500 or more employees can be found in neighboring Muscogee County:

- AFLAC
- Fort Benning
- St. Francis Hospital
- Pratt Whitney
- Total Systems
- Synovus
- Columbus State University
- Columbus Regional Health Care
- Muscogee County School System

Community Facilities

There are a number of community facilities within the three counties and elsewhere that attract transit riders, they include: Schools, libraries, health department, city halls, board of commissioners, banks, health clinics, dental clinics, fire departments, police departments, water towers, public works facilities, senior centers, neighborhood services centers, and courthouses.

In addition, there are numerous medical facilities in Columbus that generate significant trips for both Pataula Transit and private transportation service providers. The majority of those trips are provided to Medicaid patients.

Estimated Future Transit Demand

There are several factors in favor of a growing rural transit market for the Pataula Transit. The population in the 65+ age group has grown from 7.48 percent of total population in all three counties from 1990 to 8.38 percent of total population in 2010. This trend is expected to continue over the next 20 years. As the population in all three counties ages more disabilities can be expected, as well as more people who are too unable to drive. Finally, the number of people below the poverty level is also much higher in the region and the state; this trend is also projected to continue.

Public Consultation Process

Stakeholder Interviews

Once the Pataula Transit System begins to operate; it will be suggested to administer interviews to engage stakeholders in the transit planning and decision-making process. The goal of these interviews will be to better understand diverse viewpoints from those funding and participating in transit service provision. The Pataula Transit stakeholder group will be composed of members from the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transportation Authority composed of members from each participating county.

Some of the suggested possible questions to ask will include, but not limited to:

1. What is your impression of public transit services in each of the three Counties, if any?
2. What is your vision for Pataula Transit System?
3. What are the obstacles to achieving the vision of the Pataula Transit System?
4. What priorities should Pataula Transit focus on?

Public Involvement Activities

Once the Pataula Transit System is operating, an integral part will be the inclusion of opportunities for public involvement. Both users and non-users can provide useful information about a transit system. The perceptions and observations from participants are considered in the development of the transit system's goals and objectives. Stakeholders and staff suggested that the best way to get public input was by using a survey. These surveys can be placed at key locations within each County including senior centers, medical facilities, health department, county courthouse, grocery stores, schools, and County Board of Commissioner's offices.

Chapter Five
RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINANCE PLAN

Recommended Policies and Action Strategies

Recommended policies and action strategies are intended to sustain and enhance public transportation services provided by the Pataula Transit System. It is important to recognize these are only recommendations for the Pataula Transit System. Any service improvements that may eventually be implemented will undergo the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Transportation Authority planning and budgeting process.

Policies and Strategies

The mission of Pataula Transit is to provide quality, affordable transportation services to its service region residents. The following policies and strategies seek to accomplish and further the mission. Responsible implementation parties are listed in brackets.

Policy 1: Provide transportation to medical, shopping and other resource centers for service region residents, with special attention to core transit riders (those who do not have access to other modes of transportation, are 65+ years old, low income, and disabled).

Strategy 1: Work with neighboring jurisdictions on improving rural transit system to better serve residents on a regional scale with more destinations, service frequency, transfers, and shorter time travels. (PTS)

Strategy 2: Work with other transit agencies to get clients to work destinations. (PTS)

Discussion

Service improvements are strategic responses in areas identified during the system analysis as less productive than transit rider expectations. Service improvements are developed to improve performance and satisfy not only local demands for service but also the manner in which such demands can be met given the limited resources available to PTS. Pataula Transit staff should participate in discussions with neighboring jurisdictions on establishing regional public transit linkages to better serve clientele.

Policy 2: Capture a larger share of transit dependent populations.

