2024 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE COMMUNITIES

River Valley Regional Commission

SUPPORT
TRANSFORM
GROW

RVRC
River Valley Regional Commission

Fiscal Year 2024 River Valley

Regional Commission

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Doug Etheridge
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Cover photo provided by The Georgia Peanut Commission

Dear Community,

Once again, we celebrate another year of economic prosperity for the River Valley Region and the RVRC team. Staff has worked to encourage regional economic development goals, including supporting agriculture.

Our dedicated and talented departments continuously strive to bring results and provide crucial programs and services to the region.

During FY24, the RVRC was designated as an LDD (Local Development District) for the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC). The funding for SCRC will allow staff to provide technical assistance for grant applications and provide relevant programs to the communities in our region. The River Valley Regional Commission also announced the rollout of the River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan (RVCCDP), in partnership with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute and Fort Moore.

The Area Agency on Aging continues its partnership with Piedmont Northside Hospital to encourage fall prevention efforts. Our staff is also working to form a coalition in Clay and Quitman Counties to make these counties the first Dementia-friendly communities in the region.

The Workforce Development department has also helped to secure $1,306,645 in funding during the Program Year (PY23) and Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. These grant awards are for a two–year period, which ended June 30, 2024. The WIOA also enrolled 129 individuals who received training services in the eastern part of our region.

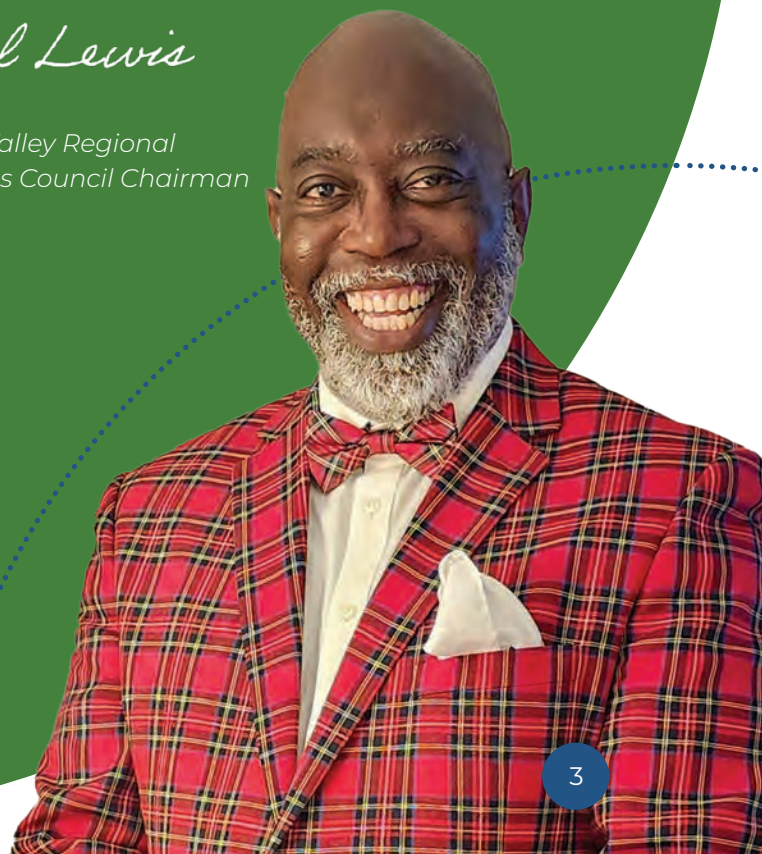
Our staff works directly with federal and state agencies to bring additional resources and funding to the region. During FY24, the RVRC assisted in securing approximately $9,690,733 for the region. For every dollar of dues received by the RVRC from our local governments, their return on investment was $26.68 in funding, programs, and services. Funding received this year was 93.6% federal and 2.6% state.

Again, thank you all for your support of the RVRC. I look forward to the new fiscal cycle, as we continue to create, promote, and foster orderly growth and economic prosperity for the benefit of our region.

