

Turner County Rural Transit Study



Turner County Courthouse
Neoclassical Revival, 1907

SUMMARY

To assist the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Intermodal Programs in providing rural public transit planning, Turner County in cooperation with the South Georgia Regional Development Center developed the Turner County Transit Study. This plan is meant to assist Turner County's rural transit system with its future planning needs.

The Minimum Requirements developed by the GDOT's Office of Intermodal Programs requires that the South Georgia Regional Develops a Transit Development Plan that includes:

1. An Executive Summary
2. An Overview and Demographic Analysis of the Region
3. Development of Goals and Objectives for Transit
4. Performance Evaluation and Existing Transit Service
5. Demand Estimation and Needs Assessment
6. Transit Alternatives and Recommendations including a Five-Year Capital and Operating Plan

Data, recommendations and strategies from the Turner County Transit Study will also be included in the updated South Georgia Regional Transit Development Plan. The South Georgia Regional Transit Development Plan will be an update of the Regional Transit Development Plan of 1990 and it will be designed as a more usable document for transit planning implementation.

I. INTRODUCTION TO SECTION 5311 PROGRAMS

Turner County utilizes Section 5311 funding to help fund its rural transit system. The Section 5311 Program offers local areas an opportunity to provide transit services improving access to business, commercial and activity centers. The program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration to provide assistance for rural public transportation. Federal funds are allocated

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to the states on a formula basis, and can be used for capital assistance, operating assistance planning, and program administration. The Georgia Department of Transportation is responsible for administering the program. GDOT is the recipient of these funds, and it in turn provides Federal funding (and a limited amount of state capital funding) to local subrecipients in Georgia.

The State of Georgia has established the following statewide goals for the Section 5311 program:

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

- **Goal: Program Implementation:**
 - partnering with the FTA in the administration of the Section 5311 program, meeting all FTA program requirements.
 - managing a program of excellence that provides timely management direction, guidance, and reimbursement to allow local entities to provide quality service.
 - partnering with local or regional entities to plan services to meet locally identified needs.
 - partnering with local or regional entities to operate the services.
 - providing technical assistance to help local providers improve effectiveness, efficiency, safety, and quality of service.
 - providing technical information, policy analyses, and program management data to support transit program development.

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

- **Goal: Safe, Secure Quality Service:**
 - operating equipment that is within its design life, inspected for safety and overall condition

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- operated by staff meeting the highest qualifications—appropriate license (Commercial Drivers License (CDL) if required), safe driving and criminal records checked, drug and alcohol tested, etc.
- operated by a staff that is trained to proficiency in all necessary skills:
 - Defensive Driving
 - Passenger Assistance
 - First Aid and CPR
- providing a safe and secure service to the riders.
- **Goal: Accessible Service—Usable by Persons with Disabilities:**
 - providing service that is accessible (adequate number of accessible lift- or ramp-equipped vehicles).
 - using operators trained to proficiency in passenger assistance, lift use, restraints, mobility devices (folding, stowage, etc.).
 - user information and outreach to ensure that persons needing the service are aware of it and can obtain information.
- **Goal: Coordinated Provision of Transportation in Rural Areas:**
 - coordinated policies at the state level through interagency coordination.
 - coordinated at regional/local level—shared vehicles, shared ride, coordinated management—where it will result in more cost-effective, quality service that meets client and general public transit rider needs.

The rural transit system in Turner County shares these goals as well. Likewise, GDOT has established minimum criteria for transit programs in GDOT’s Rural Public Transportation Service Policy. These include:

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

Additionally, GDOT recommends that service should be funded to the maximum extent possible by the generation of revenues through farebox.

Section 5311 can be used for capital and operational costs. Local funding for capital acquisition will at a minimum be ten percent of the costs. Capital expenses under Section 5311 can include:

1. Vehicles,
2. Communication equipment,

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

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

In the South Georgia region, all counties that have a rural transit system contract with a third party operator. Third party operators are experienced transit providers that are able to provide transit service effectively and efficiently. These counties use the Section 5311 funds to purchase capital equipment and contract with the third party operator for operation of the system. According to MIDS, Inc., the most utilized third party operator in the South Georgia region, local governments generally only pay for vehicle insurance in operational expenses. All other operational expenses are handled by the third party operator. The third party operator attempts to provide service efficiently in order to profit from the farebox revenues.

