Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties, GA

Bus Project

Environmental Assessment (EA)

GA-E-2006-BUSP-348

SAFETEA-LU Project No. 329

Developed by the
Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center

For

The Federal Transit Administration
Problem Statement

The lack of efficient, centralized transportation options for the residents living in the rural counties of Clay, Quitman, Randolph and Stewart Counties poses a problem because many of the residents are elderly and/or disabled, and are members of minority/low income groups. They are isolated from readily available urban services and employment centers. This lack of accessible and centralized public transportation in Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties thus lowers the quality of life for the residents of these very rural counties and their cities.

A feasibility study, entitled *Four Counties Rural Transportation Development Plan for Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County*, developed by the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center (LCRDC, July 2007)\(^1\), provided an analysis of the existing population and transportation services in the study area and a projection of how future needs could be met with public transportation. This plan was developed for the four counties in order to implement a public transportation program using Sections 5309 and 5311 programs of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Section 5309 Discretionary Capital was awarded to assist in financing the acquisition, construction, and/or improvements of facilities, rolling stock, and equipment to be utilized in a public transportation system.\(^2\) The Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program will be utilized to improve, initiate and continue public transportation service in these four counties by providing financial assistance for operating and administrative expenses.\(^3\)

The acquisition of a bus asset is compatible with the Georgia Department of Transportation’s State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and has been included since FY04. This project has received additional public input through the STIP

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1. *Four Counties Rural Transportation Development Plan for Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County*, July 2007, Developed by the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center, pg. 6-17.
3. Section 5311 Nonurbanized Area Public Transportation Program Application Guidelines. Prepared by the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Office of Transportation Delivery, Public Transportation Branch, 603 KAR 7:020 (November 2004).
process. The four counties are located in two of Georgia’s DOT districts, District 3 (Stewart County) and District 4 (Clay, Quitman and Randolph Counties).

Upon review of the Transportation Development plan referenced above, it was determined that an Environmental Assessment of each potential site location was required to identify potential impacts related to the proposed construction and operation of a new centralized transportation facility within the Four County Project area. The following document presents the analysis and results of this Environmental Assessment.

1. Purpose of the Environmental Assessment

An Environmental Assessment is a concise public document that provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The Environmental Assessment is designed to help public officials make decisions that are based on an understanding of the human and physical environmental consequences of the proposed project and take actions in the location of the project that protect, restore, and enhance the environment.

The Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center assisted in the completion of this Environmental Assessment in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NEPA Regulations\(^4\). NEPA is a charter for protecting the human environment; it requires Federal agencies to consider and evaluate the potential impacts of proposed actions, and to integrate those evaluations into their planning and decision-making process. NEPA analyses include other legislative requirements such as the consultation requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as well as others. Because federal funds are being provided through the Federal Transit Administration for this project, compliance of NEPA requirements is required.

Environmental Assessments also include agency and public notification of the intent to implement the Proposed Action, and provide the opportunity for agency and public review and comment upon the assessment document. The following scoping and public/agency notification activities have or will occur:

- Various Local, State, and Federal agencies were contacted for information and invited to participate in the Environmental Assessment process.
- Upon approval of the Environmental Assessment, a letter and supporting documentation will be sent to the Georgia State Clearinghouse. The Georgia State Clearinghouse coordinates the Executive Order 12372 review by State-level agencies.
- Also upon approval, the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center will hold a public hearing to allow the public, and other State and Federal Agencies to comment on the assessment.
- Finally, upon approval, copies of the Draft Environmental Assessment will be mailed to appropriate Georgia regulatory agencies and other relevant Federal and Local regulatory authorities, and made available for review by the public at the City of Columbus Library. Comments received on the Draft Environmental Assessment will be assembled, reviewed, and included in the Final Environmental Assessment document.
2. Purpose and Need

A regional transit system is required to provide the needed infrastructure to meet the transportation needs of all four of the counties in the project area. Currently Clay and Quitman Counties are successfully operating public transportation systems under the Section 5311 Rural Transportation Program. Randolph and Stewart Counties have none. Key to the implementation of the four county transit system is the construction of a centralized operation facility in the service area. This facility will house 16 vans and/or cars, the dispatching system, maintenance equipment, office personnel and supplies. It will be the headquarters for the four county transit system. Figure 1 shows the general location of the four counties in the project area and their relationship to major cities in Alabama and Georgia.