Sincerely,

Carvel Lewis

Carvel Lewis
FY24 River Valley Regional Commissions Council Chairman



Carvel Lewis

RVRC
River Valley Regional Commission

Mission

The mission of the RVRC is to create, promote and foster the orderly growth and economic prosperity for our region.

Vision

Foster a region where current and future generations succeed at home, at work, and in their communities.

Core Values

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Community
- Innovation
- Diversity
- Integrity
- Good Stewardship

River Valley Regional
Commission Staff

Executive

Jim Livingston, *Executive Director*
Annie Thompson, *Assistant to the Executive Director*
Debbie Zwaga, *Executive Secretary*
Merri Spence, *Human Resources Manager/Executive Secretary*

Planning and Government Services

Tracie Hadaway, *Director of Planning and Government Services*
Allison Slocum, *Assistant Director of Planning*
Blaine Hoskins, *Regional Planner*
Destinee Williams, *Regional Planner*
Naomi Masuoka, *Regional Planner*
Rick Morris, *Senior Planner*
Will Griggs, *Community Developer*
Mariyana Kostov, *Geographic Information System Manager*
Laura Schneider, *Regional Planner*
Ian Perry, *Community Developer*
Grant Richardson, *Assistant Director of Government Services*
John Morgan, *Regional Planner*
Camille Bielby, *Regional Planner*
Michael Murray, *Regional Planner*

Area Agency on Aging

Katie Howard, *Area Agency on Aging Director*
Kia Barrow, *Assistant Director of Aging*
Franetta Miles, *Wellness Coordinator*
Charvetria Vann, *Administrative Assistant*
Jennifer Prescott, *ADRC Counselor/Caregiver Specialist*
Robbie Monfort, *Dementia Care Specialist*
Joretta Cuba, *ADRC Counselor/Caregiver Specialist*
Annie Poles, *Lead ADRC Counselor*
Latanya Albright, *ADRC Case Manager*
Kemberly Daniel, *ADRC Counselor/Caregiver Specialist*
Marie Peterson-Barnes, *AAA Monitor*
LaCarole Lloyd, *MDS-Q Options Counselor*
Mallory Hobbs, *ADRC Counselor*
Justice Lias, *ADRC Counselor*
Elizabeth Young, *ADRC Counselor*

Finance Department

Tammy Collins, *Finance Officer*
Curtianna Johnson, *Financial Clerk*
SheKella Prince, *Financial Assistant*
Hayleigh Jones, *Financial Assistant*
Kristal Blue, *Financial Assistant*

Workforce Innovation Department

Janice West, *WIOA Workforce Director*
Tenisha Tookes, *WIOA Program Specialist*

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228 West Lamar Street | Americus, GA

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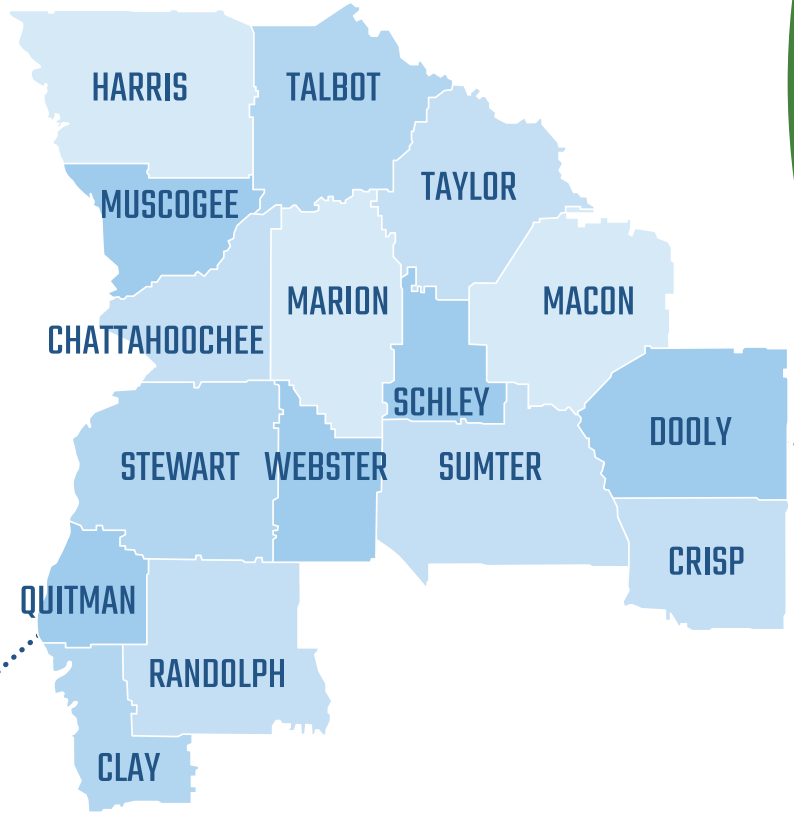