According to MIDS, Inc. farebox costs generally are \$3 for trips that are ten miles or less, \$5 for trips that are over ten miles, and \$0.50 for every mile outside of the county of service.

According to the *Georgia Administrative Guide for Rural Public Transportation Programs* (January 2007- June 2008 funding cycle), the following types of service are appropriate for rural public transportation programs:

- Demand-response or route deviation service. Demand-response is a type of service where individual passengers can request door-to-door or curb-to-curb transportation from a specific location to another specific location at a certain time. Route deviation service operates along a public way on a fixed-route, but which may deviate from the route occasionally in response to take a passenger to a destination or pick one up from an origin, after which it returns to the regular route. This is often not available on a regular, daily basis at the times riders need to provide them with reliable transportation to work.
- Contract and subscription service. Subscription service is a type of demand response service in which routes and schedules are pre-arranged to meet the travel needs of riders who sign up for the service in advance. Often these riders are clients of human service agencies, who contract with the transportation operator to provide the service on behalf of the agency. This type of service may be provided by a Section 5311 program only to the extent that it does not violate FTA Charter Bus restrictions.

II. TURNER COUNTY OVERVIEW and ANALYSIS

Turner County is a relatively new county, for Georgia. It was formed in 1905 by from taking portions of Wilcox, Worth, Irwin, and Dooly Counties. Turner County is located in South-Central Georgia and is surrounded by Wilcox, Ben Hill, Irwin, Tift, Worth and Crisp Counties. It is bi-sected in half by the north-south running Interstate 75.

Population Trends

Population trends are important indicators of future services needed by a community. But, it must be remembered that the past trends, while indicators, could easily miss as prognosticators of the future. It is incumbent upon Turner County officials to stay abreast of recent events. For example, the Tifton Gazette reported in April 2007, that a study done by the *Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at the Georgia Institute of Technology* indicated that Tifton is predicted to be an emerging Mega Region for the Piedmont Atlanta Mega Region. It is one of only seven cities highlighted and the only one classified as rural. The other cities were: Charlotte, Charleston, Birmingham, Atlanta, Jacksonville, and Chattanooga. The close proximity of Tifton to Turner County means that it should expect to see more growth than indicated by the Census numbers and tables.

(The following tables are pulled from many sources. It must be acknowledged, frustratingly, not all the numbers for each year match exactly. They are usually quite close though. By comparing only a table with the same data source any margin of error is significantly reduced.)

Table 2-1

**Total Population for Turner County
1960 - 2000**

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Turner (total)	8,439	8,790	9,509	8,731	9,510
Ashburn	3,291	4,209	4,766	4,827	4,419
Rebecca	278	266	272	148	246
Sycamore	501	547	474	417	496
Turner, unincorporated	5,440	3,768	3,998	3,339	4,343
SGRDC	150,165	157,500	186,200	195,448	227,421
State of Georgia	3,943,116	4,611,479	5,484,527	6,522,645	8,229,820

U.S. Census Bureau

According to U.S. Census reports, the recorded population of Turner County, reached a high in 1920 of 12,466 and fell steadily, reaching a low in 1960 of 8,439. The 1920s are the time when the boll weevil struck and this fact is thought to be responsible for the declining population as people began leaving the farms. By 1978, the boll weevil eradication program had succeeded and cotton

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was again grown as a crop. As is shown by Table 2-1, the population of Turner County remained fairly steady, with mild growth, from 1960 through 2000, with the exception of a precipitous dip from 1980 to 1990 of over 8 percent, but then population, rebounded by 2000. This was part of a larger national trend. The U. S. Census Bureau reported that rural counties had a net influx of more than 1.6 million people from 1990 to 1995, which stands in contrast to the 1980s when rural counties suffered a net loss of 1.4 million people.

