

5 FORWARD: 2018-2022

COMPREHENSIVE
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGY

NORTH CENTRAL ALABAMA REGION



COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



FORWARD:
2018-2022

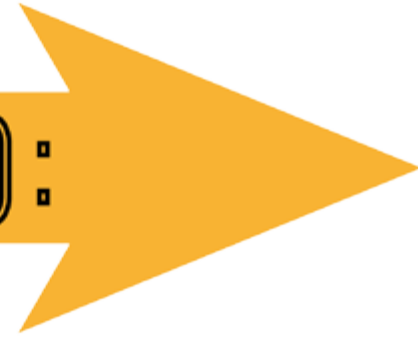


TABLE OF CONTENTS

NORTH CENTRAL ALABAMA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| <u>CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE</u> | → | 3 |
| <u>MISSION, VISION, & GOALS</u> | → | 4 |
| <u>INTRODUCTION</u> | → | 5 |
| <u>1 SUMMARY BACKGROUND</u> | → | 8 |
| <u>2 SWOT ANALYSIS & ASSET BASED APPROACH</u> | → | 30 |
| <u>3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ACTION PLAN</u> | → | 32 |
| <u>4 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK</u> | → | 37 |
| <u>5 ECONOMIC RESILIENCE</u> | → | 38 |
| <u>APPENDIX</u> | → | 45 |

CEDS STRATEGY COMMITTEE

The CEDS Strategy Committee is comprised of various stakeholders representing economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, tourism, entrepreneurs, education, workforce development, utilities, and local business owners in the Region. The purpose of the committee is to prepare input and information on the future direction of the Region and to offer guidance on potential future initiatives of NARCOG.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Suzanne Harbin (Kristi Barnett) | Wallace State Community College |
| Joseph Burchfield | Tennessee Valley Authority |
| Danielle Gibson | Hartselle Chamber of Commerce |
| Cherrie Haney | Cullman County Economic Development |
| Jason Houston | Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce |
| John Joseph IV | Decatur Corridor Development, Inc. |
| Dale Greer (Stanley Kennedy) | Cullman Economic Development Agency |
| Brooks Kracke | North Alabama Industrial Development Association |
| Tim Lovelace | NARCOG Small Business Fund Loan Committee |
| Jeremy Nails | Morgan County Economic Development Agency |
| Dr. Jim Payne | Calhoun Community College |
| Jesslyn Reeves | Decatur City Schools Foundation |
| Tami Reist | North Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association |
| John Seymour | Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce |
| Leah Bolin (Ben Smith) | Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce |
| Tony Stockton | Lawrence County Industrial Development Board |
| Larry Waye | Decatur-Morgan County Entrepreneurial Center & NARCOG Board Member |

MISSION, VISION AND GOALS



MISSION

Dedicated to improving the quality of life for the citizens of Cullman County, Lawrence County, and Morgan County.

VISION

Visioning a diversified, resilient, and sustainable economic future for our Region that is forward thinking, embraces change, and capitalizes on our assets, while building on our traditional successes.

GOALS

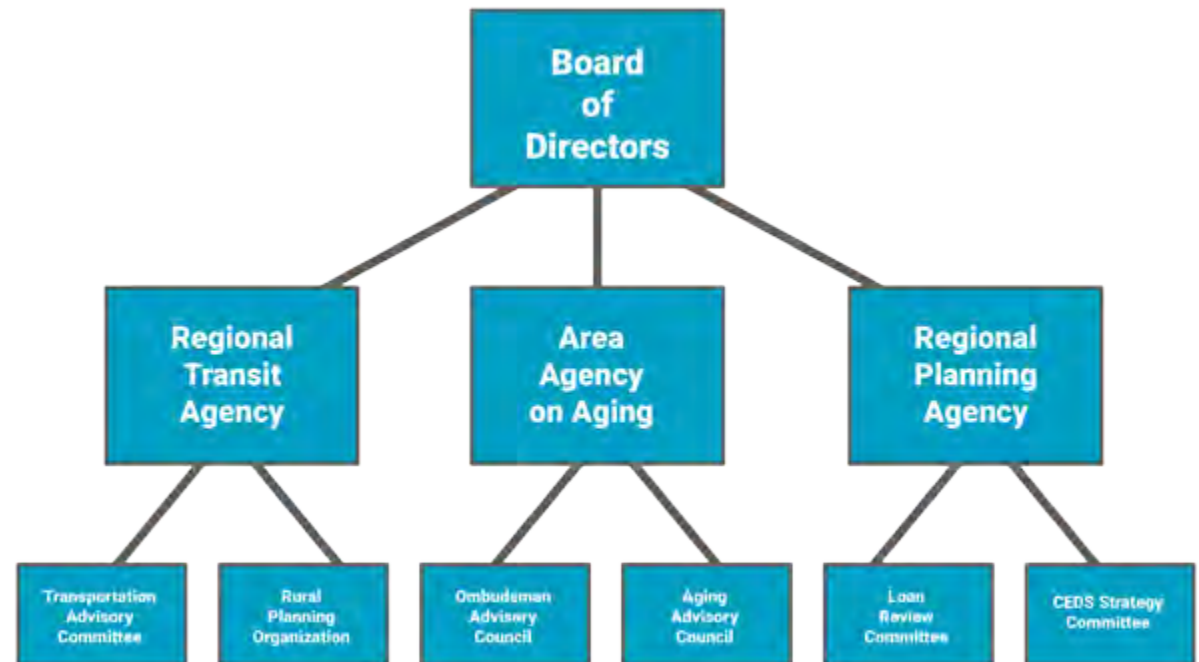
- 1. Inspire Innovation and Entrepreneurship**
- 2. Foster Sustainable Economic Prosperity**
- 3. Improve Education and Workforce Development**
- 4. Invest in and Modernize Transportation and Infrastructure**
- 5. Leverage Cultural and Natural Assets**
- 6. Advocate Planning and Leadership Development**

INTRODUCTION

ORGANIZATION

The North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) was originally created in 1966 as the North Central Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. NARCOG was re-established with its new name and subsequently certified by Governor George Wallace on November 1, 1971. NARCOG operates under the authority of Section 3 of Act No. 1126 of the 1969 Regular Session of the Legislature of Alabama. This Act, as amended, can be found in Sections 11-85-50 through 11-85-73 of the 1975 Code of Alabama. It provides for the creation and operation of regional planning and development commissions, which have among their many purposes, to “carry on continuous, comprehensive planning for the Region, assessing needs, resources, and development opportunities and formulating goals, objectives, policies, and standards to guide physical, economic, and human resource development.” NARCOG offers a multitude of services to the people and communities in our Region, as illustrated in the organizational structure diagram.

NARCOG ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



WHAT IS AN EDD AND CEDS?

NARCOG is a designated Economic Development District (EDD) through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) and includes Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties, along with 23 municipalities, referred to as the Region throughout this report. As the Region's EDD, NARCOG is responsible for developing and maintaining a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) through a continuous planning process. A CEDS must be updated at least every five years for a region to qualify for EDA assistance and is required for EDD designation. A CEDS is a strategy-driven plan for guiding regional economic development that is prosperous and resilient. The NARCOG EDD followed the latest guidelines released by the EDA in February of 2015 in developing the new five-year update of our Region's CEDS. Of note, the new guidelines require that the CEDS incorporates economic resilience as an influence on our strategic planning.

The following five sections form the framework of our 2018 CEDS:

1 SUMMARY BACKGROUND

2 SWOT ANALYSIS & ASSET BASED APPROACH

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ACTION PLAN

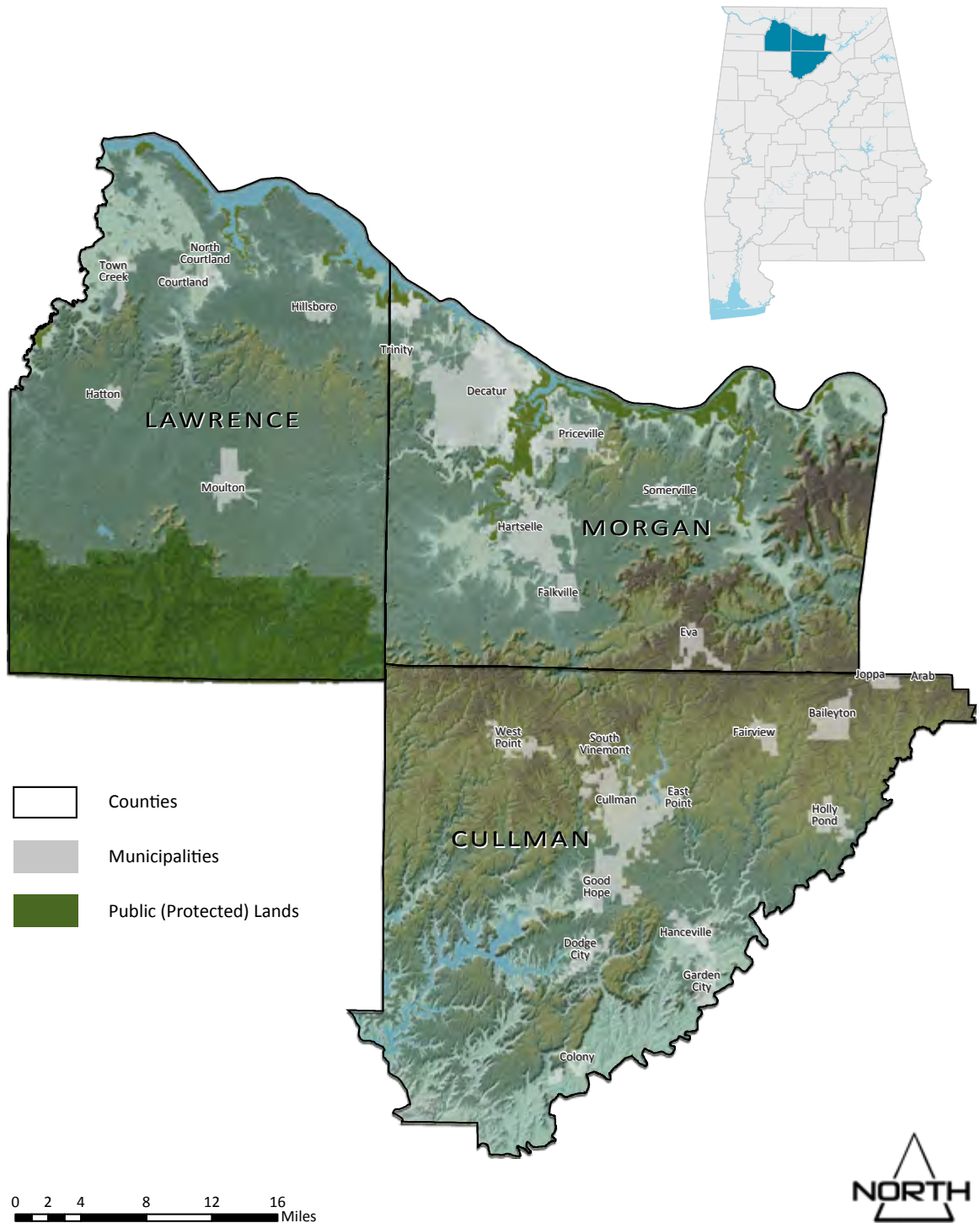
4 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

5 ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

CEDS TIMELINE

The CEDS Strategy Committee was established by NARCOG over the course of late 2016 and early 2017. The committee held three meetings at NARCOG on April 27, June 22, and August 24. All committee meetings were open to the public, and the required 30-day public comment period for the CEDS was available from August 3 to September 30, 2017 on NARCOG's website. NARCOG's CEDS was adopted by the Board on September 27, 2017.

Additionally, it is worth noting that NARCOG hosted two International Economic Development Council (IEDC) workshops on July 19, 2017 at Calhoun Community College and July 20, 2017, at Wallace State Community College on "Economic Development for Local Elected Leaders and Community Partners" and "Economic Resiliency for Local Elected Leaders and Community Partners." These two IEDC workshops were very timely in regards to the update of the CEDS and the new requirement for incorporating economic resiliency, as well as providing an additional opportunity for input from community leaders and the CEDS Strategy Committee members that attended.



OUR REGION

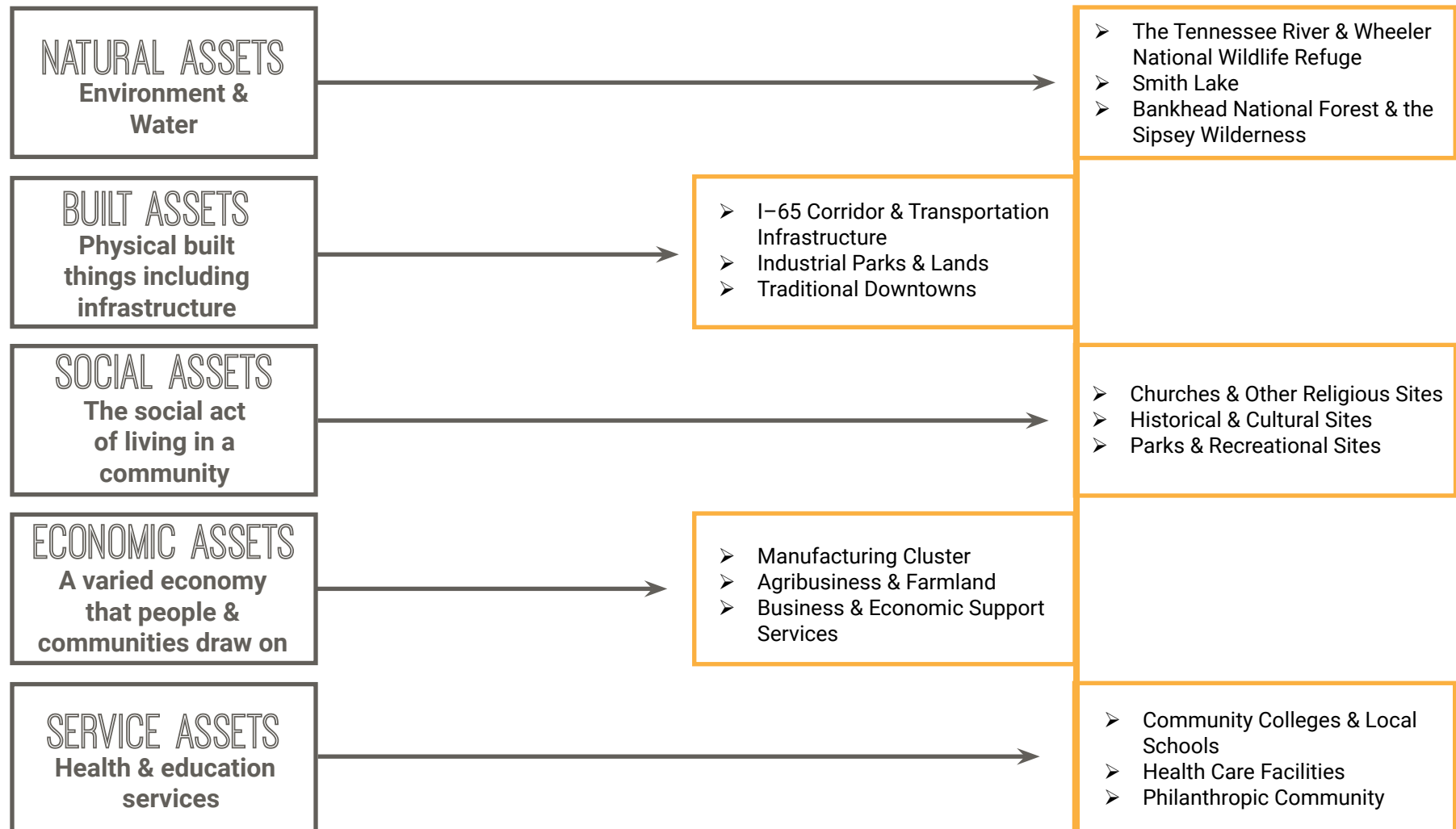
Our Region consists of Cullman, Lawrence, and Morgan Counties and twenty-three municipalities. The Region also includes the Decatur Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) consisting of the City of Decatur and the rest of Morgan and Lawrence Counties. Our Region is also a part of the Huntsville-Decatur Combined Statistical Area that includes Morgan and Lawrence Counties along with Limestone and Madison Counties. Geographically speaking, our Region is located along the south bank of the Tennessee River and within the mountains and valleys of North-central Alabama, which is home to an abundance of natural resources. Together they add an excellent quality of life for our residents, while also providing opportunities for our Region to capitalize on tourism from visitors.