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River Valley Communities

16 Counties • 35 Cities

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF CUSSETA-CHATTAHOOCHEE COUNTY

CLAY COUNTY
Bluffton
Fort Gaines

CRISP COUNTY
Arabi
Cordele

DOOLY COUNTY
Byromville
Dooling
Lilly
Pinehurst
Unadilla
Vienna

HARRIS COUNTY
Hamilton
Pine Mountain
Shiloh
Waverly Hall

MACON COUNTY
Ideal
Marshallville
Montezuma
Oglethorpe

MARION COUNTY
Buena Vista

MUSCOGEE COUNTY-COLUMBUS CONSOLIDATED GOVERNMENT

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF GEORGETOWN-QUITMAN COUNTY

RANDOLPH COUNTY
Cuthbert
Shellman

SCHLEY COUNTY
Ellaville

STEWART COUNTY
Lumpkin
Richland

SUMTER COUNTY
Americus
Andersonville
DeSoto
Leslie
Plains

TALBOT COUNTY
Geneva
Junction City
Talbotton
Woodland

TAYLOR COUNTY
Butler
Reynolds

UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF WEBSTER COUNTY

Photo provided by GDOT Transportation Investment Act Office

Regional Impact

FY24

It is the responsibility of the RVRC to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us. We do this by being efficient and effective administrators of the local, state, and federal funds we receive or secure. For Fiscal Year 2024, over $8 million in funding was secured for projects and development across the region.

Every community in the River Valley region gains access to the services provided by the RVRC through annual dues, which amounts to one dollar per capita. For Fiscal Year 2024, there were 363,238 people in the region by census estimates, resulting in $363,238 in annual dues paid by the communities.

RVRC calculates return on the investment for the region by dividing the number of funds received in federal, state, and other dollars by the amount of annual dues. **For FY24, the ROI is $23.52 for every one dollar of dues.** This means that for every one dollar paid by each community, the RVRC was able to generate $23.52 in programs and services.

STATE & FEDERAL DOLLARS BROUGHT TO THE REGION

$9,690,733
Total Federal and State Funding Secured

93.6%	2.6%	2.9%
Federal Funding	State Funding	Private Investments

FUNDING ALLOCATIONS BY PROGRAM

$1,355,501
Community and Economic Development

$1,306,645
Workforce Development

$2,100,316
Planning Initiatives

$4,800,021
Aging Services

$26.68 /per $1
For Every $1 in Annual Dues, RVRC Returned $23.52 in Programs and Services to Our Communities.