Table 2-2

Turner County Population Numerical and Percentage Change, 1960 - 2000

	1960 - 1970		1970 - 1980		1980 - 1990		1990 - 2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Turner (total)	- 720	- 7.6	720	8.2	- 779	- 8.2	801	9.2
Ashburn	918	27.9	557	13.2	61	1.2	-408	-8.5
Rebecca	- 8	- 2.9	6	2.3	- 124	- 45.6	100	68.5
Sycamore	46	9.2	- 73	- 13.3	- 57	- 12.0	65	15.0
Turner, unincorporated	- 1672	- 30.7	230	6.1	- 659	- 16.5	1,004	30.1
SGRDC	7,335	4.9	28,700	18.2	9,248	5.0	37,704	16.2
State of Georgia	668,363	17.0	873,048	18.9	1,038,118	18.9	1,707,175	26.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1960 - 1990

Table 2-2 reflects the changes in the actual numbers of increase or decrease in the population in all of Turner County, the towns, the remaining unincorporated area. The first column under each decade is numerical change in absolute terms and then the corresponding change in percentages. It would be interesting to know if people moved from Ashburn out into the county or if Ashburn simply lost people from 1990 to 2000. The most growth occurred in the county, especially in the unincorporated areas. In terms of total population, Turner County ranked 122 of the 159 counties in Georgia. (The Georgia County Guide, 2006).

Table 2-3

Turner County Population By Age Groups, 1980 - 2000

Age	1980		1990		2000		1980 - 2000
	number	%	number	%	number	%	Percent Change
0 to 4	892	9.4	748	8.6	736	7.7	-17.5
5 to 14	1,823	19.2	1,569	18	1,591	16.7	-12.7
15 to 24	1,604	16.9	1,338	15.3	1,441	15.2	-10.2
25 to 34	1,303	13.7	1,140	13.1	1,218	12.8	-6.5
35 to 44	970	10.2	1,114	12.8	1,287	13.5	32.7
45 to 54	848	8.9	860	9.8	1,197	12.6	41.2
55 to 64	886	9.3	735	8.4	809	8.5	- 8.7
65 & up	1,173	12.3	1,227	14.1	1,231	12.9	4.9
Total	9,325		8,731		9,510		

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Table 2-3 examines the Turner County population growth over the last twenty years in terms of age groups. It is important to recognize if there are trends in changing demographics within the population; not just in terms of net gain or net loss. This can help leaders anticipate needs ranging from new elementary schools to personal care homes for the increasingly aging population. There are some interesting changes of the numbers in age groups that bear closer scrutiny. One of the first facts noticed, is the decrease 156 youngsters in the number of infants through 4 year olds. From 1980 to 2000. this equated to a decrease of over 17 percent. Next, children ages 5 to 14 dropped almost 13 percent during this same time period. This trend of decreasing percentages continues through the 15 to 24 and the 25 to 34 year old age groups.

Then, there is a marked change. The 35 to 44 year old age group grew a whopping 33 percent from 1980 to 2000. This is followed by a huge upsurge in the 45 to 54 year olds of over 41 percent. These findings are consistent with those reported by the *Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at the Georgia Institute of Technology* in the Tifton study, dated April 2007. The growth of this group is also confirms what is antidotally reported to be occurring in much of South Georgia. The majority of this growth is purportedly coming up from Florida. There are many who are becoming disenchanted with the escalating hurricane activity, the inability to evacuate swiftly, the increasing property taxes, the congestion, and the rising cost of living. There are so many of these people, like Baby Boomers, they have had their own nametag coined; “half-backs.” This moniker stems from the fact that they are returning half of the way back from whence they originally came. These are not your “Sun City” retirees, but a younger, active population who are seeking a place to retire one day, but are meanwhile working. This older, experienced labor force could be a boon to Turner County in attracting businesses and industries.