Figure 2 shows the locations of the parcels chosen for the potential transit site within the Four County Project Area. Site One is located in northern portion of the study area in Stewart County, southwest of Richland, Georgia, along State Highway 27. Sites Two and Three are in the central portion of the study area near the Springvale Community in Randolph County, along US Highway 82. Site Four is located in Quitman County, in the western portion of the county, also along US Highway 82.

These locations were chosen based on criteria outlined in the Transportation Development Plan (pg. 63-68). They included Size of property, Ownership, Availability of property, Surrounding Landuse, Environmental Considerations, Centrality of Location, and Traffic Impact and Accessibility. Each is discussed in detail within the discussion of Alternative Actions.
Figure 1 Showing Location of Four-County Project Area
Figure 2 Showing Location of Proposed Transit Sites
3. Alternative Actions

This section describes the alternative actions examined by the Four County Regional Steering committee to determine what would best serve the public in this area. Five alternative actions were considered, including the No-Action Alternative. The other four alternatives involve locating the facility at four different locations within the project area. These sites were chosen based on eight (8) criteria outlined in the Transportation Development Plan (July 2007). These criteria were:

A. **Size:** It was determined that the parcel chosen for the transit site should be large enough to house a dispatch office and a vehicle maintenance garage. The building should be approximately 3,000-4,500 square feet to accommodate office space and four maintenance bays. In addition, there should be additional space for at least 16 vans to park, as well as for employee parking. In order to accommodate these uses and future expansion, it was determined that the size of the parcel needed to be a minimum of three acres. A weight of 2 was assigned to this criterion.

B. **Ownership:** When purchasing the land, it was thought that single ownership would be preferable over multiple, particularly since the expense of dealing with multiple owners would not be cost effective. A weight of 1.5 was assigned to this criterion.

C. **Availability:** Sites with no current use, including those that were vacant, undeveloped, or currently for sale, were preferred over sites with structures or currently being used for agricultural, tree farming, or a business purpose. A weight of 1.75 was assigned to this criterion.

D. **Surrounding Land Use:** Adverse effects to surrounding properties were considered when choosing the locations of the four potential sites. Thus, the current land use and zoning of adjacent properties were reviewed. A weight of 1 was assigned to this criterion.
E. **Environmental Considerations:** The flood plains, wetland and soils in each of the potential site areas were reviewed in order to avoid any negative environmental impacts to surrounding areas. A weight of 2 was assigned to this criterion.

F. **Location:** A site centrally located in the four county project area was preferred. A weight of 2 has been assigned to this criterion.

G. **Traffic/Circulation/Accessibility:** Additional traffic generated by the facility was expected to impact existing traffic patterns; thus sites with adequate road frontage on existing paved streets or highways were preferred over those sites that front dirt roads. Ingress and egress to the sites were considered, as well as good street visibility. A weight of 1.75 was assigned to this criterion.

H. **Site Preparation:** A flat well drained site was preferred over a site that would require extensive backfill and drainage work. Current utilities available to the sites were considered. A weight of 1.5 was assigned to this criterion.

As seen above, each criterion was assigned a weight, illustrating the importance of each criterion in determining the most suitable location for the transit facility. Each site was scored according to each of these criterion; the results are presented in the following discussion of Alternative Actions.