Our Region has a long history of being an industrial center in North-central Alabama due to its strategic location at the convergence of a true multi-modal transportation system that includes I-65, U.S. 31, the CSX railway, the Norfolk and Southern railway, the Tennessee River, and several airports. Also, the NARCOG EDD is conveniently located near Redstone Arsenal, the Huntsville International Airport, the Port of Decatur, and the Port of Huntsville.

SUMMARY BACKGROUND

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will guide NARCOG's work in the Region over the next five years. To develop an effective plan, the CEDS Strategy Committee sought to gain an understanding of the Region's current standing across numerous dimensions. One of the committee's first tasks was to identify the strategic assets that can be leveraged to create wealth in our Region's communities, as well as the challenges that we must overcome to take full advantage of those assets.

ASSET-BASED MAPPING



NATURAL ASSETS

Nestled in the Tennessee River Valley amongst the rolling foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the natural beauty of the NARCOG Region draws many visitors to explore our lush forestlands and sparkling waterways. Lands under forest–cover in the Region comprise approximately 583,000 acres (see map on page 11). These valuable natural resources furnish wildlife habitats, recreation and outdoor opportunities, and raw materials for industry. Forest lands exercise a balancing effect on water resources of the Region by diminishing erosion, sedimentation, and flooding. Bankhead National Forest offers a wide array of outdoor pursuits, such as hiking, horseback riding, hunting, boating, fishing, and canoeing. The Sipsey Wilderness, which lies within Bankhead, contains more than 24,000 acres to explore, and was the first designated wilderness area east of the Mississippi River.

Created by the Wheeler Dam along the Tennessee River, the 67,100–acre Wheeler Lake stretches across 60 miles of the northern border of our Region. Wheeler Lake attracts about four million visitors a year for fishing, boating, and camping. Visitors also enjoy the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge upstream from the dam. Designated as a waterfowl refuge, the area is home to a wide spectrum of wildlife. Another popular waterway in our Region is Smith Lake. At 21,000–acres with over 500 miles of shoreline, Smith Lake welcomes

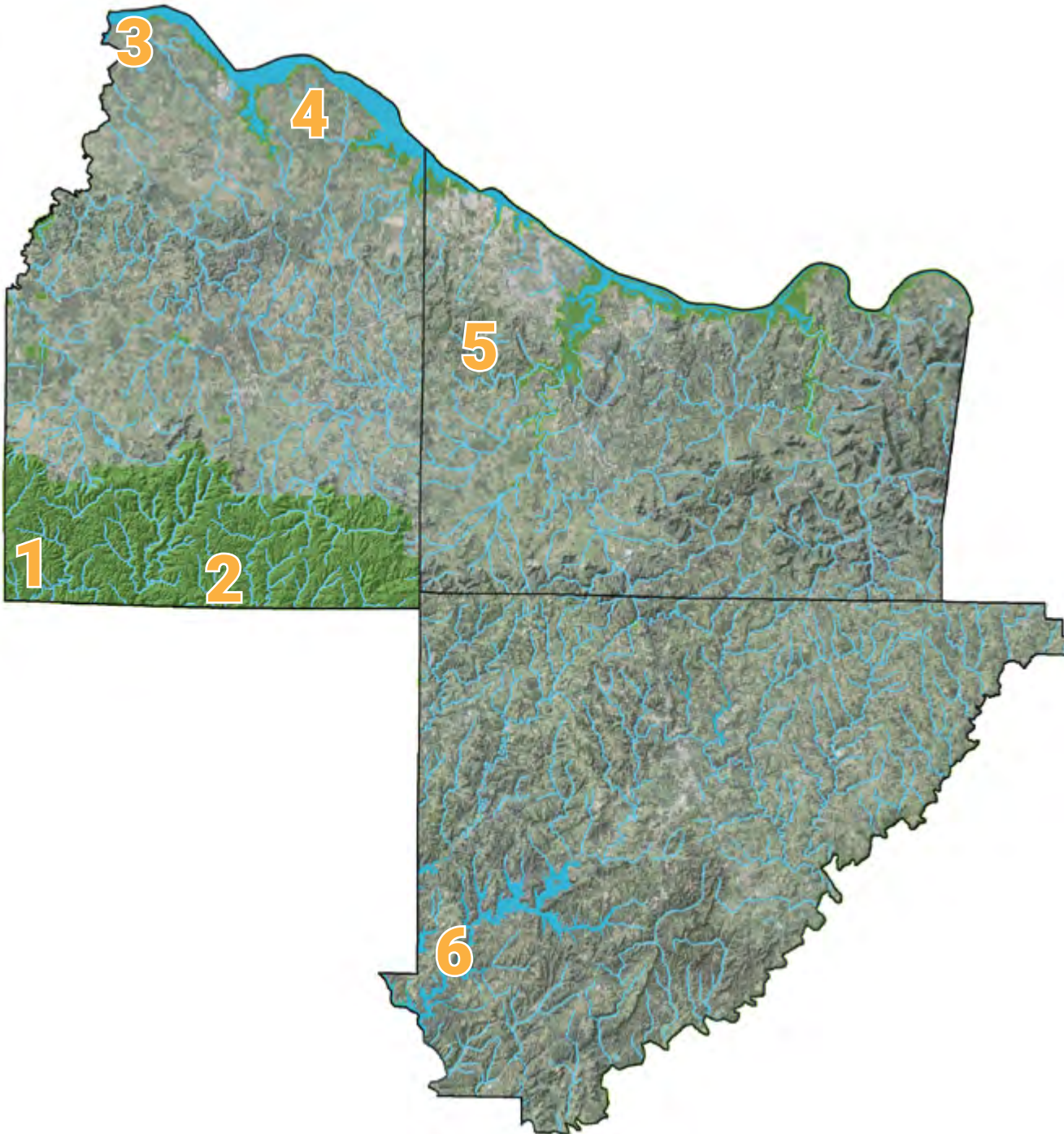
weekend visitors from Birmingham and Huntsville, as well as vacationers from around the state to enjoy fishing and water sports.

Tourism represents an important industry in our Region. According to the Alabama Tourism Department, direct and indirect travel–related earnings in the NARCOG Region totaled \$90,306,929 for 2016. All three counties have enjoyed growth in tourism over the past year, with Morgan County growing at an impressive 7.1% and Lawrence County showing 6.4% growth in travel–related earnings from 2015 to 2016. Over the next five years, building upon our past success in tourism with increased promotional efforts will allow this thriving industry to continue to represent a major revenue source for our Region's economy.

Not only do our waterways bring in revenue from tourism, the Tennessee River continues to influence the agricultural and industrial growth of the Region. The Tennessee–Tombigbee Waterway gives direct access to the Gulf Coast and the Port of Mobile, the 10th–busiest in the nation, as well as other major ports in the East and West. The City of Decatur operates one of the busiest ports along the Tennessee River, handling a large portion of the more than five million tons of river freight that moves through the City. Over the next five years, the transportation advantages provided by the Tennessee River are expected to exert considerable influence on industrial locations and economic growth in the Region.

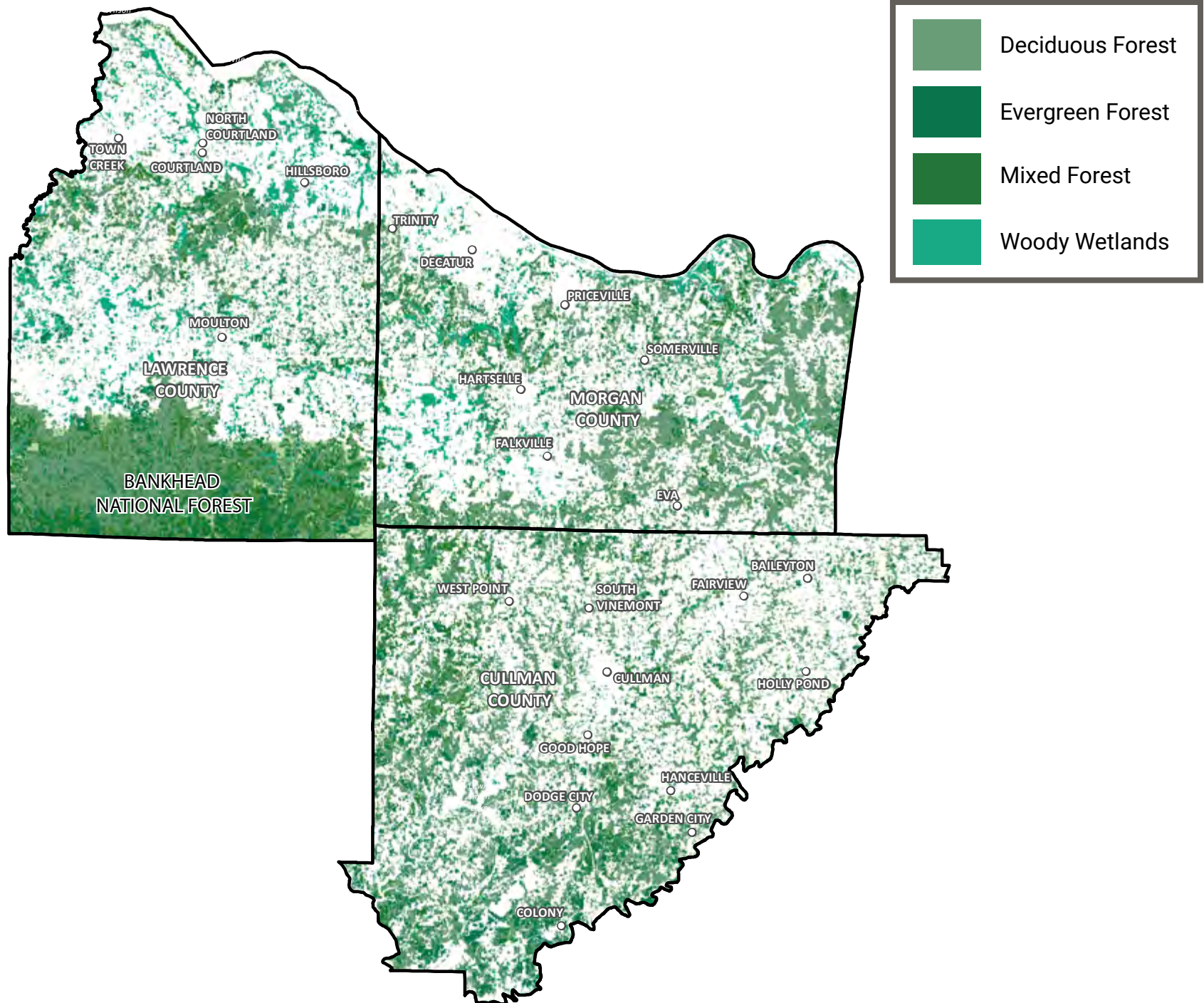


NATURAL ASSETS



- 1** Sipsey Wilderness
- 2** Bankhead National Forest
- 3** Tennessee River
- 4** Wheeler Lake
- 5** Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge
- 6** Smith Lake

FOREST LAND COVER



BUILT ASSETS

A low tax structure, modern infrastructure, market access, and generous incentives make the NARCOG Region one of the most favorable business climates in the country. Our regional economic development organizations foster a supportive network for businesses and industries relocating to the area by providing aggressive incentives packages such as TVA Incentive Programs, Industrial Development or Site Prep Grants, and Tax Abatements. While we offer an attractive environment for business and industry in our Region, we recognize the need for infrastructure improvements, such as broadband. While generally available in our urban centers, some of our rural communities lack the broadband access necessary to remain competitive in today's economy. Broadband is vital to business communications, education (such as virtual learning and digital textbooks), and workforce development. NARCOG recognizes that areas with low-density, low-growth populations present limited potential revenue to commercial communications entities. Therefore, one of our primary goals is to develop critical infrastructure, such as broadband, through strategic use of wireless systems and/or smart grids that are partially funded by federal and state initiatives.

I-65 CORRIDOR & TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

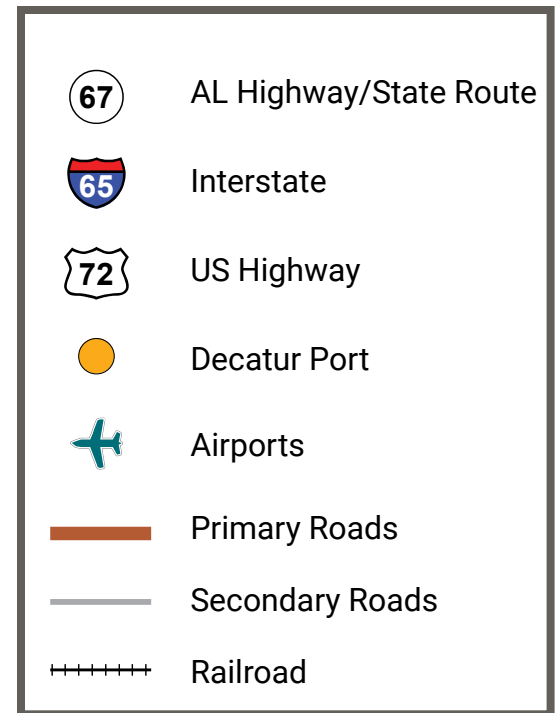
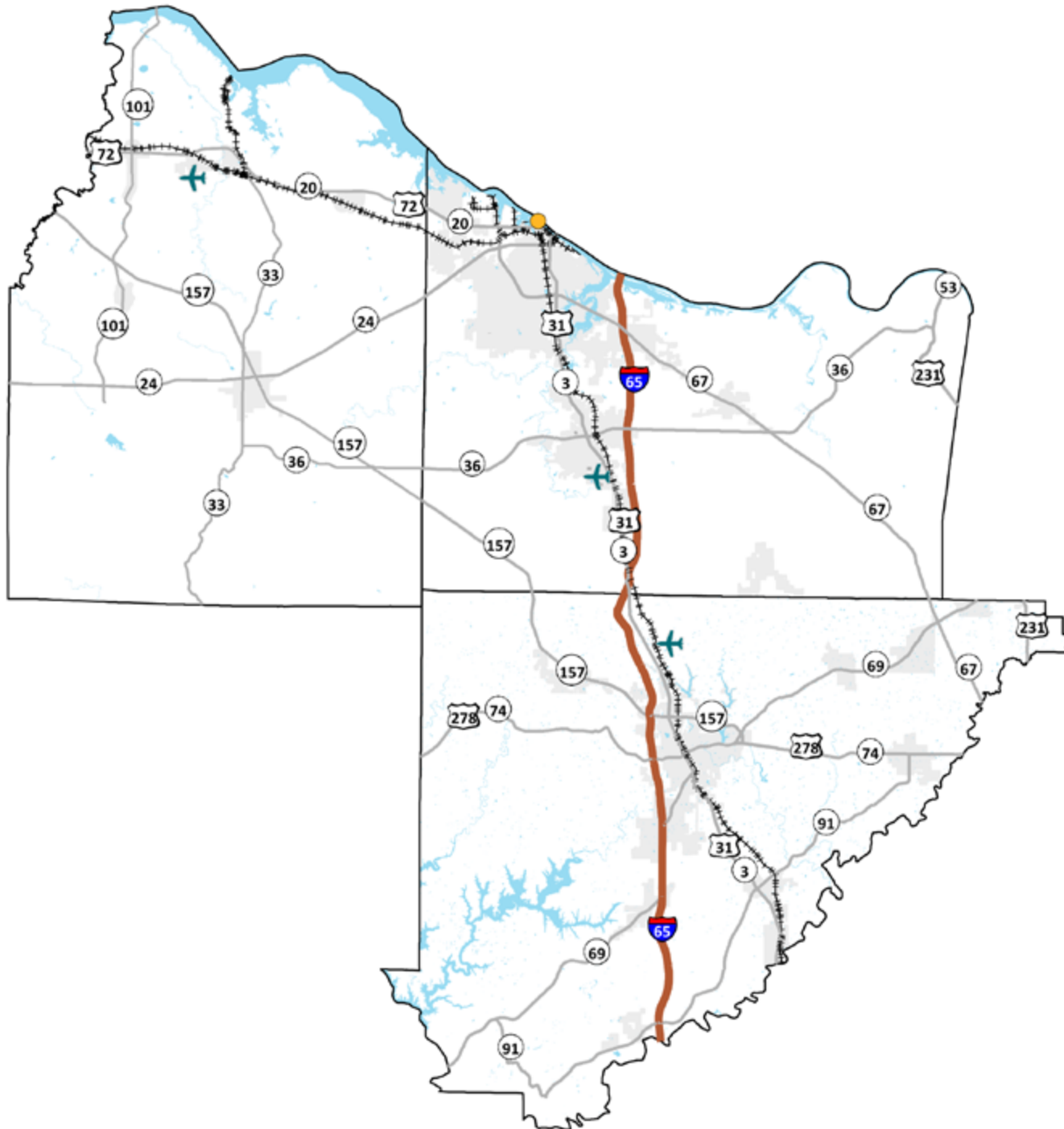
The I-65 Corridor is a major north-south corridor in the United States and our Region. It begins in Mobile, Alabama, providing access to Mobile Bay and the Gulf of Mexico and runs north terminating in Gary, Indiana, along the shores of Lake Michigan and just south of Chicago, Illinois. Along its path, it connects large cities such as Birmingham, Nashville, Louisville, and Indianapolis. In our Region, it traverses both Cullman and Morgan Counties, while providing access to Decatur, Priceville, Hartselle, Falkville, Cullman, and Good Hope. The I-65 Corridor can be viewed on a larger scale within our Region to include U.S. Highway 31 and the CSX Railway, which both run parallel along the interstate's path.