Table 2-4

**Turner County Population:
By Race and Ethnic Background, 1980 - 2004**

	1980		1985		1990		1995		2000		2004	
	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%	number	%
White	5,984	63.0	5,148	54.2	4,999	52.63	5,702	60.03	5,274	55.52	5,483	57.72
Black	3,501	36.8	3,553	37.4	3,788	39.88	3,595	37.85	3,828	40.3	3,858	40.61
Other	14	n/a	30	.32	47	.49	28	.29	30	.32	n/a	n/a
Hispanic	48	.51	35	.37	42	.44	55	.58	229	2.41	303	3.19
Total	9,499		8,728		8,834		9,325		9,361		9,644	

The Georgia County Guide, 2006

Table 2-4 examines the changes in racial distribution in Turner County from 1980 through 2004. The white population seems to have declined by about 500 people in the last twenty-four years, although they are still the majority at almost 58 percent of the total population. The black population has increased about 350 persons and they make up about 41 percent of the population. The Hispanic population, while still very small for rural south Georgia has grown from only 48 people counted in the census to 303 people counted. This number might be vastly under-reported.

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Schools and hospitals usually have a better handle on the true number than census figures. Many counties in south Georgia now believe the Hispanic population to be closer to 10 percent.

Table 2-5

Turner County and Surrounding Counties Population , Projections and Size

	2000 - 2005		2005 - 2010		2010 - 2015		Area in Sq Mi	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	rank
Turner	9,400	-1.21%	9,708	3.28%	9,839	1.35%	290	102
Ben Hill	17,343	-0.87%	16,655	-3.97%	16,370	-1.71%	254	122
Irwin	9,936	-0.35%	10,413	4.80%	10,686	2.62%	363	73
Tift	40,178	4.49%	42,261	5.18%	44,352	4.95%	269	114
Worth	22,008	0.33%	21,560	-2.04%	21,382	-0.83%	575	17
Crisp	22,028	0.17%	21,983	-0.20%	22,019	0.16%	281	110
Wilcox	8,691	1.42%	9,061	4.26%	9,263	2.23%	383	64
Rockdale							132	159
Ware							906	1
State of Georgia	8,829,383	7.28%	9,864,970	11.73%	10,813,573	9.62%		

Source: The Georgia County Guide, 2006, State Office of Planning & Budget (uses cohort component method)

Tables 2-1 through 2-4 have looked back at past population trends. Table 2-5 is that of future Population Projections. This table examines the population projections for Turner County. Neighboring counties are included only for comparison sake. It also examines the geographic dimensions, in square miles, of Turner County and surrounding counties to be sure that size is not a factor in population. When comparing populations, it makes sense to know the size of the region used for comparison. Rockdale County and Ware County are included as the smallest and largest counties, only to book-end the data for clarity.

Turner County is projected to continue with slow, but steady and manageable growth. However, it is anticipated that it will probably greater than the *Georgia County Guide* projects, based upon previously referenced trends. (Please note the difference in Table 2 – 8).

Workplace Destinations

Turner County is bi-sected in half by the north-south running Interstate 75. There are only five exits in Turner County, as compared to seven exits for Tifton itself, not including the county. An interstate cutting through the county is a mixed blessing. It can literally divide a community in half and yet it frequently brings with it additional growth and related jobs. However, an interstate also provides a ready means to leave Turner County to drive to larger areas, which typically have more employment opportunities. Becoming a ‘bedroom community’ is not beneficial for a county from an economic standpoint. Nor is it healthy from a civic and community involvement standpoint because the residents are actually gone most of the day. They shop, fill up the vehicle with fuel, eat lunch, go to the movies, and read that paper. All of this commerce removes tax revenues from Turner County. Another damaging effect of commuting is that commuters are limited in their involvement with the schools and the education

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system and often begin to identify with another community, not their where their house is located.

Table 2-6

**Turner County
Labor Force: by Location of Work**

Category	1990	2000
Total population	8,703	9,504
Worked in State of residence	3,182	3,826
Worked in county of residence	2,186	2,370
Worked outside of county of residence	996	1,456
Worked outside of state of residence	27	16

Source: The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (<http://www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2/>) 2006

Table 2-6 examines where the residents of Turner County worked in 1990 and 2000. In the same years, respectively there were 6,391 residents in the labor force participation, or 73 percent of the total population. By 2000 there were 7,668 residents in the labor force participation, or almost 81 percent. In 2000, only 30 percent of employed citizens of Turner County actually worked in Turner County. From 1990 to 2000, more people found work outside of Turner and fewer worked in Turner County. In 1990, over 34 percent of the resident work force was employed in Turner County, by 2000 in had fallen to about 30 percent. However, it is a good trend that so many of the residents are working. In 1990, over 73 percent of the residents were in the work force and by 2000, it had risen to almost 81 percent. It is expected that more and more residents also travel outside of the county for shopping, educational, and personal reasons, as well employment.