**Alternative Actions**

1. **No-Action Alternative.** The “No-Action” alternative is the status-quo option, where no centralized facility would be built and residents would continue to have no access to regional public transportation.
2. **Construct and Operate a Centralized Transit Facility at Site 1.** This alternative involves constructing and operating a centralized facility at Site 1 in Stewart County for administration of the transit system, and the dispatching and maintenance of vehicles. The system should be established in a centralized location to be most readily assessable to all riders. The centralized operating facility will house a dispatch office and a vehicle maintenance garage. Based on the four-county population and the expected ridership, a building with approximately 3,500 square feet of office space and four maintenance bays large enough for at least 16 vans and/or cars has been proposed. This will provide ample space for transit staff, passenger waiting areas, and busses to meet the needs of the system.

Site 1 is located on a currently vacant, county-owned property along Highway 27 in Stewart County (see Figure 2 for location). This tract of land encompasses approximately three (3) acres. It is currently zoned for Agricultural use, and is flat, with very little vegetation. Its location along US Highway 27 provides good egress and ingress into the property. Using the criteria and ranking system set forth in the Transportation Development Plan (LCRDC, July 2007), Site 1 scored 57 out of a potential 67.5 points for suitable location for the transit facility. The site’s major deficiency was its location in the northeastern portion of the four county project area, rather than in center.

3. **Construct and Operate at Centralized Transit Facility at Site 2.** This alternative involves constructing and operating a centralized facility at Site 2 in Randolph County (see Alternative 2 for description transit operation). This flat, vacant, single-ownership property encompasses approximately four (4) acres which are not currently zoned by Randolph County (Figure 2). There are a few residences in the general area. The site contains a burned, dilapidated structure that will need to be removed prior to use. Its location along Highway 82 provides good egress and ingress into the property. Using the criteria and ranking system set forth
in the Transportation Development Plan (LCRDC, July 2007), Site 2 scored 63.5 out of a potential 67.5 points for suitability at the location for the transit facility.

4. **Construct and Operate at Centralized Transit Facility at Site 3.** This alternative involves constructing and operating a centralized facility at Site 3 in Randolph County (see Alternative 2 for description of transit operation). This vacant, single-ownership site encompasses approximately 1.70 acres which are not currently zoned by Randolph County (Figure 2). There are a few residences in the general area. The site is located at the intersection of two dirt roads (County Road 31 County Road 112) and US Highway 82, providing moderately good egress and ingress into the property. Using the criteria and ranking system set forth in the Transportation Development Plan (LCRDC, July 2007), Site 3 scored 52 out of a potential 67.5 points for suitability at the location for the transit facility. The site’s major deficiencies were the property’s size, which was too small to house the facility and parking area, and the roads were not paved, which would inhibit traffic flow and decrease the accessibility into facility in case of rain or other hazardous weather.

5. **Construct and Operate at Centralized Transit Facility at Site 4.** This alternative involves constructing and operating a centralized facility at Site 4 in Quitman County (see Alternative 2 for description of transit operation). This large county-owned property encompasses approximately nineteen (19) acres which are not currently zoned by Quitman County (Figure 2). The site has one unused structure on it which would need to be removed prior to use. There are several houses and public buildings located nearby along Kagler Rd, including an elementary school and recreation facility. The site is located on a city street that is partially paved, providing moderate access from Kagler Rd to US Highway 82 and Georgia State Route 27. Using the criteria and
ranking system set forth in the Transportation Development Plan (LCRDC, July 2007), Site 4 scored 56.75 out of a potential 67.5 points for suitability at the location for the transit facility. The site’s major deficiencies include the presence of several public buildings nearby, an existing structure on the property that would need to be removed, and the location of the property in the western portion of the four county project area.

4. Environmental Regulations and Other Considerations

This section presents a general discussion of the environment regulations that guided this Environmental Impact Assessment:

A. Cultural Resources

Cultural resources are protected by a variety of laws and regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), as amended, NEPA, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA), and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and constructive use of publicly owned land, specifically significant recreation land, parkland, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Section 106 of the NHPA and implementing regulations (36 CFR 800) outline the procedures to be followed in the documentation, evaluation, and mitigation of impacts for historic sites and other cultural resources.