363,238
Population of the River Valley Region

Photo provided by The Georgia Peanut Commission

11,060
Units of In-home Respite Care
Were Provided to 88 Clients

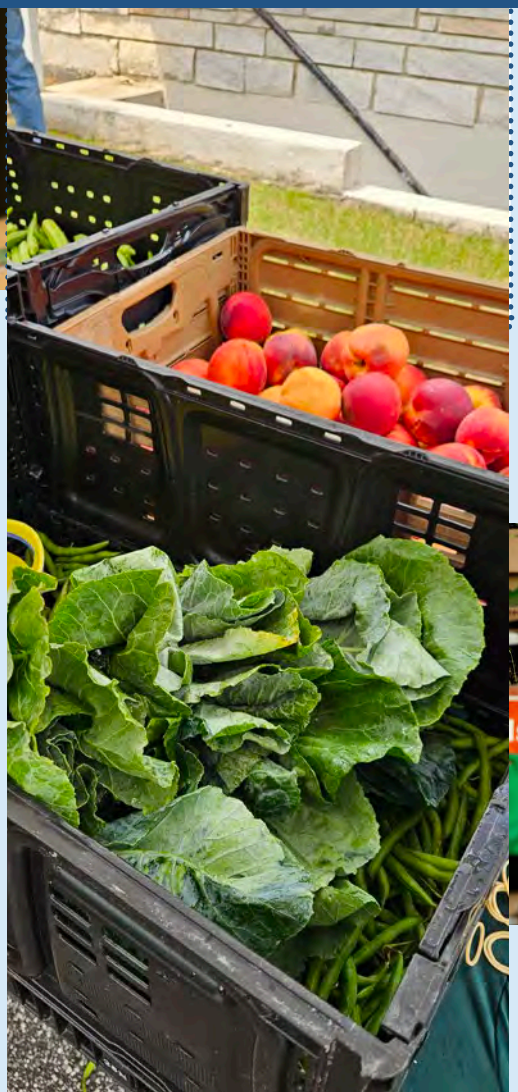
43,074
Vouchers for Respite Care
were Provided to 32 Clients

15,137
Homemaker Aid Units
Were Provided to 260 Clients

13,209
Personal Care Aid Units
Were Provided to 69 Clients

1,647
Units of Case Management
Were Provided to 137 Clients

AAA STATISTICS



Area Agency on Aging

The River Valley Area Agency on Aging provides services to seniors and persons with disabilities in the 16-county region. The goal of these services is to help seniors remain in their homes for as long as possible. Because caregiving is critical to safely keeping seniors at home, support is given to caregivers to prevent burnout. Classes are also provided to help seniors, and their caregivers improve and maintain their health. The Aging and Disability Resource Connection provides information on resources available to callers as well as screening to determine eligibility for certain programs.

The staff of the River Valley Agency on Aging are committed to providing the information and services needed by seniors and persons with disabilities in the region.

FEEDING THE REGION

151,981
Home Delivered Meals to 841 Clients

78,756
Congregate Meals were Provided to 482 Clients

3,782
Seniors Received Vouchers for Locally Grown Produce at Senior Farmers' Markets

38
Senior Farmers' Markets Were Conducted

Seniors Farmers' Markets

The 2024 Senior Farmers' Markets took place during the months of June, and August of 2024. AAA staff were able to work closely with senior center managers, senior housing managers, coordinators, and community volunteers to conduct 38 farmers' markets. With these markets, River Valley Area Agency on Aging was able to provide 3,782 people with vouchers for produce locally grown by farmers within the region.

What We Do

- Nursing Home Transitions
- Medicaid Waiver Services for Persons with Limited Financial Resources
- Options Counseling and Money-Follows-the-Person Program
- Home and Community Based Services
- Senior Center Programs
- Case Management
- Wellness and Evidence Based Services
- Caregiver Support
- Elderly Legal Services

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP)
Helps individuals who have a chronic condition or know someone who does, to take control of their health through self-management, problem solving, and action planning

Diabetes Self-Management Program (DSMP)
Focuses on people with Diabetes or their caregivers.

Tai Chi for Arthritis
Participants learn Sun style Tai Chi sequences to improve balance, breathing, and physical strength.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers
Equips family caregivers with tools and strategies to better handle unique challenges.

A Matter of Balance
Provides practical strategies to reduce the risk of falling while increasing physical activity.

Wellness Classes

River Valley Area Agency on Aging hosted several wellness training classes and awarded certificates to a total of 56 completers. There was one Chronic Disease Self-Management (CDSMP) class with 15 completers and two (2) Diabetes Self-Management (DSMP) classes held with 18 completers. Cross Training for CDSMP and DSMP lay leaders was held, awarding 8 participants certificates of completion. Three (3) Tai-Chi classes saw 20 completers. The A Matter of Balance (MOB) program trained 10 coaches and awarded 21 certificates of completion.