TABLE 2-7

**Commuting Comparison by Percentage
State and SGRDC Region, 1970 - 2000**

Location	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Increase Since 1970
Georgia	25.3	29.7	37.9	41.5	16.2
Ben Hill	9.4	9.2	14.2	21.4	12.0
Brooks	18.8	31.6	40.8	51.5	32.7
Cook	17.0	22.7	32.4	40.2	23.2
Echols	45.7	57.4	83.5	85.0	39.3
Irwin	21.9	34.6	47.6	56.6	34.7
Lanier	43.1	45.2	50.7	65.3	22.2
Lowndes	4.4	7.1	9.1	8.6	4.2
Tift	5.5	6.3	10.6	15.5	10.0
Turner	11.4	12.2	32.0	38.3	26.9

Source: US Bureau of the Census 1970-2000

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Table 2-7 examines the percentage of commuters in the state and region from 1970 through 2000. It is no surprise to see that all the areas cited have experienced an increase in the percentage of commuters. This is lamentably the same trend seen throughout America. As can be seen, Turner County is more fortunate than many counties in the region in that “only” 38 percent of the residents must leave the county to find suitable employment.

Table 2-8

Interstate Counties North and South of Turner County Population Change

County	Change 1980 – 1990	Change 1990 - 2000	2000 Population
Turner	- 8.5 %	9.2 %	9,504
Tift	6.5 %	9.7 %	38,400
Crisp	2.7 %	9.9 %	21,996

Source: Georgia Department of Community Affairs, County Snapshots, 2006

Table 2-8 is presented here, following the analysis of population and workforce destination, to look at the growth and employment, in conjunction with I-75 availability. Both Tift County, to the south, and Crisp County, to the north, are larger, but their percentage in population growth from 1990 to 2000 is very similar to that of Turner County. Table 2-5, which looked at population changes, as depicted by the *Georgia County Guide 2006*, is not thought to consider other factors of growth sufficiently. It is anticipated that Turner County’s growth will more closely mirror that of the neighboring interstate counties.

The following page is Map 1, Turner County, D.O.T. Traffic Counts, utilizes data the Georgia Department of Transportation makes available of Annual Average Daily Traffic report (AADT) and then the GIS department plotted the points on a road map of the county. It comes as no revelation that I-75 has the highest AADT with approximately 25,197 vehicles. The figures on the map are one-way, so this equates to an average of 50,394 vehicles per day traveling on I-75. What is interesting to note though is that the traffic count gradually increases as the flow goes south to north; 24,645, 24,710, 25,299, 25,618, and 25,712. Does this indicate that more Turner County residents commute north rather than south to Tifton, as might be expected? Or, is there some other explanation?

Pulling the most current information from GDOT, excluding I-75, the busiest location in Turner County is at the beginning at the intersection on Main Street and ending at the intersection off S.R. 112. The AADT there is 7,430. Number two in local ranking at 6,510 AADT is beginning at Jamestown Avenue and ending at Monroe Avenue. Washington Avenue to No Name is the third busiest location with 5,970 AADT.

The goal of providing this Traffic Count map of Turner County is to assist leaders in their strategy for growth, road tree planting beautification projects, welcoming signage, road repaving, and planning and zoning issues, etc. There is a Park and Ride Lot on I-75 and S.R. 112 with 15 spots and car pooling should be encouraged.

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Economic Characteristics

Turner County's economic history has relied upon the agricultural/forestry sectors to be its mainstay through the early part of the 1900's and after the 1960's the manufacturing sector provided the highest levels of employment. However, much of the manufacturing segment is no longer in America. Out-migration, a major problem through 2000 continues to rob the young and middle-aged persons from the Turner work force. In the last twenty years, the work force in has become very mobile with those employed working outside Turner County rising from 11 percent to over 38 percent of the work force. Greater Turner is centered between the larger urban centers of Tifton and Cordele. It is 20 miles south on I-75 to Tifton and 17 miles north on I-75 to Cordele. This area provides a wide range of employment opportunities and has an extensive trade area.