The Georgia DNR Historic Preservation Division (GA HPD) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) must be consulted regarding potential impacts to cultural resources and means to mitigate impacts. If resources are identified and impacts have been defined, mitigation
measures may be required and stipulated in a legal agreement such as a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA).

The proposed project was field surveyed for historic properties in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and amendments thereto. The survey boundary and methodology were established using the GDOT/FHWA Cultural Resource Survey Guidelines. These guidelines were established as a result of past interaction with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and his staff and were greed upon by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the SHPO.

The proposed project would consist of the construction of a transportation facility to house the Four County Transportation System. Four (4) potential sites were identified and evaluated for this purpose.

The area of potential effects (APE), as defined in 36 CFR 800.16(d), is the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may cause changes to the character or use of historic properties if any such properties exist. Based on the nature and scope of the undertaking, the guidance in the GDOT/FHWA Cultural Resources Survey Guidelines and past experience with similar projects, LCRDC has evaluated and defined the APE for this proposed project. Four potential locations were chosen for this project, and the APE was determined to consist of the property containing the site, and the immediately adjacent properties. No potential for indirect effects is anticipated by implementation of the proposed project.

The Georgia SHPO was informed of our efforts to identify historic properties by consulting existing information and the results of those efforts and asked to provide information on any unidentified National Register listed or eligible properties within the project’s APE by a letter dated May 24, 2007. LCRDC received a response from the Georgia SHPO requesting more information on July 3, 2007.
For each property 50 years old or older identified within the APE, a Georgia Historic Resources Survey Form with attached photographs has been prepared (see Appendix A). The Criteria of Eligibility was applied to each property and a recommendation regarding National Register eligibility has been made. For those properties recommended eligible for listing in the National Register, photographs and a proposed boundary depiction have also been attached.

B. Water Resources

The guiding State and Federal regulations concerning evaluating potential impacts to water resources include the Federal Clean Water Act and the Georgia Water Quality Control Act. Sites within the State of Georgia with a developed area of greater than 1 acre in size are required to have a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit in accordance with these Acts. In addition, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) has required that all state waters have a minimum stream buffer of 25 feet from each bank as a way to protect surface water quality. The “Criteria for Water Supply Watersheds” (GA EPD Rules for Environmental Planning Criteria, Chapters 391-3-16-01) defines a buffer as a natural or enhanced vegetated area with no land disturbances, or minor land disturbances, such as trails and picnic areas. Thus, a property boundary of a site should be no more than 25 feet from the closest water body.

Concerning Wetlands, EO 11990, entitled “Protection of Wetlands,” requires Federal agencies to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands to the extent possible. Filling or grading of wetlands or other jurisdictional waters is regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under authority of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), which is developed mostly with the use of aerial photography with some ground-truthing, all four of the counties in this study contain wetlands to some degree. Wetland Geographic Information System (GIS) data was downloaded from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife’s website.
and overlain over each site on a map to determine the potential impact of these protected areas.

Executive Order (EO) 11988, entitled “Floodplain Management,” requires Federal agencies to take action to minimize development inside floodplains. Therefore, the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) were reviewed for the presence of floodplains in the vicinity of the proposed sites. Also, if floodplain GIS data were available for a particular county, it was downloaded and overlain on a map with the proposed site location as well. Neither Clay nor Randolph Counties has been mapped for Floodplains under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Program.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1274-1276) preserves selected rivers in free-flowing condition and protects those rivers and their immediate environments for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. The National Wild and Scenic Rivers System is primarily administered by four Federal agencies: the Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the USDA Forest Service. These agencies are charged with protecting and managing the wild and scenic rivers of the United States. The only river in Georgia to be designated as a Wild and Scenic River in Georgia is the Chattahoochee River in northeastern Georgia. There are no Wild and Scenic Rivers within the Four County Project Area.

In addition to complying with these regulations, each site’s site surface drainage, water retention, local groundwater, aquifer recharge areas, and depth to groundwater were examined.