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Dementia Care Specialist Program

The Dementia Care Specialist program was created by the Georgia General Assembly and began providing services in FY23. The position provides training and information on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias for professionals and families. Information includes virtual dementia tours, Dealing with Dementia Behaviors, and a Dementia Friends programs designed to give basic information to the community. The goal of the Dementia Care Specialist, in partnership with others in the community, is to make our community more Dementia Capable. In FY24, 248 people participated in 14 Virtual Dementia Tours. 16 Dementia Friends classes were given providing important information to 239 people. Two (2) Dealing with Dementia classes were taught with 19 students.

Infrastructure

Transportation Investment Act (TIA)

On December 31, 2022, the last Transportation Infrastructure Act 1 (TIA-1) tax money was collected for the River Valley Region. Over a 10-year period, the region collected $512,301,207.20 for transportation-related projects through the 1% sales tax voters approved in 2012.

This funding will continue until 2032 through the TIA-2 referendum that was passed by the region in May 2022. In the most recent quarter of 2024, $115,277,118.63 in TIA-2 funding has been collected throughout the River Valley Region.

All photos on this page are provided by GDOT Transportation Investment Act Office"

TIA FUNDING DISTRIBUTION

25%
of Total Funds Collected in the River Valley Region are targeted to Local Jurisdictions.

75%
of Total Funds Collected in the River Valley Region are targeted to Voter Approved Projects.

$1.3 BILLION
Total Projected Local Infrastructure Impact of TIA Funding from 2013-2032 in the River Valley Region

RIVER VALLEY TIA-2 IMPACT
2023-2032 BREAKDOWN

45
Approved Projects

$824,611,842
Projected Total TIA-2 Impact for River Valley Region from 2023-2032

Infrastructure

Photo showing the failing water distribution system before CDBG funds were awarded.

CDBG FUNDING

FY 2024

Through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) funds, the RVRC was able to secure $1,355,501 in funding in FY24 to benefit residents across the River Valley Region.

COMMUNITY	AMOUNT	PROJECT
Stewart County	$670,212.00	Housing Improvements
Woodland	$685,289.00	Water Improvements

Woodland

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT SUCCESS

In FY 2024, the RVRC secured $685,289.00 in CDBG funding on behalf of the City of Woodland to upgrade deteriorating water delivery and sewer infrastructure.

The funding from this grant will allow the city to replace all the undersized/poor material water mains, all service lines, isolation gate valves, as well as install 3-way fire hydrant assemblies necessary to meet ISO fire protection standards. These improvements will ensure satisfactory water pressure, safe and clean water, and provide fire protection throughout the target area.

When completed, this project is expected to directly benefit a total of 90 Woodland residents, 72 percent of which are individuals with low-to-moderate incomes. 86 minority residents will directly benefit from the improvements.

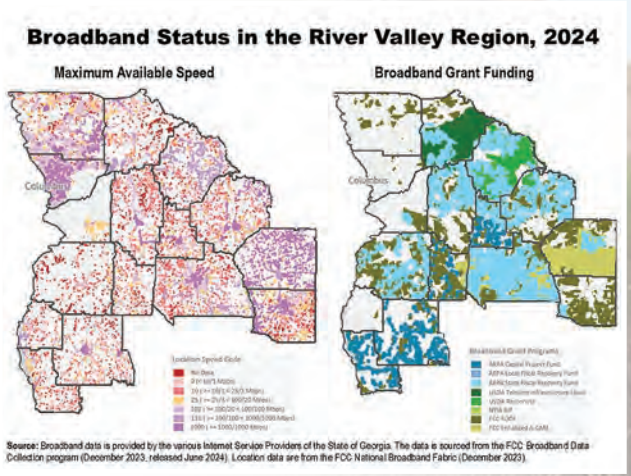
Infrastructure

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Awards

Eight RVRC communities have received funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG), funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). With 18 applications selected for awards throughout the state, the awards in the RVRC region account for nearly half of the total number of awards. Communities chosen for funding include Buena Vista, Fort Gaines, Quitman County, Randolph County, Schley County, Stewart County, Taylor County, and Webster County. Each community will receive a grant award of $150,000. Funding will be used to conduct energy planning, purchase electric vehicles, and conduct energy audits and upgrades to government buildings.