Strategy 1: Increase marketing transit service activities through non-profits, faith-based organizations and major media such as the Southern Tribune, local radio stations, website postings, etc. to educate residents about service availability. (PTS, RVRC)

Strategy 2: Monitor trip rates to quickly get another van into service when needed. (PTS)

Discussion

The current fiscal capacity of PTS does not allow for a major extension of services without an increase in travel generators and transit riders. Gradually capturing ridership should increase PTS at a sustainable pace.

Marketing transit services should go hand in hand with the service improvement discussed in the previous section. There is a wide web of non-profit and faith-based organizations both PTS and the RVRC can tap into increased transit ridership. Advertising on radio as well as in local newspapers on websites and billboards is another option in increasing PTS service exposure.

Trip rates should be monitored to ensure a new shuttle bus can get into service as soon as possible after meeting trip thresholds.

Policy 3: Control operating costs.

Strategy 1: Work with neighboring jurisdictions to purchase fuel collectively at predetermined contract rates. (PTS)

Discussion

Increase fuel prices have hampered operating budgets for transit systems through Georgia. The inability to forecast fuel prices should encourage PTS to coordinate with neighboring transit systems to purchase fuel at predetermined bulk rates, thereby stabilizing one of its major operating expenses. Having a purchasing system like a state fuel card, to purchase fuel at a reduced rate, would be a big benefit to rural transit providers.

Policy 4: Ensure service region-wide transit capacity.

Strategy 1: If feasible, engage state and private agencies to further coordinate services. (RVRC)

Strategy 2: If appropriate, coordinate with state agencies to stabilize trips for private providers. (RVRC)

Discussion

Coordination of services is a difficult process and requires open and honest communication. Coordination can improve various agencies' internal performance measures and also improve overall mobility of clients and reduce costs for all concerned. All rural transit area providers need to coordinate, where feasible, to provide better service.

It is clear that private transportation providers deliver a significant number of transportation trips within the Pataula Transit service area but also deal with server fluctuations in trips from year to year. Private transportation providers are an integral part of public transportation within the service region. Stable and predictable business will ensure that an important component of public transportation will have a continued presence in the PTS service region.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are those activities, outcomes or events that demonstrate progress towards achieving the action strategies derived from specific policies. The following performance measures are included to evaluate PTS' progress.

- Increases in the number of trips
- Client satisfaction rates on PTS ridership surveys
- Hours of operations
- Number of hours spent marketing transit services
- Number of transit systems partaking in joint purchase of fuel
- Progress towards a better regional service

Finance Plan

See appendix 4: Table 5-1 Fiscal Year 2013 budget and finance plan for PTS.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Pataula Transit Sample Survey

Pataula Transit Survey

1. What is your age?

Under 18 years	35-44 years	65+ years
18-24 years	45-54 years	
25-34 years	55-64 years	

2. Are you physically disabled? Yes No
What kind of assistance (if any) do you need when being transported? (For example, Do you need a wheelchair lift?)

3. What are your transportation needs? (Check all that apply.)

Work	Job search
School or Training	Grocery Shopping
Senior Center	Pharmacy/Drug Store
Mental Health Service	Other Shopping
Doctor/Medical Care	Entertainment/Cultural Event
Social Services (Food Stamps, Child Protective Services, Court Visits, Child Support Recovery, Etc.)	Other (Please List)

4. In your opinion, are transportation needs being met in your County?

All needs are being met.
Most needs are being met.
Some needs are being met.
Few needs are being met.