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5 The wetland data was downloaded from [http://www.nwi.fws.gov/download.htm](http://www.nwi.fws.gov/download.htm)
6 The floodplain data was downloaded from the FEMA website: [http://msc.fema.gov.htm](http://msc.fema.gov.htm)
C. Air Quality

The Clean Air Act section 176 (c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)) requires that Federal Transportation projects are consistent with state air quality goals, found in the State Implementation Plan (SIP). The process to ensure this consistency is called Transportation Conformity. Conformity to the SIP means that transportation activities will not cause new violations of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS), worsen existing violations of the standards, or delay timely attainment of the relevant standard.

Transportation conformity is required for Federal Transportation projects in areas that have been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as not meeting the NAAQS. These areas are called nonattainment areas if they currently do not meet air quality standards. The counties in the four county project areas (Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart) have not been designated as a nonattainment area for fine particulate matter, called PM$_{2.5}$.

In addition to PM$_{2.5}$ assessments, EPA also regulates air toxins. Most air toxins originate from human-made sources, including on-road mobile sources, non-road mobile sources (e.g. airplanes), area sources (e.g. dry cleaners) and stationary sources (e.g. factories or refineries). Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATS) are a subset of the 188 air toxics defined by the Clean Air Act. An assessment of MSATS is required statewide for most federal transportation projects.
D. Noise Assessment

The Federal Highway Administration issued noise regulations (23 CFR 772) that must be complied with by State Department of Transportations and local governments for those who receive Federal highway funding for such projects. Noise considerations are part of the planning, location, and design of all federal aid transportation projects. GDOT’s written statewide noise policy and procedures discusses two methods used for identifying a noise impact. First predicted noise levels with the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) noise abatement criterion should be compared. An exterior 67 decibels [dBA] has been established for schools, libraries, residences, churches playgrounds and recreational areas and a 72 [dBA] criterion has been established for commercial activities. Any predicted noise level that approaches (within one decibel) or exceeds these levels is considered an impact. Second, predicted traffic noise levels with existing noise levels should be compared. A substantial increase (10 [dBA] or more over existing levels) associated with a Build noise level of 60 [dBA] or higher is identified and an impact is noted.

E. Environmental Justice and Socioeconomics

EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations, was signed on February 11, 1994 and amended on January 30, 1995. This order requires Federal agencies to promote “nondiscrimination in Federal programs substantially affecting human health and the environment.” In response to this directive, Federal agencies must identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.
During preparation of this assessment, census data from 2000 were used to identify the minority and low-income populations in the project area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). The total population in the study area in 2000 was 18,998. The minority residents in this area made up 57.09% of the total area population (Table 1). These minority residents are predominantly African-American persons.

Table 1. Population 1990 and 2000 by Racial Composition (in %).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2000 Population</th>
<th>2000 Percentage below Poverty Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>38.43%</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>52.12%</td>
<td>46.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>38.94%</td>
<td>59.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>37.10%</td>
<td>61.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td><strong>41.65%</strong></td>
<td><strong>57.09%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 1990, 2000*

The four county project area has a high amount of families living below poverty level, especially among black and African American families, and especially families with female heads of households. In 2000, an average of 24.65 percent of the residents was below the poverty level (Table 1). The Georgia state average was 12.3.

The per capita personal income for the four county project area in 2000 was on average $14,750. The median household income for the project area ranged from $22,295 to 25,563, finishing among the last 13 counties in the state (Table 2).
Table 2. Per Capita Personal Income 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2000 Per Capita Personal Income</th>
<th>2000 Median Household Income and Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>16,819</td>
<td>$22,295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>14,301</td>
<td>$25,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>11,809</td>
<td>$22,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>16,071</td>
<td>$25,313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>14,750</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24,043</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>21,154</td>
<td>$42,057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000

As stated above, the total population for the four county project area in 2000 was 18,998. This population had decreased since 1980 and is projected to decrease through 2020 (Table 3).