Regarding transportation infrastructure, the NARCOG Region is very fortunate to possess an extensive multi-modal transportation system that includes major highways, railways, airports, and the Tennessee River. The Region has both state (Alabama Highways 24, 33, 36, 67, 69, 91, 101, and 157) and federal (Interstate 65 and U.S. Highways 20, 31, 72, 231, and 278) highways along with county and local roads. Rail service is provided to the Region by the Norfolk Southern Railway, which runs east to west and the CSX Railway, which runs north to south. A major part of the state's navigation system is the Tennessee River which serves as the

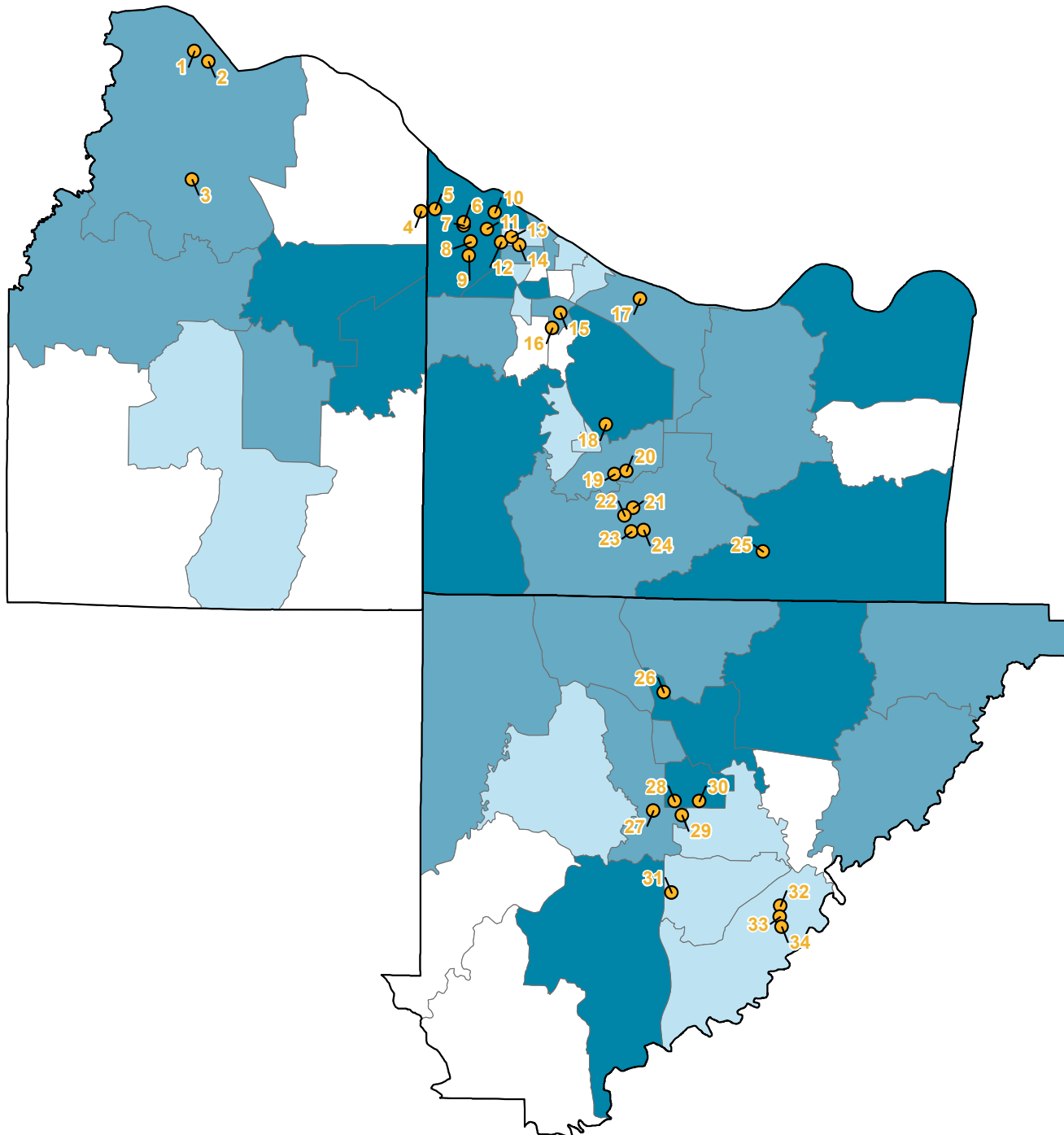
northern boundary of the NARCOG Region and includes the state docks and Port of Decatur. The Tennessee River, a part of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, provides access to the Gulf of Mexico, the Port of Mobile and to other major ports in the East and West. Additionally, there are four small non-commercial airports offering various of services in our Region. These include Pryor Field in Decatur, Hartselle-Morgan County Regional Airport in Hartselle, Folsom Field in Cullman, and the George C. Wallace Airpark, a former Army air base in Courtland, with two 5,000-foot runways. This transportation infrastructure will continue to greatly benefit and influence the existing agricultural, industrial, and manufacturing operations, while driving future growth and economic development in the Region.

International air transportation is provided by the Huntsville International Airport (HSV), with non-stop or direct flights to most of the major cities in the United States, including non-stop transcontinental flights. With the increasing interest in the worldwide manufacturing process and international marketing and sales, HSV is now designated as a U.S. Customs Port of Entry and authorized to operate as a Foreign Trade Zone. HSV also features a unique cargo inter-modal terminal for receiving, transferring, storing and/or distributing containerized cargo by and among air, rail, and highway transportation modes at a single site.

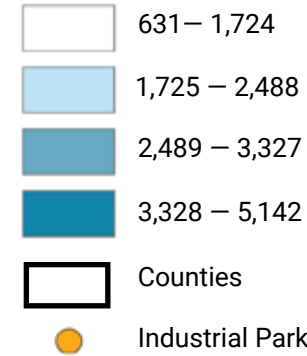
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



INDUSTRIAL PARKS & WORKFORCE POPULATION



Total Workforce Population:
Ages 18 – 64



- 1 Rebman Site
- 2 Hood Harris
- 3 Industrial Airpark
- 4 Mallard Fox West Industrial Complex
- 5 Glenn Site-Mallard Fox Creek Industrial Park
- 6 Watermark Business Park
- 7 Red Hat Rd. Taylor Site
- 8 Eyster/Steed Site
- 9 Williard Hill Property
- 10 1030 State Docks Road
- 11 Davis Site
- 12 183 Old Trinity Road Site
- 13 Neal Holland Property
- 14 Nelms Site
- 15 Decatur Business Park
- 16 Jeff Parker Central Pkwy Site
- 17 Sharp Farm - Priceville
- 18 PRIMARY DATA CENTER SITE - Morgan Center Business Park
- 19 Hartselle Industrial Park
- 20 Morgan Center Business Park
- 21 Falkville I-65 @ Culver Road Site
- 22 Nelson Site
- 23 Morgan West Site
- 24 Falkville 93 Acre Site
- 25 George Crawford Industrial Site
- 26 P.C. Partners Property
- 27 Burrow Property
- 28 York Property
- 29 J & J Properties
- 30 Ege Property
- 31 Buster Property
- 32 Hanceville Industrial Park #1
- 33 Fisher Property
- 34 Tinney Property

INDUSTRIAL PARKS & LANDS

All three of our counties offer attractive industrial and business park locations. Over the ten years from 2006–2015, Cullman County has made a capital investment of over \$1 billion in new and expanding manufacturing and distribution resources. In Lawrence County, the Industrial Airpark, part of Alabama’s Enterprise Program, offers special incentives to qualifying businesses relocating to, or expanding facilities in, the industrial park. Lawrence County has commercial property available in the Mallard Fox West Industrial Complex, as well as industrial sites on the Tennessee River. Mallard Fox West is an Advantage Site located within a designated Foreign Trade Zone and U.S. Customs Port of Entry, which affords local industries with shipping and customs–related advantages. Morgan County has properties available in various industrial parks such as Mallard Fox Creek Industrial Park and Morgan Center Business Park, as well as privately owned industrial facilities and acreage.

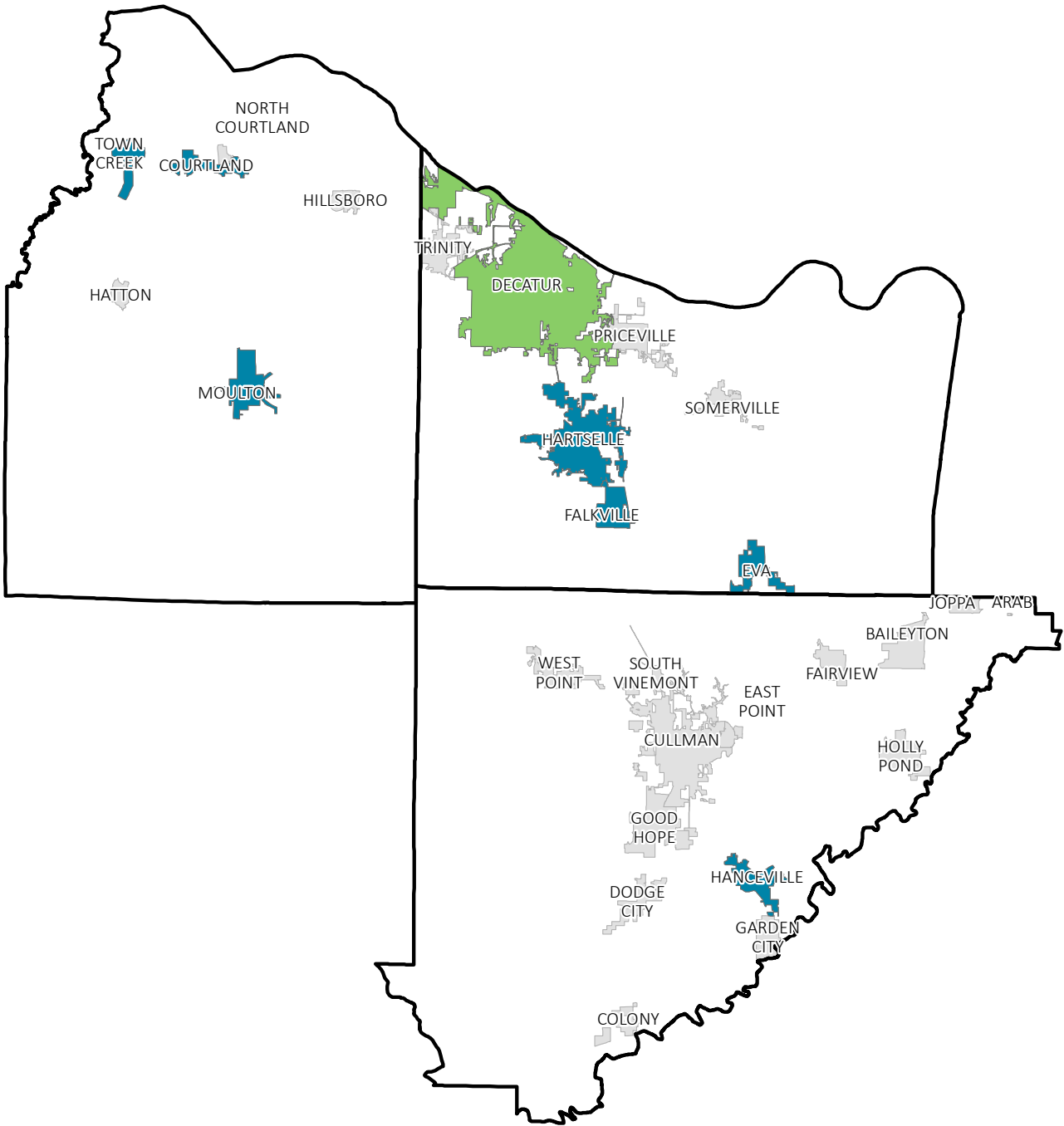
TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWNS

Many of the historic downtowns in the Region are being revitalized to attract a variety of restaurants, shops, and professional offices; thereby renewing a sense of community pride and increasing local prosperity. Falkville and Hanceville have both received CDBG downtown planning grants to further this effort. The Town of Courtland lost \$770,000 in tax revenues when International Paper closed their Courtland plant in 2014. In response, NARCOG prepared the *Courtland Economic Development and Recovery Plan* with funding from a CDBG planning grant. The Courtland Development Council (CDC) formed to transform Courtland into a thriving center for tourists and retirees. After analyzing the area’s assets, the town and CDC agreed that the best course of action involved focus on its rich history, as Courtland had been named to the National Register of Historic Places for its unusually large concentration of significant buildings—more than 100 homes, buildings, and sites dating from 1820 to 1930. The CDC has held sessions with potential business owners, downtown building owners, the Alabama Small Business Development Center, NARCOG, and the Alabama Historical Commission to attract businesses to the downtown area, while preserving the value of its historic buildings through careful renovation and maintenance.

In 2016, NARCOG partnered with Main Street Alabama to establish the Regional Downtown Network Initiative to extend the nationally recognized Main Street 4–Point Approach® for downtown revitalization to communities with an identified traditional downtown. The program focuses on design, organization, promotion, and economic vitality. NARCOG believes that the regional approach to Main Street Alabama’s Downtown Network program will help these communities and the Region as a whole with economic development and downtown revitalization efforts. The following seven communities agreed to participate in the program: Courtland, Eva, Falkville, Hanceville, Hartselle, Moulton, and Town Creek. Decatur became a designated Main Street Alabama community in June of 2014.



MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES



| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | Counties |
| | Designated Community |
| | Downtown Network Community |

SOCIAL ASSETS

CHURCHES & RELIGIOUS SITES

A 2016 study by the Pew Research Center found that 51% of Alabamians attend church at least weekly. Religion is an integral part of the Region's culture, with over 550 congregations in the NARCOG Region alone. A notable religious site is the Shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament. The Shrine welcomes pilgrims from around the world who attend Holy Mass, receive the Sacrament of the Confession, and enjoy quiet contemplation while strolling the beautiful grounds. Another popular site is the Ave Maria Grotto, affectionately nicknamed "Jerusalem in Miniature." The four-acre park includes 125 miniature replicas of world-famous historical buildings and shrines, painstakingly re-created by Brother Joseph Zoetl, a Benedictine monk of St. Bernard Abbey.

PARKS & RECREATION SITES

Approximately 3,792 acres of park and recreation areas contribute to a range of recreational opportunities for those living in, and visiting, the NARCOG Region. Some of the larger recreational facilities include Point Mallard Park and the Jack Allen Soccer Complex in Decatur, Sparkman Park in Hartselle, H. A. Alexander Park in Moulton, and Heritage Park in Cullman. These park and recreation sites also provide quality of life and economic development

opportunities through sports tournaments and tourism.

HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SITES

The Region boasts a rich history and a thriving cultural scene. Within the three counties, there are thirty-six properties and districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places, including the Bank Street Old Decatur Historic District and the Cullman Downtown Historic District. Cultural attractions include the Princess Theatre for the Performing Arts, Carnegie Visual Arts Center, and the Alabama Center for the Arts. Museums range from the Crooked Creek Museum that focuses on the Civil War, to the Jesse Owens Memorial Park and Museum, which honors the Olympic track star, to the Oakville Indian Mounds Park and Museum which preserves and displays artifacts dating back to 10,000 B.C. The Evelyn Burrow Museum displays more than 5,000 objects primarily of porcelain, pottery, glass, and bronze from the Victorian era to modern times. The new Cook Museum of Natural Science is slated to open in downtown Decatur in 2018, at an estimated cost of \$17 million. It promises to be a major economic engine for downtown and its revitalization efforts by providing a premier tourism and education destination, as well as a cultural venue for meetings and events.