Broadband

- Provide short-term and long-term economic development planning and coordination to implement the disaster recovery and resiliency economic development plan goals and objectives.
- Tracked projected broadband service availability for unserved Census Blocks.
- Used the Digital Economy Plan to address telecommunication deficiencies.
- Provided technical assistance for municipalities and seeks broadband expansion investment.



Work Source Georgia

The River Valley Regional Commission serves as the grant recipient and administrative entity for the local area Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA) services. These services are governed by the Middle Flint Workforce Development Board, which is comprised of local area private and public sector members. The local WIOA area serves an eight (8) county area consisting of Crisp, Dooly, Macon, Marion, Schley, Sumter, Taylor, and Webster counties. WIOA services offer educational and training opportunities to eligible individuals ages 17 and up within the area to assist and enhance employment opportunities which will lead to employment, retention in employment and individual self-sufficiency. WIOA grant awards designated for the area during Program Year (PY) 2023 and Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 totaled **$1,041,593.00.**

WIOA has fifteen (15) performance measures reporting standards. Local areas negotiate performance measures annually with the State Workforce Division for their area performance goals.

PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES Program Year (PY) 2023

Program	Performance Measure	Level Achieved	Goal / Outcome
Adult	Entered Employment Rate Q2	92.4%	Exceeded
Adult	Enter Employment Rate Q4	83.3%	Exceeded
Adult	Credential Rate	71.8%	Met
Adult	Skills Gains	73.9%	Exceeded
Adult	Median Earnings	$10,067	Exceeded
Dislocated Worker	Entered Employment Rate Q2	100.0%	Exceeded
Dislocated Worker	Enter Employment Rate Q4	100.0%	Exceeded
Dislocated Worker	Credential Rate	100.0%	Exceeded
Dislocated Worker	Skills Gains	0.0%	N/A *
Dislocated Worker	Median Earnings	0.0%	N/A *
Youth	Entered Employment Rate Q2	93.7%	Exceeded
Youth	Enter Employment Rate Q4	80.0%	Exceeded
Youth	Credential Rate	78.9%	Exceeded
Youth	Skills Gains	85.2%	Exceeded
Youth	Median Earnings	$ 2,707	Met

** N/A (Dislocated Workers) no participants enrolled in Dislocated Worker cohort.*

WIOA STATISTICS

129
Total Individuals Receiving Training Services From WIOA

$1,041,593
Grants Awarded to WIOA for a Two–Year Period Ending June 30, 2024

58
Individuals Served by Individual Training Accounts

52
Individuals Served by Youth Training Services

29
Businesses/Employers benefited from serving as a worksite or hiring WIOA participant

12
On-the-Job Training with local area employers participating

$15,344
received in employer reimbursements from WIOA.

What We Do

- Administer the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act services on behalf of the Middle Flint Workforce Development Board.
- Assist Trade Act impacted customers with training applications, assessments, career advisement, case management, and referral to training activities.
- Provide Rapid Response services for companies and individuals affected by layoffs and closures.

WIOA Success

Hailey Dunford

Hailey Dunford enrolled in the WIOA Youth Services program in September 2022 to work towards achieving her General Education Diploma (GED). While in the GED program, Hailey participated in Work Readiness, Career Pathways, and Work Experience activities, earning her GED in 2022.

Hailey wanted to explore the healthcare field after she completed Work Experience at a healthcare facility, Magnolia Manor, in Buena Vista. She was then offered part-time employment at the end of the Work Experience.