Table 2-9

**Turner County
Major Employers, 2004**

Name	# Employees	Name	# Employees
Bio-Plus	15	Coley Farm Services	34
Cornerstone Manufacturing Co	40	Drillers Service, Inc.	9
Sconyers Gin & Warehouse	11	Golden Peanut Company	90
Gray Distribution Services	9	H.C. Williams Peanut Co.	4
Holley Steel Construction	8	South GA Rec.Vehicles	3
La Salle Bristol Co.	16	CentraPak	300
Johnston - Garrett Seed Co.	19	M & W Sportswear	70
Nolin Steel Erection Co.	7	Gulf Pole & Timber	16
Universal Forest Products	106	Tifton Turf	35
Southern Wholesale Vinyl Supply	30	Triangle Chemical Co.	20
Turner Co. Stockyards	6	Regal Wood Products	8
Williams Trucking, Inc.	21	Rockwood Industrial	10
City of Ashburn	57	JDC Peanut Company	34
Turner County	82	Turner Co. Public Schools	300

Table 2-9 is specific to major employers within Turner County. The major employers of today lie in and around Ashburn and Sycamore. Rural farm and non-farm populations have cycled upward and downward in the decades where agricultural employment yielded to manufacturing employment. Consequently, small settlements have prospered and faded to bedroom communities. Table 2-9, of specific employers, is also of interest when compared to the following table which projects generic types of industry will be growing and declining in Turner County.

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**Table 2-10
Turner County Employment:
Past and Projections by Industry**

Category	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Total Employed Civilian Population	3,767	3,482	3,197	3,564	3,930	4,012	4,093	4,256	4,419	4,745	5,071
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, hunting & mining	430	425	419	383	347	306	264	181	98	0	0
Construction	224	151	77	167	256	272	288	320	352	416	480
Manufacturing	1,003	928	853	835	816	723	629	442	255	0	0
Wholesale Trade	296	199	102	138	174	113	52	0	0	0	0
Retail Trade	574	491	407	413	419	342	264	109	0	0	0
Transportation, warehousing, and utilities	143	182	221	222	222	262	301	380	459	617	775
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	92	130	167	126	84	80	76	68	60	44	28
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	136	106	75	96	117	108	98	79	60	22	0
Educational, health and social services	480	439	398	546	694	801	908	1,122	1,336	1,764	2,192
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	177	101	24	129	233	261	289	345	401	513	625
Other Services	66	128	190	192	194	258	322	450	578	834	1,090
Public Administration	146	205	264	301	337	433	528	719	910	1,292	1,674

2

Calculate Projection

10 year rate of change multiplier (1 is base):

Original Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

www.georgiaplanning.com/dataviews/census2dv_project.asp?mult+2&Y80+Y&Submit1=Calculate+Projection

NOTE: The projections are based on the average rate of change from 1980 to 2000. The base multiplier of 1 means that it will follow the same trend. The multiplier can be adjusted. For example, if the multiplier is changed to 1.5, the rate of change will be increased by 50% every 10 years. A multiplier of zero means no change. A negative value will mean a reverse in the trend.

Table 2-10 projects employment, by industry, in Turner County. This chart does not reflect commuter employment. It must be kept in mind when reviewing this chart, that there is no influence to it other purely linear projection of numbers based on the past figures, from 1980 to 2000. In other words, it can be useful to consider, but not totally accurate in that real world changing factors are not able to be considered in this linear model. For example, while it is undoubtedly true that category of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting & Mining is in decline, it is highly improbable that it will disappear completely. Agri-business is still the state's largest industry. It is unlikely that employment in the other fields, which are zeroed out on the above table, will be completely eliminated either. Growth is projected in Construction, which is probably accurate. However, the table shows a decline in the category of Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate, which is closely aligned with Construction and will probably actually grow. Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities is also predicted to grow and this seems very reasonable, as are Educational, Health and Social Services and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services, and Other Services. It is reasonable to expect that the Public Administration sector will increase too, but in 2000, it was 8.5 percent of the workforce, it is unlikely that it will swell to 33 percent of the workforce. This table is presented in order to give you a fuller picture of the statistics for Turner County that are available, but use your own sound judgment, based on experience and on-the-ground local knowledge, when reviewing it.