Jesse Owens statue located at the park.



St. John's Evangelical Church in Cullman.

ECONOMIC ASSETS

ECONOMIC CLUSTERS

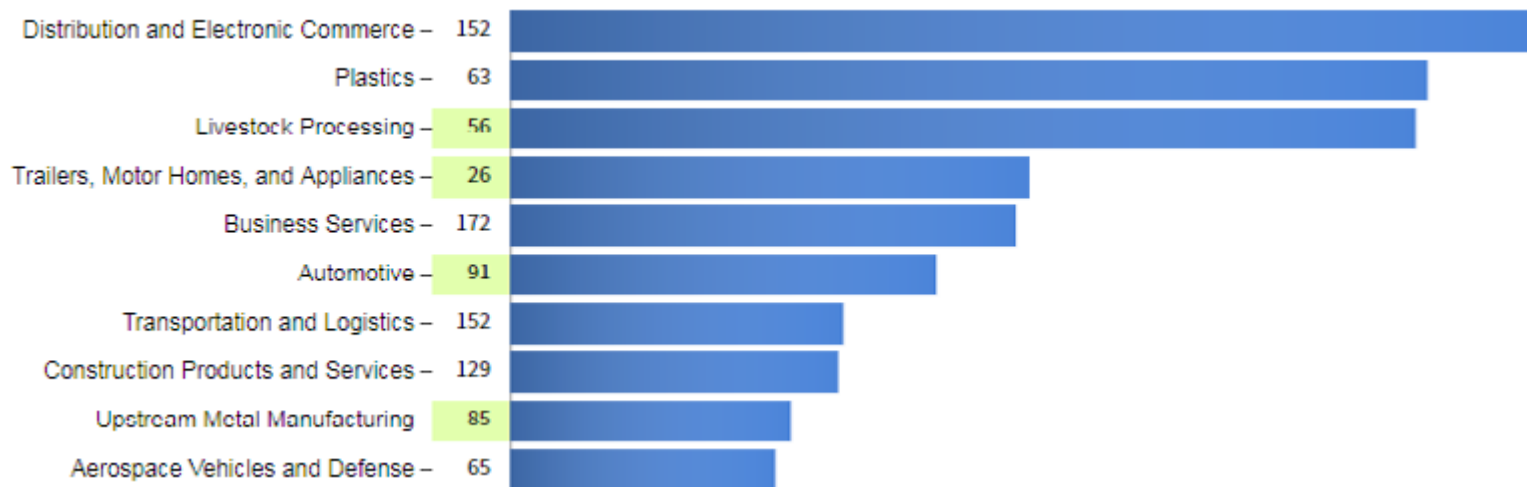
An economic cluster is a core of related business entities in a similar geography that work together to produce goods and services. They can include companies, suppliers, service providers, government organizations, and academic institutions. These clusters take advantage of the economic strengths of the Region to offer the following benefits:

- Growing skilled employees
- Promoting knowledge and innovation sharing
- Encouraging new businesses to set up operations in an area to take advantage of existing clusters
- Providing a shared infrastructure to create greater operating efficiencies

The “Cluster Linkages and Economic Diversification” illustration on page 19 shows how our Region’s clusters are inter-related, as well as the economic diversification in the Region. The dark green clusters in this illustration have been identified by the U. S. Cluster Mapping Project as “Strong Clusters” that yield high employment specialization and generate higher growth in new business formation and start-up employment. The second illustration, “Private, Non-agricultural Employment”, shows the largest clusters in our Region based on employment numbers.

By creating joint marketing efforts with existing local businesses, we can work to convince the members of their supply chains to relocate to our Region to take advantage of the benefits of economic clustering. Expanding and strengthening economic clusters in this way will help to build a more diversified, resilient economy.

PRIVATE, NON-AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT BY TRADED CLUSTER: NARCOG REGION, 2015

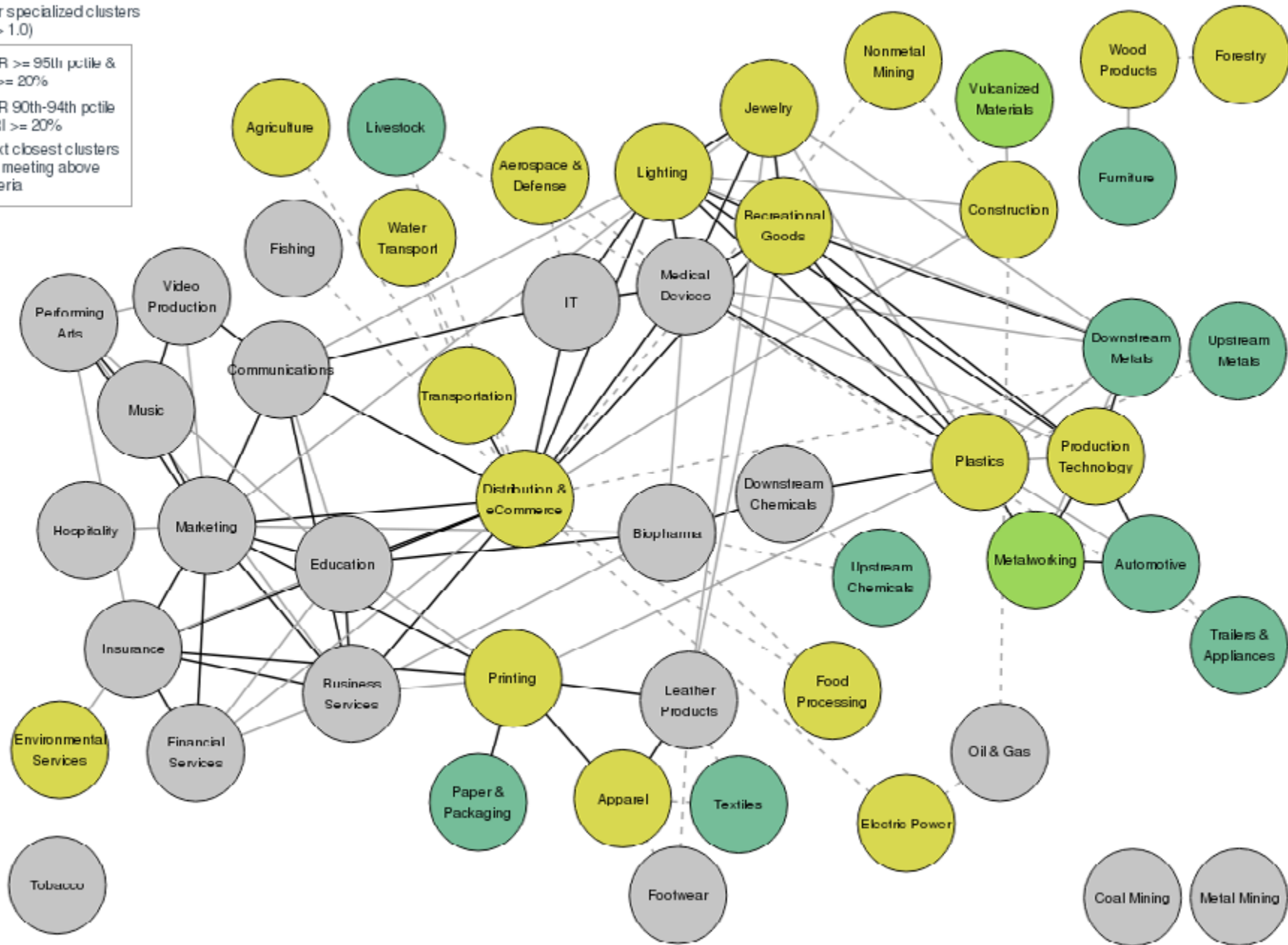


CLUSTER LINKAGES & ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION: NARCOG REGION, 2015

Cluster Specialization

- Strong clusters above 90th percentile specialization
- Strong clusters above 75th percentile specialization
- Other specialized clusters (LQ > 1.0)

- BCR >= 95th pctile & RI >= 20%
- - -** BCR 90th-94th pctile & RI >= 20%
- - -** Next closest clusters not meeting above criteria



AGRIBUSINESS & FARMLAND

A report released by Auburn University’s Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology in February of 2013 revealed that agriculture, forestry, and agribusiness make up \$70.4 billion of Alabama’s gross domestic product, or 38% of the state’s annual economic output. The study also showed that these sectors employ about 580,000 people. On average, 1 out of every 4.6 jobs in Alabama is related to agriculture or forestry. Likewise, agribusiness is a crucial component of our Region’s economy. A report published by the Alabama Cooperative Education System (ACES) in 2013 shows that Lawrence County, in particular, depends heavily upon agricultural resources (see adjacent table).

According to USDA estimates, 42.7 million acres of US farmland were lost from 2002 through 2012. The USDA estimates that Alabama lost over 200,000 acres of farmland during the same timeframe. While our national and state farming bases are shrinking, the world population is growing. The United Nations estimates that the world population will grow from its current level of 7.6 billion to 9.8 billion by 2050. The productivity and efficiency of agribusiness must markedly improve to meet the demand of a burgeoning global population. A significant investment in agricultural technology innovation must be made. With multi-generational agricultural operations, our Region possesses a unique depth of knowledge and experience that can be leveraged in developing agricultural technology. Currently, plans are underway to open a satellite location of the Decatur-Morgan Entrepreneurial Center in Lawrence County to inspire entrepreneurs—particularly innovators in agricultural technology.



Falkville Farm



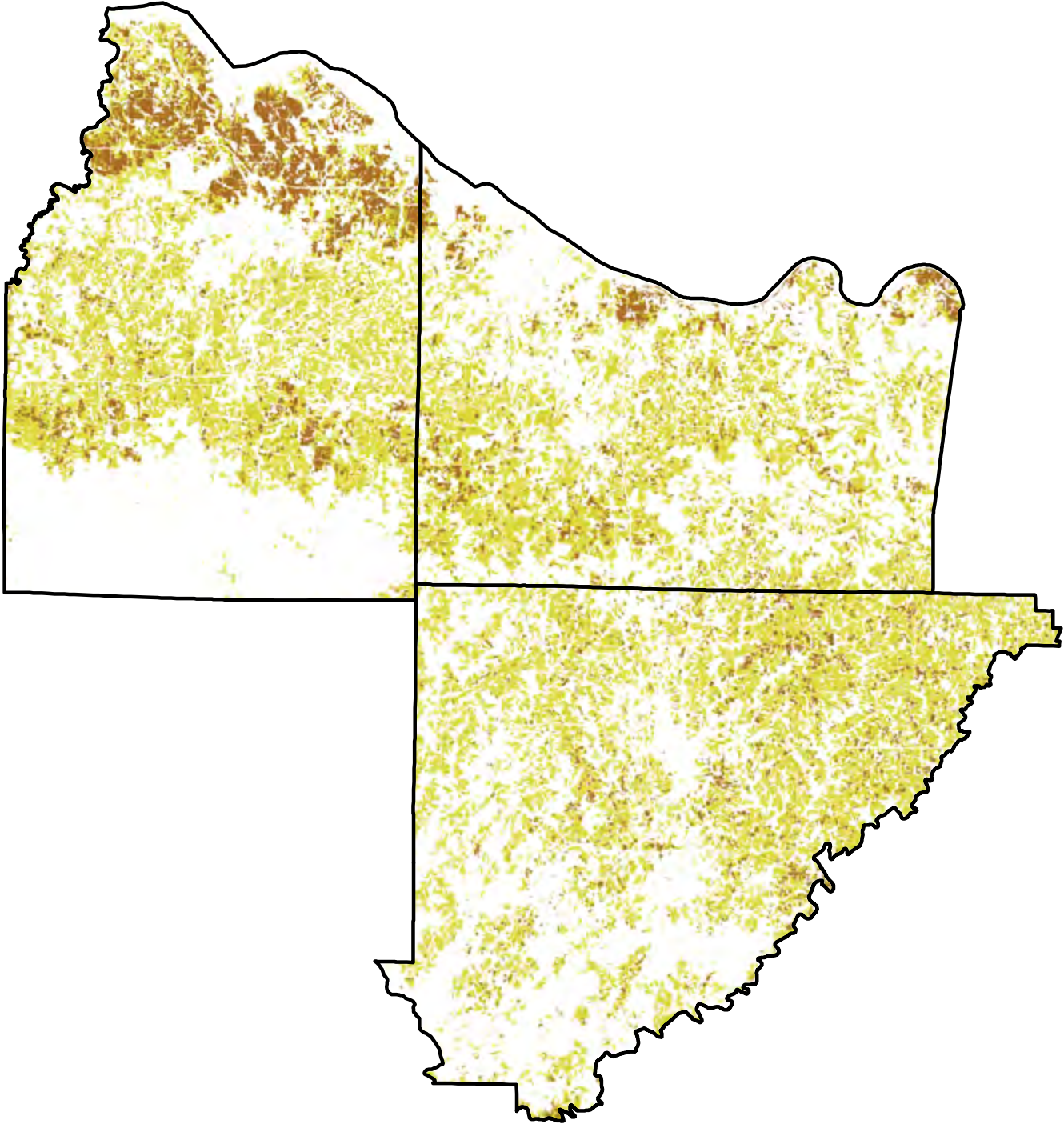
Courtland Farm



AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & RELATED INDUSTRIES IN THE NARCOG REGION

| Counties | Full & Part-time Jobs | % of Workforce | Total Economic Impact | % of Total Economic Activity |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Lawrence | 8,444 | 67.70% | \$1.4 billion | 84% |
| Cullman | 15,555 | 39.90% | \$2.4 billion | 50% |
| Morgan | 18,841 | 30.20% | \$2.8 billion | 24% |

<http://www.aces.edu/impact/ag/>

AGRICULTURE LAND COVER



-  Hay/ pasture
-  Cultivated crops

COST OF LIVING

The average wage of a region gives an indication of the overall quality of jobs available and the financial well-being of the residents. In our Region, the median household income is \$41,575, compared to \$43,623 in the State of Alabama, and \$53,889 nationally. The development of a more skilled workforce will increase our median income. Of course, the lower median income is somewhat offset by a lower cost of living. According to Sperling's Best Places, the cost of living in our Region is only 83.3% of the national average. Housing is significantly more affordable in the NARCOG Region at only 56% of the national average.

REGIONAL COST OF LIVING AS COMPARED TO THE UNITED STATES

| Cost of Living | Decatur | Hartselle | Decatur MSA | Morgan County | Lawrence County | Cullman County | NARCOG Region | United States |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Overall | 80.5 | 83.7 | 84 | 83 | 81 | 86 | 83.3 | 100 |
| Grocery | 98.4 | 98.4 | 97.9 | 98.4 | 96.2 | 94.6 | 96.4 | 100 |
| Health | 90.1 | 90.1 | 90 | 90 | 90 | 92 | 90.7 | 100 |
| Housing | 46.2 | 56.1 | 58 | 52 | 50 | 66 | 56 | 100 |
| Utilities | 102.8 | 102.8 | 102 | 103 | 100 | 94 | 99 | 100 |
| Transportation | 95.2 | 95.2 | 95 | 95 | 94 | 94 | 94.3 | 100 |
| Miscellaneous | 97.5 | 97.5 | 98 | 98 | 99 | 96 | 97.7 | 100 |

https://www.bestplaces.net/cost_of_living/county/alabama/lawrence

BUSINESS & ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

To assist small businesses and start-ups with gap financing and microloans, NARCOG operates a Small Business Fund (SBF). The SBF is funded by monies from the ARC, EDA, USDA, and state bond. To date, the SBF has closed on over 100 loans, using \$9,324,610 in loan fund dollars and leveraging \$57,123,845 in private investment. Approximately 1,449 jobs have been created and/or retained in the

NARCOG Region as a result of the program. NARCOG plans to expand this program through increased marketing efforts.

The Decatur-Morgan County Entrepreneurial Center (E-Center) seeks to "Encourage, Enthuse, and Empower" start-ups, small businesses, and businesses in transition. In addition to regularly hosting classes and networking opportunities for entrepreneurs and small business owners, the E-Center houses a variety of office spaces at below-market rates. Since opening in 2009, the

E-Center has counseled over 585 business owners, generating more than 400 jobs and \$8 million in new payroll revenue. In 2016, the E-Center expanded operations into a second facility located in Lawrence County, with help from a USDA RBDG grant obtained by NARCOG. It has already reached full capacity, and the E-Center is planning further expansion.