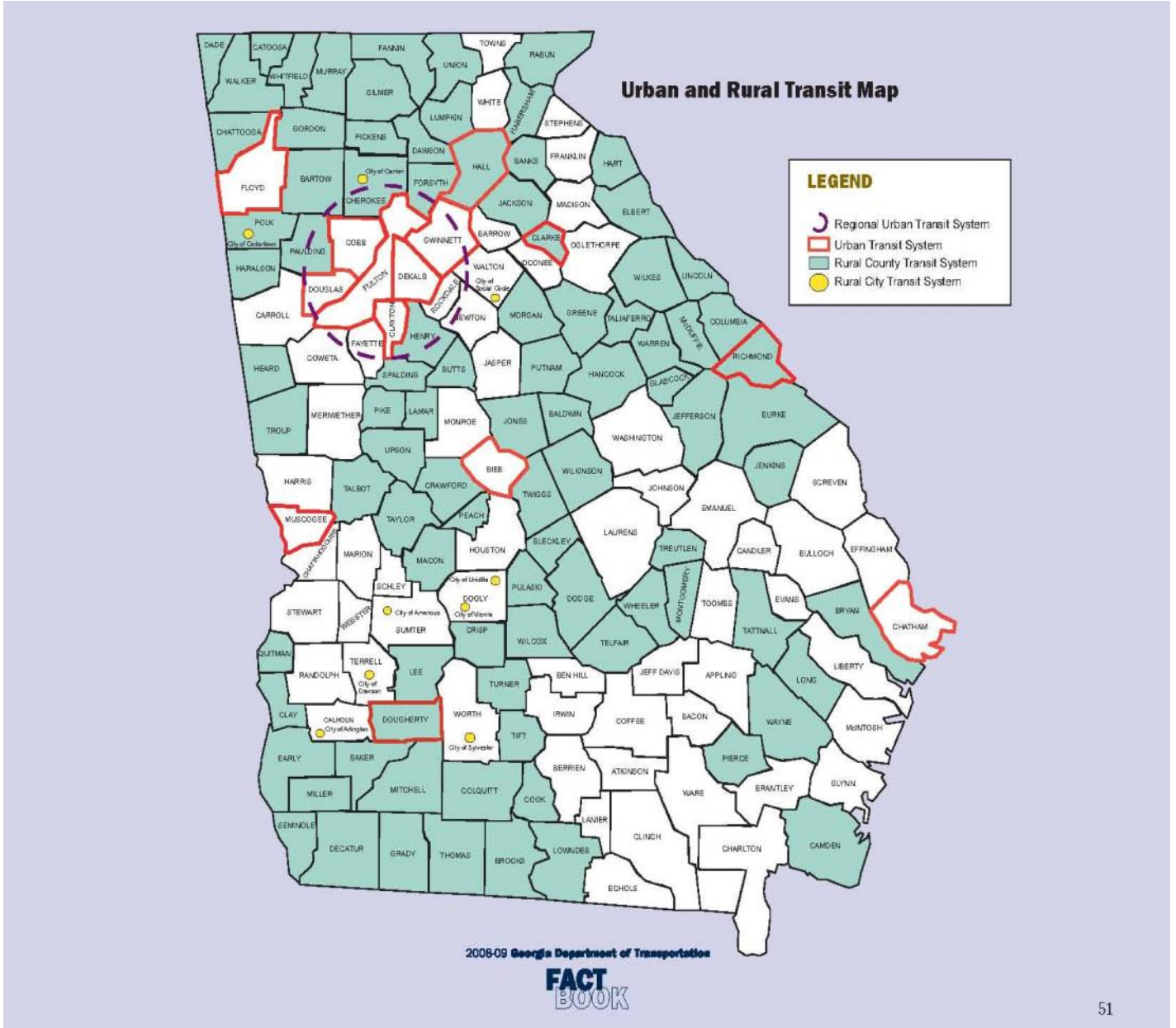
5. Please choose the statement that most accurately describes to what extent you feel there is a need for public transportation in this county.

There is a strong need for public transportation services.
There is somewhat of a need for public transportation services.
There is no need for public transportation services.

6. What are specific locations public transportation should serve? Put a 1 in the box for most important, 2 in the box for second-most important, and so on until all boxes are filled.

Major employers	Grocery stores
Hospitals	Shopping areas
Schools	Entertainment/cultural attractions

Appendix 2: Urban and Rural Transit Map



Appendix 3: Pataula Transit Facility and Fleet Photos