Table 3. Total Population 1980-2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>3,553</td>
<td>3,364</td>
<td>3,357</td>
<td>3,310</td>
<td>3,274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>2,209</td>
<td>2,598</td>
<td>2,705</td>
<td>2,844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>9,599</td>
<td>8,023</td>
<td>7,791</td>
<td>7,666</td>
<td>7,574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>5,896</td>
<td>5,654</td>
<td>5,252</td>
<td>5,124</td>
<td>5,028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21,405</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,250</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,998</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,805</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,720</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The age group over 65 years of age has the largest number of all age groups. The percentage of seniors over 65 in Quitman County is 19.86%, in Clay County 19.51%, in Stewart County 18.53%, and in Randolph County 15.56%.
The four county region’s civilian labor force numbered 7,329 people in 2000. The unemployment rate averaged 6.5% of this population, as compared to the Georgia state average of 4.0 (Table 4).

**Table 4. Civilian Labor Force 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>2000 Census</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Labor</td>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>1,300</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>985</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>2,930</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>2,114</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>7,329</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Of the working members, not all stay in the county of residence to work, but instead commute to other counties (Table 5).

**Table 5. Daytime Population Movement Due to Work 2000.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Daytime Population Inside County</th>
<th>Number of People During the Day…</th>
<th>Total # of Workers During the Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leaving the County to Work</td>
<td>Coming into the County to Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>3,357</td>
<td>3,136</td>
<td>431</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>2,598</td>
<td>2,677</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>7,791</td>
<td>7,754</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>5,252</td>
<td>5,043</td>
<td>832</td>
<td>623</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,998</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,610</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,070</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,682</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The chart below identifies the number of residents employed within each county in addition to non-residents commuting from the four county region for employment (Table 6).
Table 6. Commuting Patterns in the Four County Region 2003.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work Location</th>
<th>Employed Residents</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Employed Non-Residents</th>
<th>County of Residence</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clay County</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Randolph Co.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quitman County</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Randolph Co.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Stewart Co.</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randolph County</td>
<td>1,835</td>
<td>68.7</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>Clay Co.</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Stewart Co.</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Quitman Co.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewart County</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Other Counties</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety 2003.
5. Environmental Conditions and Impacts

In this section, each proposed transit site location is examined to determine the potential environmental impacts that may result from construction and operation of a transit facility in that location. A description and assessment of each site is presented below.

Site 1

Site 1 is located in the northeastern portion of the study area in Stewart County, along Georgia Highway 27 in the Randall Crossing Community (Figure 3). Figure 4 provides a view of the site setting.

Figure 3. Location of Site 1 in Stewart County.
A. Cultural Resources

a. Existing Conditions: A review of existing information on previously identified historic properties revealed that no National Register listed properties, proposed National Register nominations, or National Historic Landmarks were identified in the DNR Stewart County survey.

In 2006, Site 1 was surveyed to (1) evaluate the presence or absence of previously identified archaeological or historic architectural resources in the project’s area of potential effect (APE) and (2) to identify any archaeological or historic archaeological sites not previously identified.

Historic Structures: In 2006, a survey of the property identified two (2) historic structures 50 years old or older not identified in the DNR survey. These were the crossroads general store located at the...
intersection of Moore’s Store and Westbrook Roads (Stewart 001) and the Allen Chapel, a front gable church on GA Hwy 27 (Stewart 002). The Criteria of Eligibility was applied to these two properties and they were not recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Stewart 001 was evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4. There are no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented with this property. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion B. Also, there are no indications that the property is likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. This property does not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion D.

Stewart 001 was evaluated under Criterion A and Criterion C. Under Criterion A, there are no known associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the commercial development in the area. Stewart 001 was also evaluated under Criterion C and does not appear to possess significance in the area of architecture. The type and method of construction of the property are not unique or unusual and the property represents a well-documented type or style of architecture. Alterations to the main building and setting include the addition of several metal buildings to the west and north of the main building. Because Stewart 001 has lost integrity in this area, it is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register.
Stewart 002 was evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4. There are no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented with this property. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion B. Also, there are no indications that the property is likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. This property does not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion D.