To inspire the evolution of a technology entrepreneurship culture in our Region, the E-Center plans to create a council of successful entrepreneurs to collaborate on new ventures, then work with venture capitalists, angel investors, and revolving loan funds to financially support business start-up and expansion. The E-Center envisions an Innovation District to include a tech accelerator supported by corporate R&D units and academic institutions. NARCOG supports the E-Center's efforts, and will supply research and technical assistance in seeking state and national government financial support.



SERVICE ASSETS

COMMUNITY COLLEGES & LOCAL SCHOOLS

One of NARCOG's primary goals is to "Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of residents for a ready workforce to strengthen community and economic development opportunities." Currently, our Region lags behind the nation and the State of Alabama in numbers of high school and college graduates. High school graduates represent 86.7% of the national population, 84.3% of Alabamians, and 81.9% of our Region. The percentage of the population with a bachelor's degree in America is 29.8%, 23.5% in Alabama, and only 17.5% in our Region.

Quality of education will determine the success of our workforce, thereby impacting the economic prosperity of our Region. Therefore, school districts in our Region are actively working to increase education quality and graduation rates. Many of our elementary schools meet College and Career Readiness Standards by providing Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math (STEAM) activities. By high school, most of our students can take advantage of flexible education opportunities, such as dual enrollment options and free public virtual schools.

Wallace State Community College is located within the Region, and Calhoun Community College is located on our Region's border in Tanner, AL, with satellite campuses in Decatur and Huntsville. These institutions offer technical and vocational training along with a general college curriculum. Wallace State offers more than 50 majors leading to degree, certificate, and transfer opportunities, and provides programs such as dual enrollment, the FastTrack Academy, and Tech-Prep. Fast Track and Fast Track for Industry (FTI) are joint partnerships between Wallace State and the local school system that allow high school juniors and seniors the opportunity to complete up to two years of college coursework before high school graduation. FTI is an accelerated dual enrollment program that allows high school juniors and seniors to pursue degrees and obtain entry into high demand, skilled positions in the workforce.

Both colleges also work with the local business community to develop industry-specific training programs. For example, Calhoun offers the Alabama F.A.M.E. (Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education) Advanced Manufacturing Technician Program (AMT). This cutting-edge two-year program teaches advanced manufacturing technology and provides paid working experience with sponsor companies. Calhoun also offers the SpaceTEC Certified Aerospace Technician program, sponsored by aerospace industry leaders such as Boeing, ULA, ATK, Jacobs

Engineering, and ERC.

The area's technical schools are of increasing importance, as are the vocational educational programs offered by the area's high schools. The State of Alabama also implements industrial training through the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) program, a member of the Alabama College System. This program is aimed at new and expanding industry within the state, and is housed in the activities of the Alabama Department of Commerce.

INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING WITHIN 50 MILES OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ALABAMA REGION

Athens

Athens State College

Birmingham

Birmingham—Southern College

Samford University

University of Alabama Birmingham (UAB)

Decatur

John C. Calhoun Community College

Florence

University of North Alabama (UNA)

Hanceville

Wallace State Community College

Huntsville

Alabama A&M College

University of Alabama Huntsville

Jasper

Bevill State Community College

ROBOTICS TECHNOLOGY PARK

The Robotics Technology Park (RTP) is a collaboration between the state of Alabama, Calhoun Community College, AIDT, and robotics industry leaders nationwide. The RTP consists of three training facilities representing an investment of approximately \$73 million. The RTP's mission is "to provide a technically trained, highly skilled, and educated workforce for automation and robotics, to assist public and private entities in developing new robotics systems and technologies, and to promote the creation, growth, or expansion of companies through innovative technology solutions."

According to a 2015 Bureau of Economic Analysis report, Alabama ranked 5th in the nation for percentage of employment in manufacturing (12.9%)*. As manufacturing becomes increasingly automated, greater demand will arise for technologists who are skilled at robotic innovation and repair. RTP stands at the forefront of that trend, giving a tremendous advantage to our local workforce.

A short distance from the NARCOG Region are two more education powerhouses that are developing future leaders in technology. In September of 2017, the US Space and Rocket Center in Huntsville received a \$10 million economic development grant to expand the campus and establish a U.S.

Cyber Camp for high school students. An inaugural camp was held in the summer of 2017 and covered the basics of computer science, ethics of computer use and hacking, network security, programming and coding, encryption, systems engineering, and applications of cybersecurity in technology.

For students who choose to continue their cybersecurity education at a college level, the University of Alabama in Huntsville is one of just 77 universities nationwide designated as a "center for excellence" in information assurance and cyber security.

With high-quality STEM education initiatives beginning at the elementary school level, then building as students reach high school and beyond, our Region's workforce will be well-prepared for robotics and other high-tech career paths.

AGING PROGRAMS

Population trends will affect our workforce. As the following regional data sheets indicate, our regional population growth is expected to stagnate. At the same time, our population is aging. Due to advances in healthcare, Americans are living longer and more active lives. Instead of retiring, many older Americans are retraining for new careers or finding volunteer opportunities in their communities. NARCOG is the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for our Region and manages many programs to help our local aging population. One of the AAA's most successful programs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) offers unemployed, low-income individuals 55 and older with job training opportunities at non-profit and public facilities in the Region. The AAA just completed their 5-year plan, and the agency's goals can be found in Appendix D .



One of the RTP training facilities.



The CNC Lab for Machine Tool Technology at Calhoun Community College.

*<http://www.nam.org/Data-and-Reports/State-Manufacturing-Data/State-Manufacturing-Data/Manufacturing-Employment-by-State-March-2016/>
Photo, top: <https://www.alabamartp.org/>

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

As the economic growth of the Region expands, the standard of living goes up, thereby increasing the ability to purchase and receive a higher level of health care. Conversely, the improved health of the population contributes to enlarging the output of the economy. According to the Alabama Department of Public Health, the Region is fortunate to possess four general hospitals with approximately 640 combined beds. There are also two specialty psychiatric hospitals with approximately 100 beds. Ambulatory surgery centers that provide same-day outpatient surgical care, including diagnostic and preventive procedures, represent a growing trend in health care. There are 3 ASC facilities in our region.

The greatest challenge facing the health care industry nation-wide is meeting the needs of an aging population. Our region is no exception. As shown on the adjacent chart, the percent of the population aged 65 and over in the NARCOG Region has increased from 13.1% in 2000 to 16.1% in 2015. This trend is expected to continue as the baby boomer generation ages. To address this trend, many assisted living facilities and nursing homes are available in the Region—nine nursing home facilities with over 1300 beds and 15 assisted living facilities with 488 beds. Along with providing health care services to support our aging population, NARCOG is working

to address the economic and social implications of this trend through our Aging Services programs.

PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY

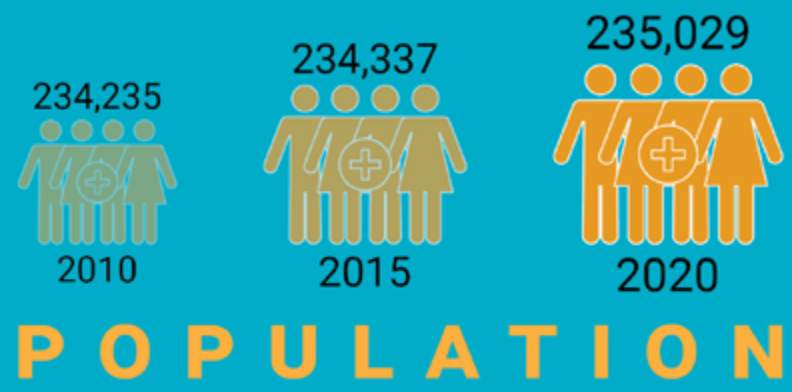
The community spirit in the NARCOG Region inspires an exceptional amount of volunteerism and philanthropy, thereby enhancing our quality of life and providing support to those in need. The Volunteer Center of Morgan County matches people and their passions to opportunities to serve the community through 200 different organizations. To highlight just a few of our local philanthropic organizations: The Community Action Partnership of North Alabama offers numerous programs for children and senior citizens, while the Community Action Agency provides emergency energy bill assistance, emergency cooling assistance, and rent assistance. Both groups work diligently to reduce or eradicate poverty. Other agencies, such as the Good Samaritan Health Clinic in Cullman and the Cullman Regional Foundation, focus on providing for the health care needs of low income or uninsured individuals.

**PERCENT OF POPULATION 65+:
2000, 2010, 2015**





NARCOG REGION



HOUSING



Housing Units 103,704
 Homeowner Vacancy Rate 1.43%
 Rental Vacancy Rate 4.07%

Units with No Vehicle Available 4.87%



EDUCATION

81.9% Age 25+ with ≥ high school diploma
17.5% Age 25+ with ≥ bachelor degree

EMPLOYMENT



TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

- GE Appliances, a Haier company
- Cullman County Schools
- REHAU
- Wal-Mart Distribution
- Cullman Regional Medical Center
- Wayne Farms Prepared Foods
- Wayne Farms Fresh
- 3M
- United Launch Alliance
- State of Alabama



HEALTH

14.2%
Population with no health insurance

13.7% Food Insecurity Rate

23.8% Child Food Insecurity Rate



ECONOMY

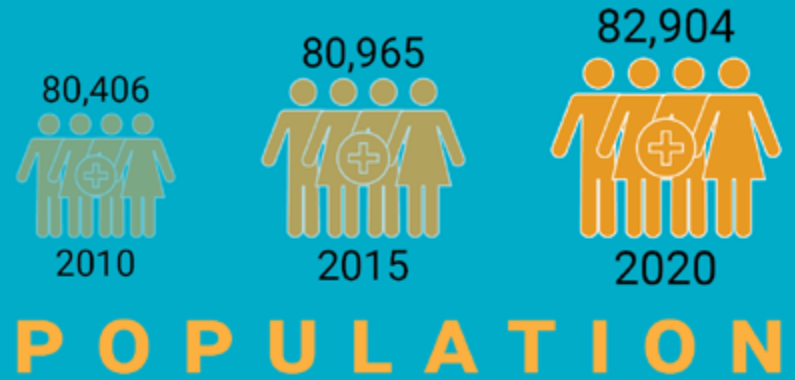
\$8,361,817,000
Total Personal Income

\$2,211,375,071
Net Taxable Assessed Valuation

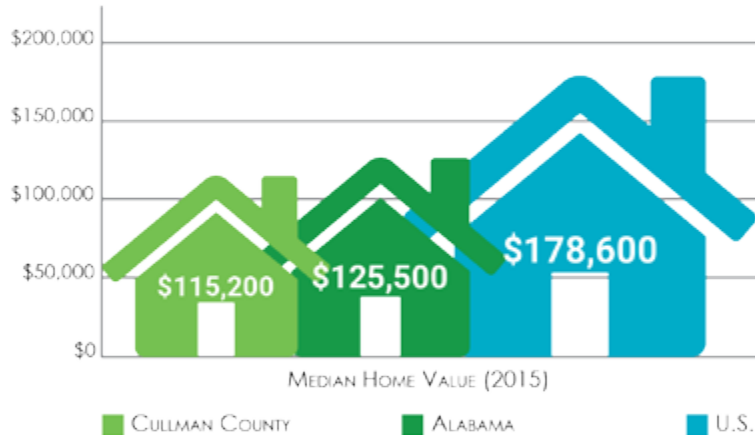
23% Public Assisted Households
\$35,630 Per capita income
\$39,750 Annual wages per employee



CULLMAN COUNTY



HOUSING



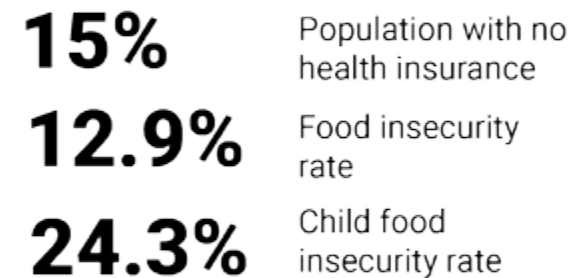
EMPLOYMENT



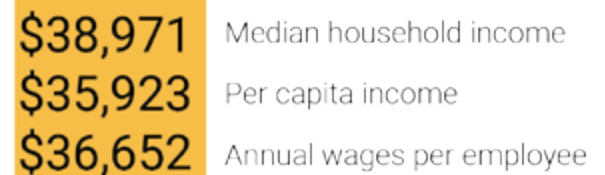
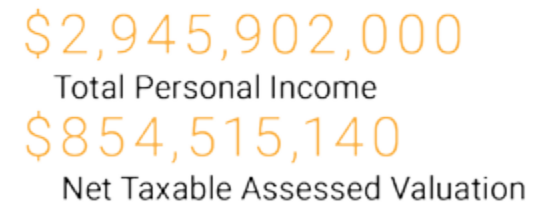
TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

- Cullman County Schools
- REHAU
- Wal-Mart Distribution
- Cullman Regional Medical Center
- State of Alabama
- Wal-Mart Super Center North/South
- Topre America Corporation
- Golden Rod Broilers
- Wallace State Community College
- Cullman County Commission

HEALTH



ECONOMY



EDUCATION

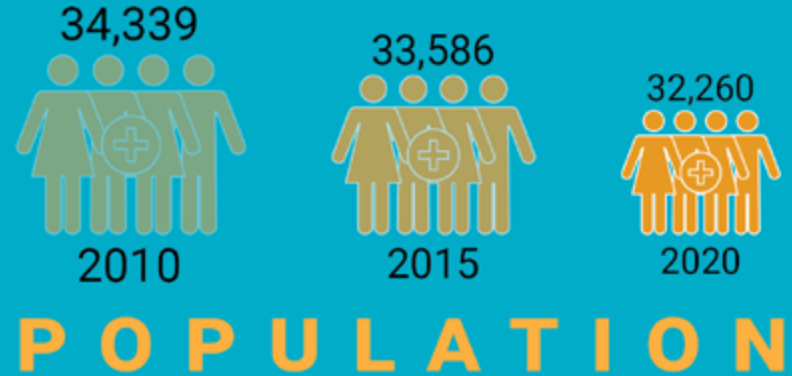


HIGHER EDUCATION:

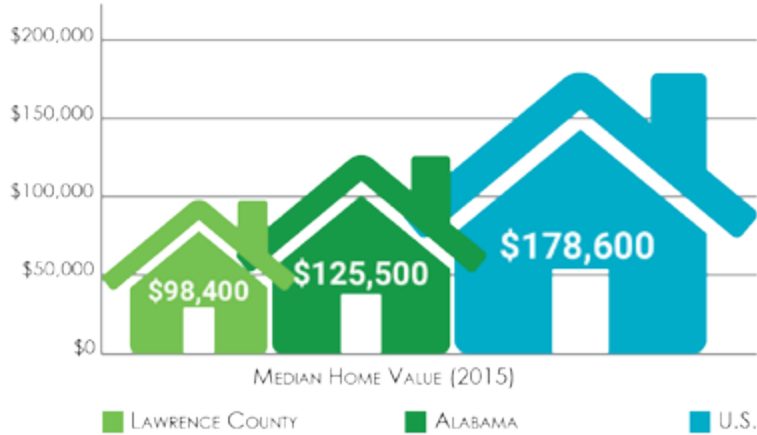
Wallace State Community College



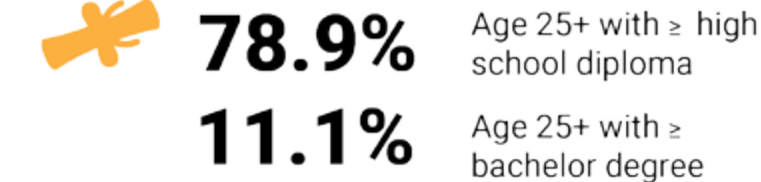
LAWRENCE COUNTY



HOUSING



EDUCATION



EMPLOYMENT



TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

- Lawrence County School System
- Wal-Mart
- Lawrence County Medical Center
- Lawrence County Commission
- NHC Healthcare
- Jack Daniel Cooperage
- Joe Wheeler EMC
- Lockheed Martin Space Systems
- City of Moulton
- Independence Tube