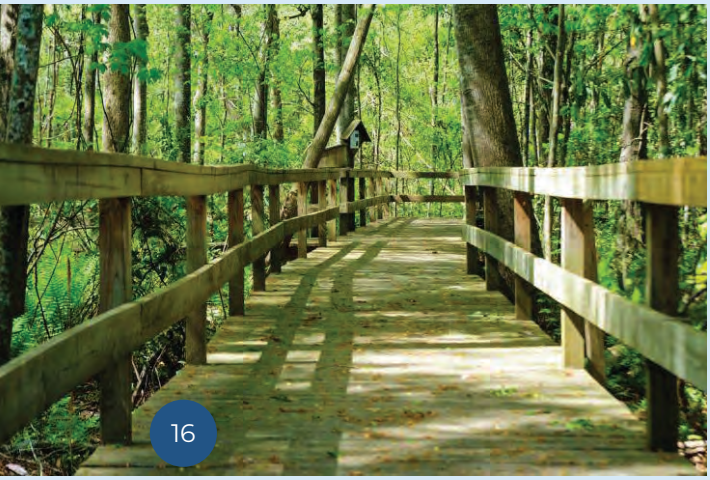
Hailey sought to continue pursuing her interest in healthcare and decided to enroll in the Licensed Practical Program (LPN) at South Georgia Technical College in Fall 2023. WIOA continued to provide her with financial assistance with tuition, uniforms, medical training items, testing fees, and supportive services while she completed the LPN program. In August 2024, Hailey completed the LPN and is now preparing for the state board exams to obtain her nursing license.

"The WIOA program has been a huge blessing to me during my GED and practical nursing journey. Knowing I would not have to worry about expenses has been a breath of fresh air," Hailey stated when asked about the program.

"This program is truly a blessing, and I will recommend it to everyone. Thank you, WIOA, for the opportunity to achieve my GED and earn my practical nursing license."

Regional Planning

Our sixteen-county region is a diverse and remarkable place, home to 363,238 people during FY24. To help our communities and the region continue to grow, develop, and thrive, we provide professional planning assistance across several programs. 2 Comprehensive Plans and 1 Pre-disaster Mitigation Plan were Completed for local governments in FY 2024.



What We Do

Regional Planning

- 2 Comprehensive Plans completed
- 2 Pre-Disaster Mitigation plans completed

Economic Development

- 37 RLF loans currently managed by staff
- Reconvened the CEDS committee
- Received 2024 National Association of Development Organizations Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award for Taylor County Fire Station GIS Siting Project.

Community Development

- 31 grant projects currently being administered
- 3 CDBG grants were selected for funding for FY24

Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

- 88 Bike-To-Work-Day Participants
- 242 Walk-Bike-to-School Participants
- 12 Business Partnerships Encouraged 190 Casual Riders
- 565 Cyclists in Special Events
- 344 People Engaged in Safety Education program

Environmental Planning

- 8 GEFA Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grants awarded

Transportation

- 33,574 DHS Transit Trips Performed
- $103,798,467 in TIA-2 funding has been collected in the most recent quarter throughout the River Valley Region.

Historic Preservation

- 61 cases reviewed by Columbus Board of Historic and Architectural Review (BHAR) Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)