Stewart 002 was evaluated under Criterion A and Criterion C. Under Criterion A, there are no known associations with events that have made a significant contribution to religion in the area. Stewart 002 was also evaluated under Criterion C and does not appear to possess significance in the area of architecture. The type and method of construction of the property are not unique or unusual and the property represents a well-documented type or style of architecture. Alterations to the main building and setting include the addition of a trailer to the rear of the building, vinyl siding on the entire structure, and the addition of a poured concrete stoop on the front of the church. Because Stewart 002 has lost integrity in these areas, it is recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

Archaeological Resources: A search of the Georgia Natural Archaeological and Historic Resource website\(^7\) indicated that no archaeological sites have been identified within the APE of the

\(^7\) Historic Resources researched on the Natural, Archaeological, and Historical Resources GIS website (NAHRGIS): [https://www.itos.uga.edu/nahrgis/](https://www.itos.uga.edu/nahrgis/)
proposed Site 1 project area. Also, none were identified as a result of the review of the site area during coordination with the SHPO in May 2007. No NHRP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological sites are located within the APE of Site 1.

b. **Environmental Impacts:** No historic or archeological sites eligible for listing or listed on the NRHP were identified within the APE of Site 1; thus, the proposed action would have no adverse impact on these resources.

c. **Section 4 (f) Applicability:** Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and constructive use of public owned land, specifically significant recreation land, parkland, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites (Department of Transportation Act of 1966 P.L. 89-670 (49 USC 303, 23 CFR 771.135)). Because the proposed action will have no adverse impact on the cultural resources within the APE of Site 1, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act does not apply.

B. **Wetlands and Floodplains.**

a. **Existing Conditions.** Stewart County has been mapped for Floodplains under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Program. Site 1 is located in Flood Zone X which is defined as Areas outside the 1-percent annual chance floodplain, areas of 1% annual chance sheet flow flooding where average depths are less than 1 foot, areas of 1%
Figure 5. Location of Wetlands and Floodplains near Site 1 (entire area shown within Flood Zone X).
annual chance stream flooding where the contributing drainage area is less than 1 square mile, or areas protected from the 1% annual chance flood by levees.\(^8\)

b. **Environmental Impact:** Site 1 is not located within any identified wetland areas or 100-year floodplain areas; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these areas.

C. **Ecologically Critical Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Other Unique Natural Resources.**

   a. **Existing Conditions:** As noted in the discussion above, there are no Ecologically Critical, Wild and Scenic, or other Unique Natural Resources in the Four County Project Area.

   b. **Environmental Impact:** There are no ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, or unique natural resources identified in the vicinity of Site 1; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.

D. **Air Quality.**

   a. **Existing Conditions:** Stewart County is currently not designated a noncontainment area of Georgia for ground level ozone and particulate matter PM\(_{2.5}\). Therefore, the levels of these pollutants have not been determined to be in access of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the EPA in the Clean Air Act (Amended 1990). Also, the construction phase will involve no open burning; thus, the primary air emissions will be associated with the operation of the construction equipment and

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\(^8\) Researched on the FEMA website: http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=floodZones&title=FEMA%20Flood%20Zone%20Designations
vehicles used to deliver the building materials. The operation phase will involve routing a maximum of 16 vans and/or cars to and from the facility two to four times daily, resulting in a maximum of 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. The main emissions will be traffic-related from the vehicles. Since the facility’s roadways and parking areas are paved, fugitive dust will be kept to a minimum.

b. Environmental Impact: In order to determine any potentially adverse impacts to air quality, the following guidance was used: the Clean Air Act, Section 176 (c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)). The proposed action was evaluated for compliance with State and Federal air quality goals. The assessment methodology involved evaluation of the scope of the proposed project with available information, plans, and recommended procedures.