HEALTH

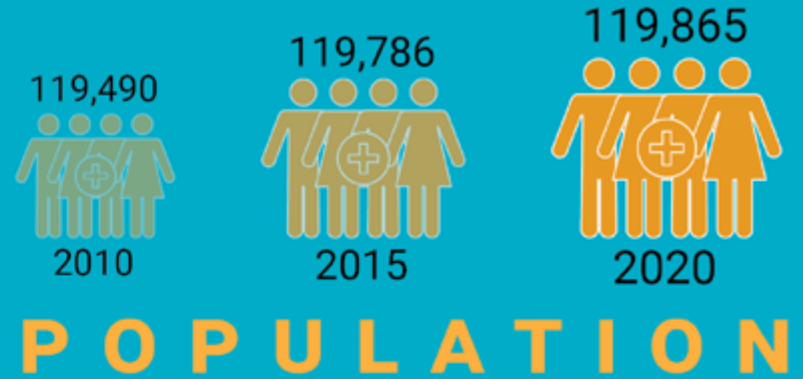


ECONOMY

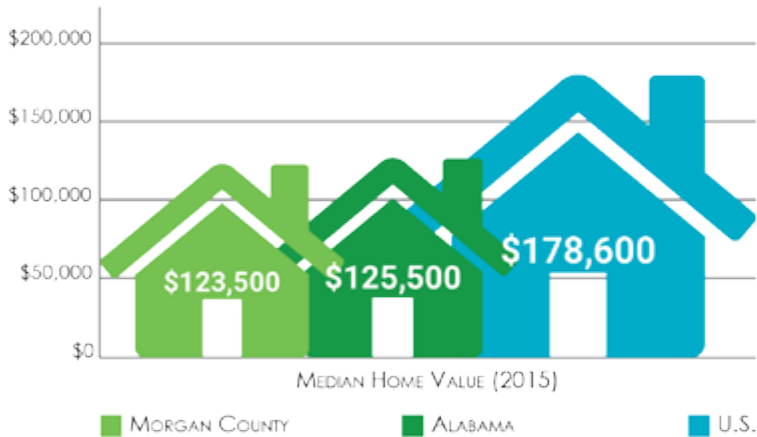




MORGAN COUNTY



HOUSING



EDUCATION



82.8% Age 25+ with ≥ high school diploma

21.3% Age 25+ with ≥ bachelor degree



HIGHER EDUCATION:

Calhoun Community College
Satellite Campus

EMPLOYMENT



55,265
Labor Force

3,011 Unemployed

Unemployment Rate **5.4%**

TOP 10 EMPLOYERS

- GE Appliances, a Haier company
- Wayne Farms Prepared Foods
- Wayne Farms Fresh
- 3M
- United Launch Alliance
- Nucor Steel
- Gemstone Foods, LLC
- Indorama Ventures Xylenes & PTA LLC
- Daikin America
- Toray Composite Materials America, Inc.



HEALTH

14.7% Population with no health insurance

13.7% Food insecurity rate

23.1% Child food insecurity rate



ECONOMY

\$4,345,622,000
Total Personal Income

\$1,356,618,280
Net Taxable Assessed Valuation

\$45,751 Median household income

\$36,345 Per capita income

\$42,264 Annual wages per employee

2 SWOT ANALYSIS & ASSET-BASED APPROACH

A dual approach was utilized to answer the question – “Where are we now?” – the traditional SWOT analysis and the Asset-Based Approach. The Asset-Based Approach focuses on positive assets to create momentum for moving forward. Based upon demographic and socioeconomic data, trends, and other information relevant to the regional economy presented in the “Summary Background”, the CEDS Strategy Committee moved forward with identifying the internal and external factors that define our Region.

NARCOG also reviewed other national, state, and local strategic plans to inform our CEDS. Several plans reviewed include:

- Alabama 2011 CEDS
- NARCOG 2012 CEDS
- NARCOG Area Plan on Aging / 2018–2021
- NARCOG South Bank Economic Recovery Program
- Converging for Success – Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce
- Accelerate Alabama 2.0
- ARC and Alabama’s Appalachian Development Plans
- Land of Sky Regional Council CEDS

STRENGTHS

A region’s assets that provide relative competitive advantages that can be promoted, often internal in nature.

WEAKNESSES

A region’s challenges that provide relative competitive disadvantages, usually internal in nature.

OPPORTUNITIES

Potential future chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress to pursue, often external in nature.

THREATS

Potential future occasions for negative impacts on the region, usually external in nature.

The SWOT analysis is a traditional approach to strategic planning and, per new EDA guidelines, should consider economic resilience factors. A committee meeting was held on April 27th to gather input on the identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) for our Region.

NARCOG then surveyed the CEDS Strategy Committee utilizing an online survey tool to confirm their input on the SWOT. The survey asked a series of questions employing the Asset-Based Approach. These questions inquired about the current assets and issues, and the advantages and negative impacts looking forward to the next 10 years.

The graphics on the next page illustrate how the SWOT analysis aligned with the Asset-Based Approach.

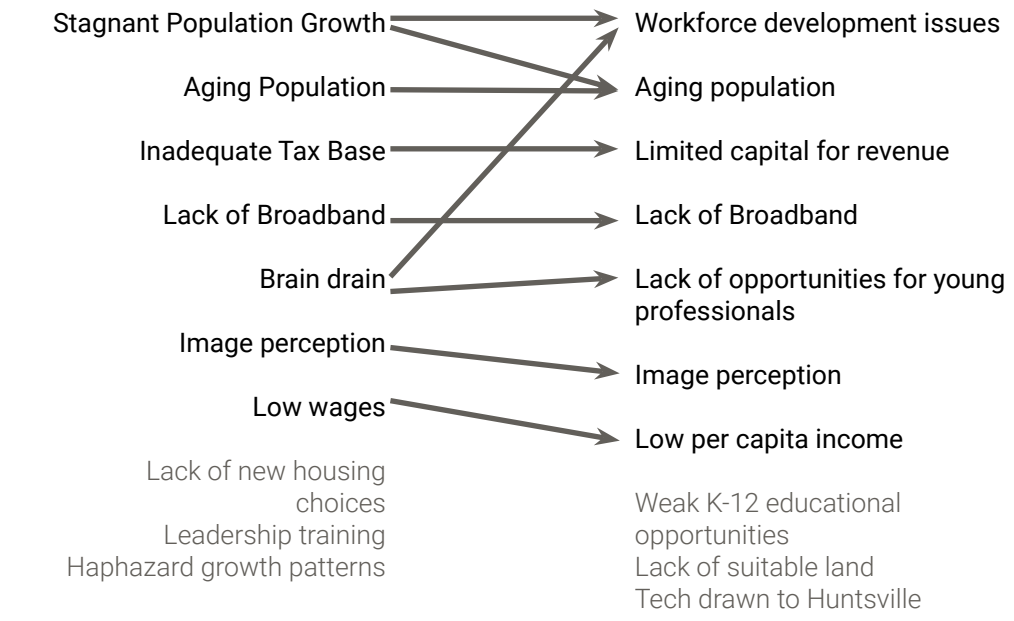
STRENGTHS

SWOT Analysis



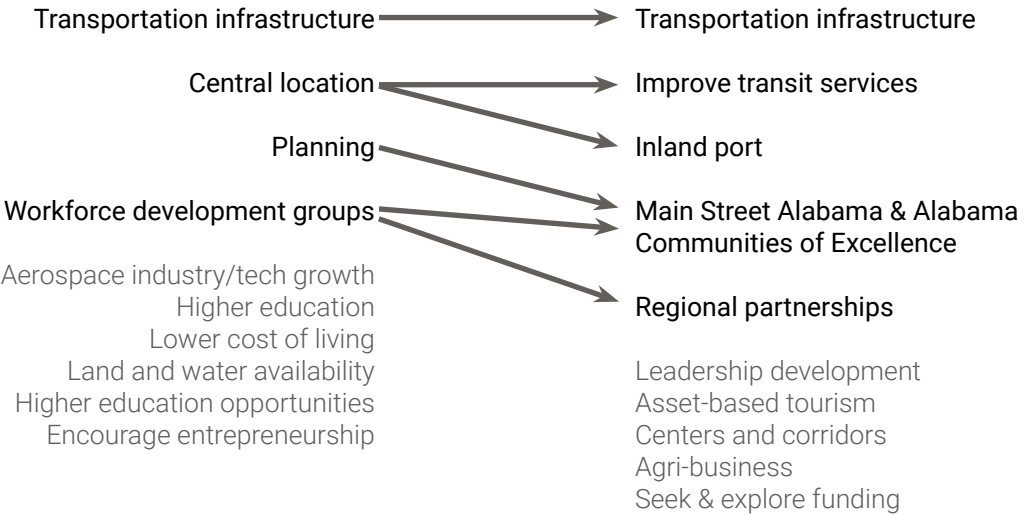
WEAKNESSES

SWOT Analysis



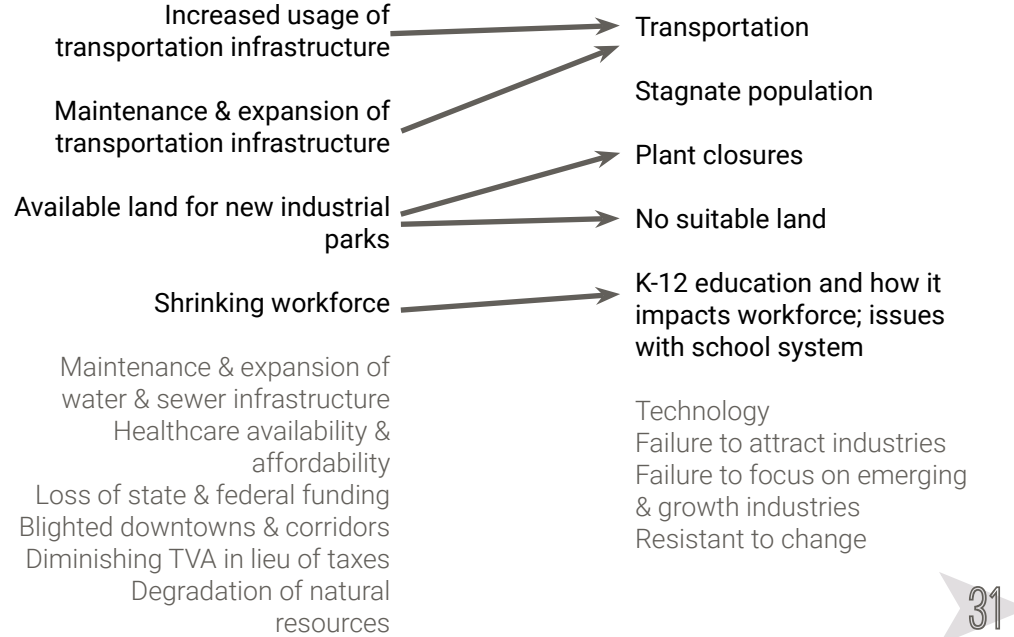
OPPORTUNITIES

SWOT Analysis



THREATS

SWOT Analysis



3 STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ACTION PLAN

VISION

Where and/or what do we want to be in 10 years?

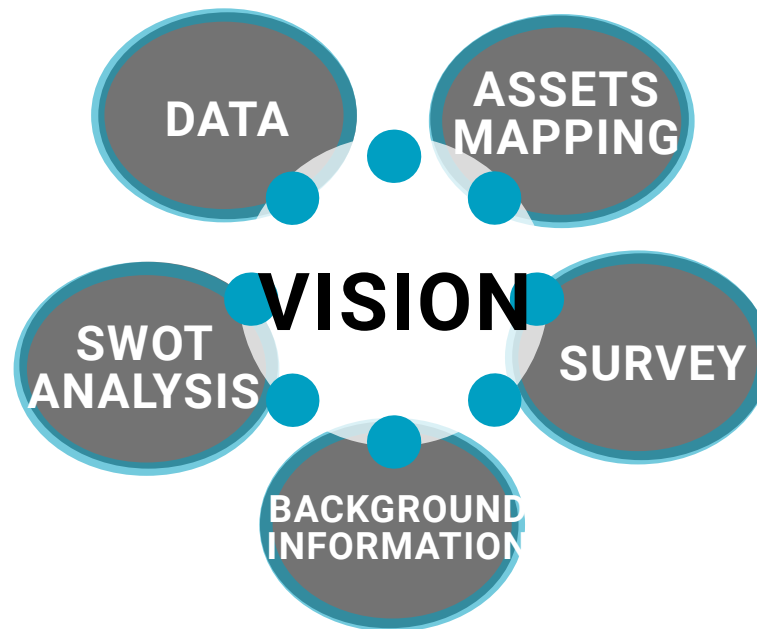
The Strategic Direction and Action Plan was developed through an internal and external analysis of the SWOT and the Asset Based Approach. Additionally, the CEDS Strategy Committee was presented the above question via an online survey to help determine the vision for our Region. The adjacent word cloud depicts the top results.

GOALS

Goals are broad outcomes or general intentions that build upon the desired vision for the Region (and are often intangible). Objectives are quantitative, directional statements that support the vision. Strategies define the means to achieve the goals and objectives.

Visioning: "The process of making a vision or a dream a reality; building a concept into a workable application."

<https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/visioning>



GOAL 1 INSPIRE INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Create a culture of technological innovation and entrepreneurship in the NARCOG Region by investing in forward-thinking entrepreneurial and business development strategies that embrace change, create disrupters, and strengthen economic opportunities.

1.1 Invest in next generation entrepreneurial and business development strategies

1.1.1 Support the WSCC Business Incubator, the expansion of the E-Center, and the development of a tech accelerator

1.1.2 Utilize the NARCOG Small Business Fund, venture capitalists, and angel investors for capital

1.2 Continue expansion of technology and innovation programs in public schools

1.2.1 Support Alabama Math Science Technology Initiative (AMSTI) and Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) programs

1.3 Develop the Region as a center for robotic innovation and repair

1.3.1 Support robotics programs in the public schools, such as EARLY and

FIRST Robotics

1.3.2 Support Robotics Technology Park training programs

1.3.3 Help facilitate partnerships between the Region's public schools and the US Space and Rocket Center

GOAL 2 FOSTER SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Foster economic prosperity for the Region that is resilient, diversified, globally responsive, demands quality development, community wellness, and environmental quality through the holistic concept of sustainability. (See Appendix C for additional economic resiliency recommendations.)

2.1 Ensure economic resiliency by preparing and protecting the Region from natural, man-made, and technological economic shocks

2.1.1 Develop and maintain Pre-Disaster Recovery Plans

2.1.2 Develop and maintain Post Disaster Recovery Plans

2.1.3 Actively participate in hazard mitigation planning and incorporate into local plans

2.1.4 Seek inspiration by researching

local and national best practices in recovery

2.2 Create a diversified economic base to compete in the global marketplace

2.2.1 Continue to attract new businesses and industries to the Region

2.2.2 Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses and industries in the Region

2.2.3 Maintain and develop local, regional, national and international partnerships

2.2.4 Support and market research and development parks in the Region

2.2.5 Actively seek foreign direct investment in the Region

2.2.6 Connect startup and existing businesses with external and global markets utilizing export strategies

2.2.7 Seek AdvantageSite designation for industrial parks through the Economic Development Partnership of Alabama

2.3 Promote environmental responsibility and stewardship in the Region to protect the Region's economy

2.3.1 Encourage responsible and

environmentally friendly economic development best practices

2.3.2 Explore opportunities in business growth in tech-based clean energy innovations

2.3.3 Seek federal and state funds to support our Regional Brownfield Initiative to identify, assess, clean-up, and reuse contaminated brownfield sites

2.4 Enhance the competitiveness of the Region's manufacturers for potential growth

2.4.1 Develop networks and support innovative manufacturing processes

GOAL 3 IMPROVE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Improve the education, knowledge, skills, and health of all residents for a ready workforce to strengthen community and economic development opportunities.

3.1 Continue expansion of technology and innovation programs in public schools

3.1.1 Support Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative and the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, & Math programs

3.2 Align existing education and training programs to establish a ready workforce for employers

3.2.1 Expand Dual Enrollment, Fast Track, Fast Track for Industry, and Virtual School to all high schools in the Region

3.2.2 Utilize community colleges in the Region—Calhoun Community College and Wallace State Community College

3.2.3 Utilize the Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT) programs and North Alabama Works workforce regional councils

3.2.4 Support programs that offer basic knowledge and soft-skills training to prepare workers for employment

3.2.5 Continue to support our AAA's Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), which provides job training opportunities

3.3 Improve access to healthcare and address chronic health conditions for workers and their families

3.3.1 Invest in access to quality and affordable healthcare, including professionals and facilities, for a healthy workforce

3.3.2 Promote NARCOG's Health and Wellness Initiative

3.3.3 Utilize the many programs available through NARCOG's Area Agency on Aging

3.3.4 Partner with the Alabama Department of Public Health to implement telemedicine opportunities to rural residents

GOAL 4 INVEST IN AND MODERNIZE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Invest in and modernize transportation and critical infrastructure such as broadband, water, sewer, and others to support community and economic development opportunities.