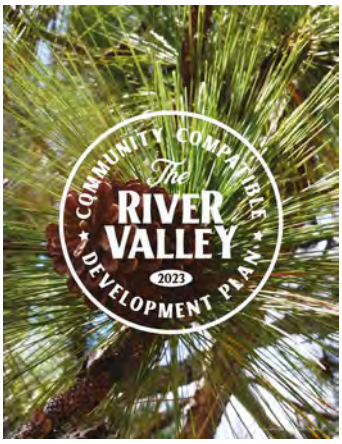
Regional Planning

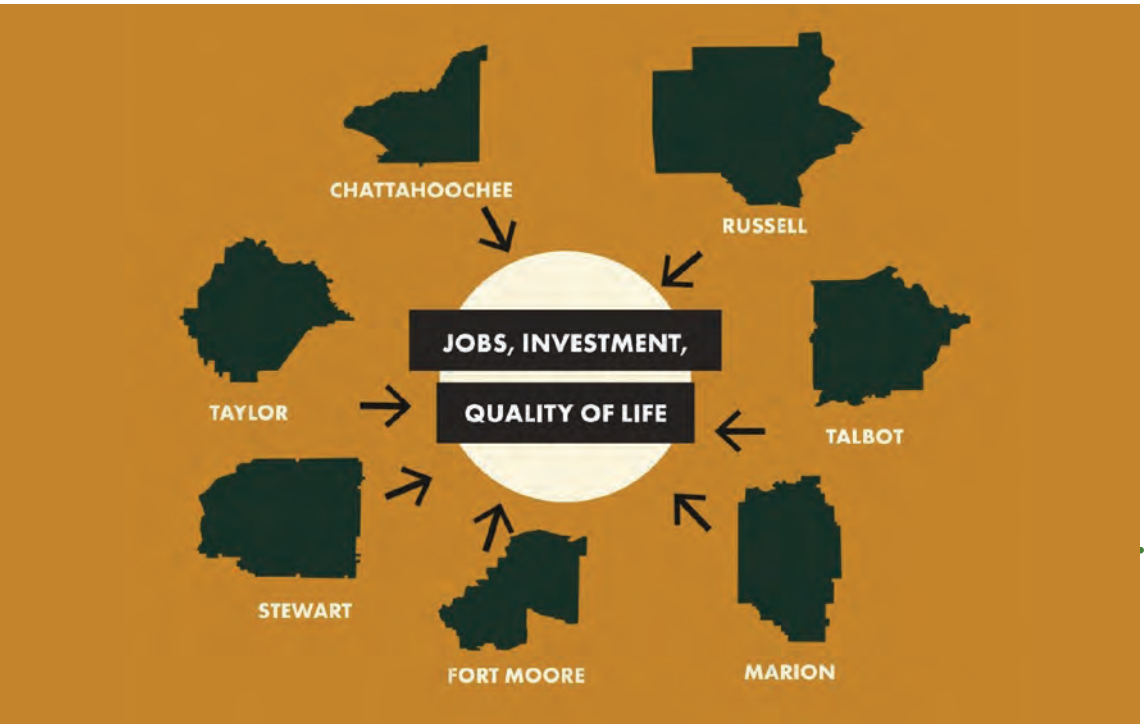
THE RVCCD PLAN SUMMARY

Beginning in 2021, the River Valley Regional Commission began work on the River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan (RVCCDP) with the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute and Fort Moore to identify and implement opportunities to provide vibrant downtowns, foster job growth, and promote outdoor activities in counties surrounding Fort Moore. This project focused on the six rural communities surrounding Fort Moore, including Chattahoochee, Marion, Russell (AL), Stewart, Talbot, and Taylor counties.

PROJECT ROLL-OUT

Fort Moore representatives participated in a River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan roll-out event on Aug. 18 at Columbus State University. During the meeting, the group introduced its regional economic development plan and discussed strategizing its implementation with local Army officials. Participants included representatives from the River Valley Regional Commission and Fort Moore Army Compatible Use Buffer partners: the Nature Conservancy, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Forestry Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, and the USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service.





rivervalleyccd.com/the-plan

RVRC
RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION

710 Front Avenue
Columbus, GA 31901

RVRC PROGRAMS

Planning & Government Services
- Grant Writing and Administration
- Comprehensive Economic Dev. Strategy
- Revolving Loan Funds
- Comprehensive Plans
- Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plans
- Zoning Assistance
- Environmental Planning
- Historic Preservation
- CDBG Administration
- Transit Development
- Mobility Management
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- Transportation Investment Act
- Geographic Information Systems

Aging Services
- Elderly Legal Services
- Home Delivered Meals
- Congregate Meals
- Homemaker
- Personal Care
- Senior Centers
- Transportation
- Caregiver Respite
- Case Management
- Nursing Home Transitions

Workforce Development
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