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Table 2-11 a
Turner County: Personal Income by Type:
in Dollars and by Percentage Change

Category	1990 \$	2000 \$	% Change	GA % Change
Total income	68,735,786	128,385,000	86.78%	95.46%
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	45,744,568	93,562,500	104.53%	94.78%
Aggregate other types of income for households	820,209	2,989,300	264.46%	195.65%
Aggregate self employment income for households	7,113,611	8,740,400	22.87%	74.84%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	4,950,213	6,430,900	29.91%	83.22%
Aggregate social security income for households	5,340,553	9,339,300	74.88%	82.25%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	1,511,408	2,069,400	36.92%	Error in data
Aggregate retirement income for households	3,255,224	5,253,200	61.38%	160.04%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

Table 2-11a looks at personal income in conjunction with the source of personal income. For applicability, the percentage of change was added. All income sources are up in the years from 1990 to 2000, however it is astounding to see an increase of 264.46 percent in Aggregate Other Types of Income for Households. Aggregate Wage or Salary Income for Households up 104.53 percent. The largest percentage increase was in the Other Types of Income category and it was up over 264 percent. However, it must be remembered that the dollar amount, almost \$3 million, which is only 2.3 percent of the total income. None the less, it is suggested that local leaders identify the factors responsible for this growth. Finally, in order to get a clearer pictures, the State of Georgia percentages were added for comparison purposes.

Table 2-11 b
Turner County: Personal Income by Type
Reflected by Percentage

Category	1990	2000
Total income	100.0%	100.0%
Aggregate wage or salary income for households	66.6%	72.9%
Aggregate other types of income for households	1.2%	2.3%
Aggregate self employment income for households	10.3%	6.8%
Aggregate interest, dividends, or net rental income	7.2%	5.0%
Aggregate social security income for households	7.8%	7.3%
Aggregate public assistance income for households	2.2%	1.6%
Aggregate retirement income for households	4.7%	4.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (SF3)

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Table 2-11b presents the same information as in Table 2-11a, but in terms of percentages for each category. Aggregate Wage or Salary Income for Households was up in 2000 to almost 73 percent of the total income. As expected, Self-employment was down from the previous decade from 10.3 percent to 6.8 percent. As noted earlier, Aggregate Other Types of Income had increased. As a comparison figure the personal income for the State of Georgia, over 78 percent was in the form of Wage or Salary.

III. COST ESTIMATES of the 5311 PROGRAM

A rural transit system includes capital expenses and operating expenses. Table 3-1 shows the estimated expenses for several vehicles that would be included in capital expenses.

Capital equipment is eligible for funding under the Section 5311 grant program. The minimum required local funding for eligible capital equipment is 10 percent. However, this amount may be higher depending on the availability of state and federal funds.

Table 3-1
Capital Equipment Cost Estimates

Capital Equipment	2006	2007	2008
Standard Van	\$25,000	\$25,500	\$26,000
Conversion Van	\$38,500	\$39,000	\$39,000
Conversion Van w/ Lift	\$42,000	\$42,500	\$43,000
Shuttle Van	\$33,000	\$33,500	\$34,000
Shuttle Van w/ Lift	\$37,000	\$37,500	\$38,000
Shuttle Bus	\$37,000	\$38,000	\$38,000
Shuttle Bus w/ Lift	\$42,000	\$42,500	\$43,000
Mobile Radio	\$1,500	\$1,700	\$1,800
Computer, Printer and Software	\$3,000	\$3,200	\$3,300

For the five year period of this plan, Turner County's current stock of capital equipment should suffice as long as they are maintained properly.

Counties that have developed a rural transportation program in the South Georgia region contract a third party operator. Many third party operators, such as MIDS Inc., provide services to the counties at no cost to the local governments. Operational expenses are paid for by fares received, and if necessary, the federal funds that are offered from up to 50 percent of the net operating deficit. Any other losses are paid for by the company, and any profits are gained by the third party operator.