4.1 Explore the deployment of high speed broadband internet service through strategic use of wireless systems and smart grids that are partially funded by regional and state initiatives

4.2 Foster sharing of resources to improve multimodal transportation, including public transit, and shipping infrastructure in the region and to leverage community development efforts in a manner that most effectively generates new resources for infrastructure and community services

4.2.1 Maintain and expand federal and state highways including the Appalachian Development Highway System and local roads

4.2.2 Develop working relationships and partnerships with the CSX and Norfolk Southern Railways

4.2.3 Capitalize on the Tennessee River, the Tennessee–Tombigbee Waterway and the Port of Decatur

4.2.4 Promote, maintain, and improve small local airports

4.3 Promote viable and reliable Regional Transit for the elderly and disabled (*See Appendix E for goals from the HSCTP.*)

4.3.1 Support the Regional Transit Agency that serves Lawrence and Morgan County

4.3.2 Support the Cullman Area Rural Transit System (CARTS) Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan (HSCTP) – FY2017

4.4 Continue to administer transportation planning programs, including the North Central Alabama Rural Planning Organization (RPO), which provide a forum for coordinating transportation improvements in the region

4.5 Promote the Inland Port Initiative

for Transportation-Based Economic Development

4.5.1 Seek funding for a feasibility study

4.6 Improve, maintain, and expand existing water and sewer systems

4.6.1 Provide professional assistance to prepare grants and other applications

4.7 Improve, maintain, and provide adequate stormwater drainage facilities

4.7.1 Provide professional assistance to prepare grants and other applications

GOAL 5 LEVERAGE CULTURAL AND NATURAL ASSETS

Leverage the Region's cultural and natural assets to strengthen the community and provide for economic development opportunities.

5.1 Continue to partner with and support the Alabama Mountain Lakes Tourist Association to promote the cultural and natural assets in the Region

5.1.1 Support the continued success and development of the tourism

industry in the Region

5.1.2 Promote existing special events and festivals and establish new ones

5.2 Preserve and capitalize on existing natural assets in support of local and regional economic opportunities

5.2.1 Promote the Tennessee River, Smith Lake, Wheeler Lake, Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge, Bankhead National Forest, Sipse Wilderness, and others as eco-tourist destinations

5.3 Preserve and capitalize on existing cultural assets in support of local and regional economic opportunities

5.3.1 Promote the historic downtowns, Jesse Owens Park and Museum, Oakville Indian Mounds and Museum, Joe Wheeler Home, Cook Museum of Natural History, the Shrine, Ave Marie Grotto, Princess Theater, and others as tourist destinations

5.4 Support investments in natural and cultural heritage resources for preservation and stewardship of community character

5.4.1 Continue to partner with and support the efforts of the Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area

GOAL 6

ADVOCATE PLANNING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Advocate for community and regional planning and build the capacity and skills of current and future leaders and organizations to innovate, collaborate and advance community and economic development opportunities.

6.1 Advocate for community and regional planning

6.1.1 Continue to provide planning and technical assistance for local comprehensive planning, area development plans including downtown plans, and neighborhood revitalization plans that build support for partnering investments from state, federal, and private sources

6.1.2 Champion a Centers and Corridors planning approach to guide regional economic development and spacial patterns (e.g. downtown and corridor plans)

6.1.3 Adopt, improve and/or enforce existing development regulations and design guidelines

6.1.4 Continue the Regional Downtown Network Initiative partnership with Main Street Alabama

6.1.5 Develop a community design and

aging in place program at NARCOG

6.2 Invest in, and take advantage of, available opportunities for networking and training current and future leaders

6.2.1 Encourage participation in the Alabama Community Leadership Network

6.2.2 Encourage participation in the adult and youth leadership development programs provided by local chambers of commerce

6.2.3 Encourage participation in the Alabama League of Municipalities training conferences

6.2.4 Encourage participation in the Association of County Commissions of Alabama training conferences

6.2.5 Encourage communities to participate in Main Street Alabama's training conferences and webinars

6.2.6 Encourage eligible communities (Hartselle, Hanceville, Cullman, Good Hope, Moulton, and Priceville) to seek and maintain designation as Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE)

6.2.7 Encourage participation in the Economic Development Association of Alabama's (EDAA) Leadership Training

Program

6.2.8 Encourage council members, planning commissioners, and building inspectors to participate in and pursue certification in the University of North Alabama's Certified Alabama Planning and Zoning Official (CAPZO) Program

6.2.9 Encourage participation in Your Town Alabama

6.2.10 Encourage attendance at other professional development training related to community and economic development

6.3 Expand upon existing regional cooperation and collaboration and look beyond borders

6.3.1 Support counties, municipalities, economic development organizations, and chambers of commerce

4 EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

An evaluation framework is comprised of performance measures used to gauge progress on the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy, as well as providing information for the CEDS Annual Performance Reports. Therefore, performance measures should be selected based upon what is important to our Region and used to evaluate the progress in achieving the vision, goals, objectives, and strategies in our CEDS. The EDA recommends that an EDD consider both traditional and non-traditional performance measures for evaluation. Below are our selected performance measures.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- Number of jobs created (anticipated)
- Number of jobs retained
- Number of new businesses and/or industries
- Number of expanding businesses and/or industries
- Amount of private sector investment
- Amount of public sector investment
- Number of labor force
- Number of unemployed
- Unemployment rate
- Changes in the economic environment in the Region
- Number of grants submitted and amount
- Number of grants funded and amount
- Number of NARCOG Small Business Fund loans
- Amount of NARCOG Small Business Fund loans
- Local revenue generated
- Net taxable assessed valuation
- Wealth creation such as GDP per capita
- Median household income
- Per capita income
- Total personal income
- Annual wages per employee
- Median home value
- Population with no health insurance coverage
- Educational attainment – high school diploma and bachelor's degree

5 ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

WHY IS ECONOMIC RESILIENCY IMPORTANT?

According to the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO), “History has shown that a region’s success is inherently linked to its economic resilience – in other words, its ability to anticipate, withstand, and bounce back from any shocks to its businesses and overall economy, whether those stem from natural hazards, climate change, or shifting economic or market conditions.”* The NARCOG Region has recently suffered significant economic shocks. Some communities have met these shocks with fortitude and solid action plans, while others teeter on the verge of collapse. For our regional economy to achieve resiliency in the face of adversity, we must fully understand the risks that we face, then develop strategies to mitigate those risks. A focus on economic resilience will enable our Region to better withstand shocks, or quite possibly prevent them altogether.

INTERNATIONAL PAPER PLANT CLOSURE, FEBRUARY 2014

In February of 2014, International Paper shuttered its facility on the South Bank of the Tennessee River in Lawrence County, Alabama. The mill, in operation since 1971, was the largest employer in Lawrence County and employed 1,100 workers with an annual payroll of \$86 million. Besides the loss of jobs, preliminary impacts have been estimated at \$3.5 million in annual state and local taxes, including \$1.3 million for the Lawrence County Commission, \$771,000 for the Town of Courtland, and \$250,000 for the Lawrence County School System. The Town of Courtland currently verges on the brink of bankruptcy, selling assets and laying off employees in a desperate attempt to stay afloat.



Closure of the International Paper plant in Courtland left about 1,100 workers without jobs. [Michael Wetzel/Decatur Daily]

*<https://www.nado.org/webinar-recording-and-slides-building-economic-resilience-in-your-community-linking-economic-development-and-hazard-mitigation-planning>

TORNADO OUTBREAK, APRIL 27, 2011

Sixty-two tornadoes carved paths of destruction across 1,202 miles of northern and central Alabama on April 27, 2011. A total of 242 people died in the storm, with more than 2,200 injured. Forty-three Alabama counties were declared federal disaster areas, while FEMA announced that 33 counties were eligible for public assistance. More than 13,000 homes and businesses were destroyed or declared unsafe, while nearly 10,000 more sustained lesser damage. More than \$228 million in damage to forest land occurred, with insured losses ranging from \$2.6 to \$4.2 billion.*

According to www.bankrate.com, Alabama ranks 7th nationally in a ranking of the nation's most disaster-prone states. The state of Alabama is especially prone to severe weather in the form of hurricanes and tornadoes. Since 1953, Alabama has had 58 major disaster declarations.



The City of Cullman was hit by tornadoes on April 27, 2011 destroying a good part of the downtown area. (Special to The News/ Chris Austin) [Joe Songer]

*April 27, 2011: A Day That Changed Alabama)

PLANNING FOR & IMPLEMENTING RESILIENCE

A resilient economy can anticipate hazards and threats to people and what they value; understand vulnerabilities and hazards to mitigate and reduce their impact; organize itself through the stages of an emergency, reconstruction, and community betterment; and respond to events as they happen by mobilizing resources and coordinating events.*

The devastating tornado outbreak, followed by the closure of the largest employer in Lawrence County, glaringly spotlighted vulnerabilities in our Region. Sudden and unexpected, the impact of these events crippled major parts of our regional economy. In response, NARCOG created a task force to develop economic recovery and resiliency action plans to help fortify our economy against future shocks.

PRE-DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING

Preparing communities and regions for long-term recovery and resiliency is a complex process requiring vision, setting of priorities, cooperation, and action sustained over a long period. It requires close collaboration among the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Located in Appendix C is a list of recommendations and strategies from the Urban Land Institute, Tornado Recovery Action Council, as well as best practices in the area of resilience planning.

ESTABLISHING INFORMATION SYSTEMS

A critical component of economic resilience and recovery planning is the establishment of communication mechanisms—both in day-to-day operations and post-shock. NARCOG takes pride in providing an arena for collaboration and conversation amongst regional leadership. We employ many mechanisms for reaching out to our community to facilitate planning efforts, as well as serving as an information hub in times of recovery post-shock. In Appendix C, we have listed some of the ways that NARCOG enables information networks in our Region.

DIRECT AND TOTAL IMPACTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PAPER MILL CLOSURE IN COURTLAND, ALABAMA ON THE STATE ECONOMIES OF ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, AND TENNESSEE

| State | Impact Type | Employment | Labor Income | Value Added (in millions) |
|-------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| Alabama | Direct | 1,127 | 133 | \$310 |
| | Total | 4,954 | 313 | \$606 |
| Mississippi | Direct | 0 | 0 | \$0 |
| | Total | 166 | 8 | \$13 |
| Tennessee | Direct | 0 | 0 | \$0 |
| | Total | 282 | 16 | \$0 |
| Total | Direct | 1,127 | 133 | \$310 |
| | Total | 5,402 | 337 | \$645 |

*Value Added = Contribution to gross state product

Prepared by Karen Abt and Consuelo Brandeis, Southern Research Station, US Forest Service

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Recovering from a disaster is no small task. Important decisions are made to restore livelihoods and ensure safety with little time to think of the long-term repercussions. Depending on the severity, the aftermath might require providing temporary shelter, clearing debris, pumping flood waters, or rapidly repairing damage to vital infrastructure such as roads, electricity and drinking water. Once damage is assessed and crucial infrastructure is restored, it is time to start rebuilding—a process that can take years.

In the midst of destruction, it is hard to see a disaster as an opportunity. But it can be exactly that—an opportunity to build back better. Too often in the rebuilding process, communities look backwards to try to replicate what they lost instead of looking forward to how they can rebuild more sustainably. Strategies for strengthening regions and communities in the wake of disaster not only mean reducing future risk, but can mean enhancing quality of place by guiding smart development, protecting natural resources, diversifying transportation options, and fostering economic growth. NARCOG has researched numerous economic recovery case studies to identify best practices that can be applied to our Region. Some of those case studies are included in this document.

MEASURING RESILIENCE

Resilience is a process, not an end-state. Our Region must employ tools to measure the effectiveness of resilience initiatives across physical, economic, and social dimensions. Rigorous procedures for data collection and analysis must be implemented to understand and mitigate our vulnerability to economic shocks. The Resilience Capacity Index from the University of California at Berkeley is one tool that communities can use to measure resilience. The RCI aids regional leadership in mitigating future shocks by highlighting areas of potential vulnerability.

RESILIENCE CAPACITY INDEX DECATUR, ALABAMA MSA

| Decatur, AL | | Overall RCI Rank: 237 (out of 361) Rank in Region: 63 (out of 147) Rank in Pop Size Class: 106 (out of 183) | |
|---------------------------------|---------|---|--|
| | Z-Score | Rank (out of 361) | |
| Overall RCI | -0.17 | 237 | |
| | Z-Score | Rank | |
| Regional Economic Capacity | -0.19 | 253 | |
| Income Equality | -0.26 | 215 | |
| Economic Diversification | -1.49 | 330 | |
| Regional Affordability | 0.92 | 70 | |
| Business Environment | 0.05 | 102 | |
| | Z-Score | Rank | |
| Socio-Demographic Capacity | -0.54 | 285 | |
| Education Attainment | -0.83 | 326 | |
| Without Disability | -1.24 | 319 | |
| Out of Poverty | -0.32 | 255 | |
| Health-Insured | 0.22 | 162 | |
| | Z-Score | Rank | |
| Community Connectivity Capacity | 0.22 | 145 | |
| Civic Infrastructure | -0.90 | 304 | |
| Metropolitan Stability | 0.97 | 38 | |
| Homeownership | 0.89 | 63 | |
| Voter Participation | -0.08 | 209 | |

University of California at Berkeley; <http://brr.berkeley.edu/rci/metro/index>

ECONOMIC SHOCKS

NATURAL DISASTERS

MAN-MADE

- Plant Closures
- Civil Unrest
- Terrorism

TECHNOLOGICAL

- Cyber Attacks
- Fraud
- Power Outages
- Disruptive Innovation

CULLMAN, ALABAMA

BEST PRACTICES IN RECOVERY

On April 27, 2011, Cullman was hit by a tornado that destroyed part of its historic downtown. With many property owners needing to quickly repair and rebuild, the city's lack of historic zoning and design guidelines amplified the downtown's vulnerabilities. Not wanting to hold up the recovery process, the city quickly hired The Walker Collaborative, which led an intensive three-day charrette to create design guidelines. Support was donated by Third Coast Design Studio and local architects. Preparing roughly 75% of the document and presenting it to the public by the end of the charrette, the guidelines were completed by the end of the same week.

Because of the availability of valuable historic information, such as historic photographs of the downtown and Sanborn insurance maps, the guidelines were based heavily upon historic precedents. For example, while the downtown currently lacks a single front balcony, the historic data revealed numerous balconies during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Consequently, the guidelines go into great detail on the design of balconies, which are encouraged as an amenity for upper floor housing. The city is currently utilizing the document as guidance for building repairs and new construction in their historic downtown.

The city also appropriated additional money to replace and modernize utilities in the damaged area to include underground utilities. In addition to the Downtown Design Guidelines, the city adopted a Facade Improvement Grant program to help with the rebuilding efforts. The program will reimburse 50% of up to \$5,000 per facade for downtown businesses. To date, the program has approved 31 applications with a total investment back into downtown Cullman of over \$6 million by the business owners with over 200 jobs being replaced or created.*



The town of Cullman was hit by tornadoes on April 27, 2011 destroying a good part of the downtown area. Left, after the tornado. Right, Cullman's downtown today. (Special to The News/Chris Austin) [Joe Songer]

*City of Cullman Downtown Design Guidelines: <http://www.cullmancity.org/Design%20Guidelines%20Updated%20Oct%2020%202011.pdf>

GREENSBURG, KANSAS

BEST PRACTICES IN RECOVERY

FARMING TOWN NEARLY OBLITERATED BY A DEADLY 2007 TORNADO GOES GREEN

Greensburg, Kansas saw opportunity in devastation. The town went “green,” transforming into a model of environmentally conscious planning and construction. In 2015, Greensburg was the world’s leading community in LEED–certified buildings per capita.*

- Invested in solar, wind, and geothermal technologies to produce cleaner electricity
- Made wide use of energy efficient building materials
- Poured more storm resistant concrete
- Installed advanced insulation and windows
- Took advantage of natural sunlight through the positioning of buildings
- Homes, banks, churches, car dealerships, funeral homes, the county courthouse and a consolidated school were all rebuilt or remodeled with energy savings in mind



Photos courtesy of Fred Hunt for the New York Times.