MIDS Inc., the most frequently utilized third party operator in the South Georgia region, explains that the average operating cost per month per vehicle is \$3,500.

In order to offset these costs, third party operators attempt to provide a large amount of transportation services as efficiently as possible. Third party operators try to break even on operational costs, and try to profit if possible.

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MIDS, Inc. has informed the SGRDC that Turner County officials decided not to be a participant in the GDOT 5311 Program. This sounds like a wise decision on the part of leaders in that MIDS, Inc. has elected to provide the service. Table 3-2 looks over their data.

**Table 3-2
Turner County
MIDS, Inc., Third Party Operator
Operational Information for 2006**

Description	Quantity or Cost
Public Trips (one way)	676
Purchase of Service Trips (DHR, Medicaid, DEFACS, Seniors, Mental Health Services, etc.)	12,933
Miles Driven	68,135
Hours	6,536
Income	\$76,468
Expenses	\$115,337
Average Cost per Trip	\$8.48
Average Cost per Hour	\$17.65
Average Miles Per Trip	5.01

Source: MIDS, Inc., Danny Saturday, Regional Supervisor, (229) 219-7666, June 2007

If one were only to look at Table 3-2, it would appear that MIDS, Inc. is losing money. Fortunately for all, that is not the case. They are able to receive 50 percent reimbursement of loss from GDOT, some additional payments from the Federal Government, they have no lease payments, and they receive lower gas prices. Turner County only had to pay 5 percent of the upfront capital expenditure. This arrangement seems like a win/win/win situation. A win for MIDS, Inc., a win for Turner County, and most importantly a win for the citizens that need this form of transportation. Mr. Saturday's phone number is included if there are any specific questions about the current MIDS, Inc. operation.

The demand estimates are expected to correlate with population growth. According to Census information in Table 2-10b, the aggregate public assistance income for all households in Turner County was only 1.6 percent and down from the previous decade. Therefore, the needs are projected to be relatively low. It seems that the current MIDS, Inc. system and the informal network of providing for transportation needs are working well and it is anticipated that these arrangements will continue to be sufficient for the next five years. However, there might be another 5 percent capital outlay to the MIDS third party operator, in about a year and a half. Finally, the entire Rural Transportation Plan and 5311 programs should be re-evaluated five years after it first began.

A recommendation to facilitate transit alternatives and bring in tourism dollars would be to establish a Turner County website. Since approximately 38 percent of the workforce commute, having a community bulletin board might be a service and promote sharing rides. There is a

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Park and Ride Lot at I-75, with 15 spaces. Turner County has a beautiful courthouse and a developing Historic District that could bring in tourism. A walking or biking/driving tour might be a method of low cost promoting. Also, consider adding unique shops, restaurants, or industries, such as Calhoun Produce. The Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism should be able to assist. Hewlett-Packard and AT&T are also reported to have technology grants that could assist in setting up a county website. Georgia Department of Community Affairs also provides Resource Team visits, on a competitive basis, in which professionals come in and study the area and make recommendations.

IV. CONCLUSION

From reading of the Turner County Rural Transit Study, and living there, it is obvious that the county will be growing and there will be change ahead. Therefore, vigilance must be taken to ensure that future growth is balanced and not all in residential growth. Residential growth (people) cost more in expenses and community services, such as fire protection, police, and schools, than property taxes can bring recoup in revenue. This means that there must be a balance of land uses; residential, farm and forest, and business and industry. Farm and forest lands do not cost as much to service as they bring in. Industrial and commercial properties are where communities receive the largest economic boost. However, you must have rooftops for commercial to follow. A link to an excellent and quick slide presentation from a UGA professor, from the Department Agriculture and Applied Economics, Dr. Jeff Dorfman, about regarding cost of community services, impact fees, and incentives can be found by typing the following in website address location: srdc.msstate.edu/smartgrowth/ppt/jeffreydorfman.ppt Accordingly, the solutions are what we have always known; all things in moderation. It is a balanced approach to land use that will promote long term prosperity and preserve the quality of life, now and for future generations.