NEWTON, IOWA

BEST PRACTICES IN RECOVERY

ECONOMY ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE RE-INVENTS ITSELF

- Whirlpool Corporation closed the Maytag Corporate headquarters and factory in Newton, IA
- Nearly 13% of the city (1,900) worked at Maytag
- Community leaders formed the Newton Transformation Council (NTC) to plan for recovery
- The City recruited potential employers by advertising available skilled workforce
- Newton transformed from a one-company city to a diverse economic base—wind energy, call center, Iowa Speedway



<http://www.newtondailynews.com/2017/03/13/wind-energy-facing-projected-growth/ajhclsp/>



<http://www.gettoknownewton.com/eight-things-speedway/>

NORTH CENTRAL ALABAMA REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Resolution Number 2017-0013

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy: 2018-2022

A

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments (NARCOG) Board of Director's recognizes the importance of creating employment opportunities and promoting a stable and diversified economy throughout our Economic Development District (EDD) as designated by the Economic Development Administration (EDA), and

WHEREAS, the NARCOG EDD is required by EDA to prepare an updated Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) every five-years and maintain it as part of the annual work program, and

WHEREAS, the NARCOG staff and CEDS Strategy Committee have undertaken and completed the summary background, SWOT analysis, strategic direction and action plan, evaluation framework, and economic resilience, as required by the new EDA guidance released in February 2015, which has resulted in the CEDS update, and

WHEREAS, the CEDS is recommended to the NARCOG Board of Directors to cover the next five-year period from 2018 to 2022 along with the Annual Reports required for the intervening four-year period.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the NARCOG Board of Director's approves and adopts the NARCOG EDD's CEDS Update.

RESOLVED this 27th day of September, 2017



Chairman



Executive Director

APPENDIX

B PARTNERS & RESOURCES

There are a host of federal, state, regional and local government, nonprofit and private organizations that supply resources, support and partnerships for economic development in Alabama. The NARCOG EDD and CEDS Strategy Committee recognize the importance of defining its role and relationships with these organizations and institutions for the enhancement of economic development planning efforts and implementation. Many of these organizations have guided NARCOG's efforts as we look forward in our CEDS for the next five years. In addition, other organizations supplied information and data used in the development of the CEDS.

LOCAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES:

Calhoun Community College
<http://www.calhoun.edu/>

Cullman Area Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.cullmanchamber.org/>

Cullman County Economic Development
<http://www.co.cullman.al.us/cced/cced.html>

Cullman Economic Development Agency
<http://www.cullmaneda.org/>

Cullman County Industrial Development Authority
<http://www.co.cullman.al.us/ccida/ccida.html>

Decatur-Morgan County Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.dcc.org>

Decatur-Morgan Entrepreneurial Center
<http://www.alabamaincubator.com/>

Decatur Utilities
<http://www.decaturutilities.com/>

Hartselle Area Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.hartsellechamber.com/>

Hartselle Development Board
<http://www.hartselle.org/hart/government/department-of-development/development/>

Hartselle Utilities
<http://www.hartselleutilities.org/>

Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce
<http://www.lawrencealabama.com/>

Lawrence County Industrial Development Board
<http://www.lawrenceidb.com/defaultadbc.html>

Morgan County Economic Development Association
<http://www.mceda.org>

North Alabama Workforce Development Alliance
<http://www.nawda.org/contact-us.html>

Rural Morgan County Industrial Development Board

Wallace State Community College
<http://www.wallacestate.edu/>

REGIONAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES:

Alabama Association of Regional Councils
<http://alarc.org/>

Alabama Automotive Manufacturers Association
<https://aama.memberclicks.net/>

Alabama Communities of Excellence
<http://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org/>

Alabama Information Technology Association
<http://www.netcentric-tech.com/aita.htm>

Alabama Power Company
<http://www.alabamapower.com/>

Alabama's Mountains, Rivers & Valleys
Resource Conservation & Development
Council
<http://amrvrcd.org/>

Biotechnology Association of Alabama
<http://bioalabama.com/>

Design Alabama
<http://www.designalabama.org/>

Main Street Alabama
<http://www.mainstreetalabama.org/>

Muscle Shoals National Heritage Area
<http://msnha.una.edu/>

North Alabama Industrial Development
Association
<http://www.naida.com/>

North Alabama Tourism Association
<http://www.northalabama.org/>

Tennessee Valley Authority
<https://www.tva.gov/>

The University of Alabama Center for Business
and Economic Research
<https://cber.cba.ua.edu/>

Your Town Alabama
<http://www.yourtownalabama.com/>

STATE & FEDERAL PARTNERS & RESOURCES:

The Office of the Governor
<http://governor.alabama.gov/>

Alabama Communities of Excellence
<http://www.alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org/>

Alabama Department of Economic and
Community Affairs
<http://adeca.alabama.gov/Pages/default.aspx>

Alabama Department of Environmental
Management
<http://www.adem.state.al.us/default.cnt>

Alabama Department of Public Health
<http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/>

Alabama Development of Commerce
<http://www.madeinalabama.com/>

Alabama Department of Tourism
<http://tourism.alabama.gov/>

Alabama Department of Transportation
<http://www.dot.state.al.us/>

Alabama Industrial Development Training
<https://www.aidt.edu/>

Appalachian Regional Commission
<https://www.arc.gov/>
Chamber of Commerce Association of

Alabama
<https://alabamachambers.org/>

Economic Development Administration
www.eda.gov

Economic Development Association of
Alabama
<http://www.edaa.org/>

Economic Development Partnership of
Alabama
<http://www.edpa.org/>

Environmental Protection Agency
<https://www.epa.gov/>

Federal Aviation Administration
<https://www.faa.gov/>

Federal Highway Administration
<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/>

Housing and Urban Development
<https://www.hud.gov/>

National Association of Development
Organizations
<https://www.nado.org/>

North Alabama Works
<https://alabamaworks.com/north/>

Retirement Systems of Alabama
<http://www.rsa-al.gov/>

US Department of Agriculture
<https://www.usda.gov/>

Alabama Agri-business Council

OTHER RESOURCES:

<http://www.alagribusiness.org/>

AL Cooperative Extension System

<http://www.aces.edu/main/>

Alabama Department of Labor

<https://www.labor.alabama.gov/>

Berkeley Resilience Capacity Index

<http://brr.berkeley.edu/rci/>

Choose Alabama

<http://choosealabama.net/index.php/taxes-incentives-and-financial-assistance>

City of Decatur, AL

<http://www.decaturalabamausa.com/>

City of Hartselle, AL

<http://www.hartselle.org>

City of Moulton, AL

<http://cityofmoultonal.com/>

Community Action Partnership of North Alabama

www.capna.org

Cullman County

<http://www.co.cullman.al.us>

Cullman County Parks

<http://www.cullmancountyparks.com/>

Cullman Regional Medical Center

<https://cullmanregional.com/>

Decatur Convention and Visitors Bureau

<http://decaturcvb.org>

Good Samaritan Health Clinic

<http://www.goodsamaritancullman.com/>

International Economic Development Council

<https://www.iedconline.org/>

Morgan County School District

<https://www.morgank12.org/domain/1345>

National Park Service

<https://www.nps.gov/index.htm>

National Register of Historic Places

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/>

Oakville Indian Mounds

<http://www.oakvilleindianmounds.com/>

Port of Decatur

<http://www.portofdecatur.net/>

Smith Lake

<http://visitcullman.org/project/smith-lake/>

Sperling's Best Places

<http://www.bestplaces.net/>

StatsAmerica Portal to US Data

<http://www.statsamerica.org/>

US Cluster Mapping Project—Harvard Business School

<http://www.clustermapping.us/>

US Forest Service

<https://www.fs.fed.us/>

Visit Cullman

<http://visitcullman.org/>

Volunteer Center of Morgan County

<http://www.vcomc.org/about/>

Wheeler Wildlife Refuge

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Wheeler/about.html>

C ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

ESTABLISHING INFORMATION NETWORKS AT NARCOG

- On an ongoing basis, proactively build relationships with local, regional, and state emergency personnel in order to help manage flows of information, supplies, resources, and people in the event of a disaster
- Use online surveys to gauge perceptions of local economy and business environment
- Collaborating with the International Economic Development Council to host workshops for local leaders regarding Economic Recovery and Resiliency
- Maintain lists of all potential federal, state, and local sources of funding and assistance to maximize federal disaster assistance
- Maintain data for industrial and commercial sites through geographic information systems (GIS)
- Support local governments in community coordination, information dissemination, and assistance with disaster relief grants and loans

- Enable business-to-business collaboration to connect business owners with each other, as well as emergency response centers
- Use social networks and media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to inform businesses and the public about recovery resources
- Employ measures to reach all segments of the population regardless of language or disability
- Create and implement a media strategy to combat negative impressions and misinformation
- Collaborate as a region to send a consistent message of need to decision makers (Congress and Federal Agencies)

PRE-DISASTER RECOVERY PLANNING STRATEGIES

1. RECOMMENDATION

Local governments should prepare pre-event contracts for debris removal and disposal that require compliance with all environmental guidelines.

STRATEGY

1.1 Communities, with the assistance

of NARCOG, should identify debris removal firms and evaluate the cost and requirements of contracts to reduce fraud and waste in the event of a sudden economic shock.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Increase the number of storm shelters available to the public, and publicize their locations so people know when severe weather approaches.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Engaging business leaders and other community stakeholders in a discussion on land-use issues and redevelopment priorities prior to an economic shock scenario enables the community to devote the proper time and resources to a potentially sensitive topic.

STRATEGY

3.1 To select a rational sequence and strategy for implementing resilience measures, criteria for prioritization need to be established that include a cost/benefit assessment of criticality of need, protection of market value, and potential market value to be created, among other factors.

4. Recommendation

Establish statewide fortification standards for construction of new, rebuilt, and extensively remodeled homes to save lives and property when tornados or other forms of severe weather move through Alabama; provide in the code inspection procedures and enforcement rules apply statewide.

STRATEGY

4.1 To limit costs, a pilot program of three or four counties should be considered, an opportunity for the NARCOG region to pilot this effort statewide.

4.2 Encourage all communities to adopt the stricter Alabama Building Code for commercial and residential construction.

4.3 Identify grants and low-cost loans to finance retrofitting for resilience improvements and offer technical assistance on securing the financing.

5. Recommendation

While considering alternative locations for business and community operations following an economic shock, attention should be paid to where the workforce of small and medium-sized businesses will live if a significant portion of the regional workforce is severely damaged. Each community should consider identifying resources and partners, such as private-sector developers and contractors, to consider temporary housing solutions in the event of a major economic shock resulting in the relocation of a massive

number of people.

STRATEGY

5.1 Regularly monitor and report on the availability of office space, industry space, and residential developers, building a network of contractors, engineers, real estate professionals, and other contacts who can quickly react to an economic shock situation by providing the resources to quickly bring critical regional assets back online.

6. Recommendation

Create an ongoing resilience task force. A resilience task force should be able to drive and ensure government and region-wide coordination to assist communities as they make decisions about long-term rebuilding. The task force is envisioned as an entity that proactively drives appropriate policy and planning decisions well in advance of an event.

STRATEGY

6.1 Identify key members of the private and public sector to serve on a resilience task force. The importance of the establishment of the taskforce must be stressed and key responsibilities must be outlined.

7. Recommendation

Promote regional coordination. Interconnected infrastructure networks are regional in scope, but they also have neighborhood-by-neighborhood impacts.

A change in the way local governments organize themselves might be needed to build an infrastructure framework that is flexible, that is sensitive to community context, and that supports the development of capacity for local disaster planning and response decision making. Regional protection demands cooperation among people and governments that share geomorphology. Without well-informed collective decision making about priorities and methods, any major new protective works a region wishes to undertake will be realized slowly, if at all, and their effectiveness will be reduced.

STRATEGY

7.1 Integrate resilience as a component into the technical assistance offered to communities and entities within the NARCOG region.

7.2 Engage communities and critical regional employers in the importance of resilience planning and identify funding opportunities to enhance preparation efforts.

7.3 Communities should consider an informal agreement or partnership with nearby communities, pledging support and assets in a time of need.

8. Recommendation

Identify those parts of your region to protect and invest in that are critical to your regional economy, culture, and health, safety, and welfare. Every region

has areas that are of special importance to its economic vitality and well-being. In addition, there are areas that are essential to its health and welfare, and to its unique cultural and historic heritage. An essential task of regional coordination is to identify these priority areas for protection and investment long term, given that resources are finite and all desirable projects cannot be undertaken.

STRATEGY

8.1 Identify natural infrastructure to preserve and utilize the presence of these assets to control growth and development patterns.

8.2 Devise a system for identifying critical assets in the region that must be addressed first in terms of resiliency and recovery following an economic shock.

9. Recommendation

Allow partial compliance and mitigation measures in order to create flexibility in insurance premiums. Appropriate reductions in premiums should be considered in flood mitigation programs even if properties fail to fully meet local, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), or flood insurance requirements. These measures may be appropriate in circumstances in which it is impossible or prohibitively expensive to raise the elevation of the building or to implement other zoning requirements. Integrating careful assessment of the value of flood

mitigation efforts should also encourage investment in retrofits, which can reduce the impact (cost, duration, displacement) of future extreme events and thereby protect major private market investments.

STRATEGY

9.1 In certain areas, relax strict building codes to cut costs for owners and others if the efforts to bring builds and other assets to code becomes cost-prohibitive

10. Recommendation

Build capacity for decision making at the local level. Many localities lack capacity and need greater access to information and resources, as well as the support of coordinating entities at higher levels of government. Resources and expertise from other levels of government must have greater duration and continuity than they do currently. Information systems and sharing agreements among communities are needed, and they can be facilitated or encouraged by a federal or regional coordinating body. The federal government needs to institute, and make permanent, a series of training sessions for local governments to teach them how to prepare for and respond to disasters. These sessions should include both elected officials and key staff.

STRATEGY

10.1 Hold a series of workshops and community town halls to address

opportunities to build resilience in both small businesses, industry, and communities.

10.2 Work with the Chambers of Commerce and local economic development organizations to develop a resilience-based continuity planning service.

11. Recommendation

Target businesses and industries within the regional cluster for business retention and expansion opportunities.

STRATEGY:

11.1 Identify existing businesses and industries that compose the regional cluster for BRE programs and financing. Businesses and industries located within or affiliated with the supply chain of large local employers should also be targeted. The existence of a large workforce geared toward this industry will easily accommodate workforce development programs and services and will ensure the regular supply of labor for critical employers.

11.2 Identify gap areas through Claritas/Nielsen for additional opportunities for BRE.

APPENDIX



D AREA PLAN ON AGING / 2018-2021

GOALS:

Access to reliable information

Older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers shall have access to reliable information, helping them to make informed decisions regarding long-term supports and services.

Empower to live in their own homes

Empower older persons and individuals with disabilities to remain in their own homes with high quality of life through the provision of options counseling, home and community-based services, and support for family caregivers.

Empower to stay alive and healthy

Empower older Americans to stay active and healthy through Older Americans Act services, Medicare prevention benefits, recreation, job, and volunteer activities.

Enable to live with dignity

Enable more Alabamians to live with dignity by promoting elder rights and reducing the incidents of abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

Promote progressive management

Promote proactive, progressive management and accountability Area Agency on Aging and its contracting agencies.

E HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN - FY2017

GOALS:

Enhance Transportation Access

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments to enhance and sustain transit services in the North Central Alabama Region through the coordination of existing and future transit services.

Minimize Duplication

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments to minimize the duplication of transit services in the North Central Alabama Region through the coordination of existing and future transit services.

Provide Cost-Efficient Transit Services

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments to

develop the most cost-efficient transit system possible in the North Central Alabama Region through the coordination of existing and future transit services and to identify and maximize the necessary resources to accomplish this.

Sustain and Maintain Existing Services

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments that this plan supports maintaining the status quo where possible.

Enhance Existing Traditional Transit Services

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments to exploit available opportunities to enhance and expand existing traditional transportation services within the region. This includes

(but is not limited to) Sections 5307 and 5311, Sections 5316 and 5317, Section 5310 as well as intercity bus transportation as defined in Section 5311.

Explore and Implement Emerging Transportation Opportunities

It is the goal of the Regional Stakeholders Group and the North Central Alabama Regional Council of Governments to identify various service opportunities and associated funding streams to provide enhanced transportation opportunities to expanded populations in less traditional venues.

The complete plan can be found here:
<https://narpo.wordpress.com/documents/>