Qualitative PM$_{2.5}$ assessments are only required for projects of air quality concern within the PM$_{2.5}$ nonattainment area. Since Stewart County has not been designated as a nonattainment area for fine particulate matter, called PM$_{2.5}$, neither a qualitative nor quantitative analysis for this project area is required.

In assessing the impact of emissions from the construction of the transit facility and parking area, the construction air impacts were considered insignificant because of the relatively small magnitude of the impacts and temporary nature of the construction activities. As for the operation phase of the facility, the main emissions would be from the maximum 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. Such a small increase in the traffic volume would not produce an adverse air quality impact.
E. Noise Assessment.

a. **Existing Conditions:** Based on site reconnaissance in 2007, the current main sources of noise in the vicinity of Site 1 appear to be vehicular traffic traveling on Highway 27. The area surrounding the site is mainly vacant, containing one church and a commercial building.

b. **Environmental Impacts:** The initial source of noise from the construction activities will be temporary (approximately six (6) months). Other than the delivery of building materials and concrete, the noise anticipated from the proposed construction should be similar to that associated with residential construction. Although of a temporary nature, construction noise can be minimized for off-site and onsite receptors by the following mitigative measures:

- Limiting hours of construction to between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday thru Saturday
- To lessen the potential noise impact to construction workers, those involved in daily operations on or around heavy equipment should wear protective ear safety equipment such as earplugs or muffs.

Impacts due to traffic generated noise once operation of the transit service has begun are expected to be minimal due to the low number of vehicles (16) which would be used for this operation, the staggered nature of their arrival and departure times, and the intermittently scheduled special appointment pickups. Any noise related to additional traffic would be confined to the parking area and adjacent roadways, and any noise increase would be inaudible. The system should operate between the hours 6 A.M. to 6 P.M.
Monday – Friday, minimizing the noise during times when nearby residents would be home from work with their families. One vehicle, a sedan or minivan and at least one driver per county, would be available for night time trips, as needed, but these trips would be kept to a minimum.

Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.

F. Environmental Justice.

a. Existing Conditions: Many of the residents in Stewart County are either minorities or low to moderate income. The percentage of black or African Americans is approximately 61.5% in Stewart County (Table 1). In terms of income, in 2002, Stewart County ranked 89th of the 159 Georgia counties (see Table 2). Thus, Stewart County reaches only two-thirds of the U.S. average of per capita personal income in 2002. Approximately 22.6% of the residents in Stewart County were below the poverty level (Table 1). Finally, in 2003, the county had an unemployment rate of 5.7% of the population (see Table 4); thus contributing to the relatively high poverty level for the county.

b. Environmental Impact: It is anticipated that locally or regionally hired construction contractors and crews would be hired to work on the transit project. Local restaurants, gas stations, and other retail outlets are expected to experience increase revenues during construction due to additional workers being in the area and potentially patronizing these establishments. Construction and operation of the facility is expected to stimulate the local economy and promote business for Stewart County.
Adverse environmental effects due to the implementation of the Proposed Action would be insignificant, as the construction would occur on a currently vacant, empty lot. There are no residential or commercial displacements associated with this proposed action. Furthermore, the proposed action would promote environmental justice by improving efficiency and connectivity of the public transportation system, which in turn provides for improved passenger safety and convenience. Therefore, no adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action.

G. Available Water Resources:

a. Existing Conditions: While the total acreage for this site is 3 acres, the construction on the centralized transit facility will disturb less than an acre. A well and septic system will need to be located on the site, thus a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit will be required.

In terms of water retention, there is no storm water system currently in place at the site or in the community; therefore, a storm water retention unit will be required.

The proposed site is located in the Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer (see Figure 6). This groundwater system is the deepest of the principal aquifers in South Georgia. It serves as a major source of water in the northern one-third of the Coastal Plain.9

b. Environmental Impact: There are no surface water resources within the boundaries of the proposed action. Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse

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effect to groundwater resources in the area. However, given that the quality of the groundwater is unknown, appropriate quality testing should precede any use of the site groundwater involving contact or consumption by humans.

Figure 6. Cretaceous-Tertiary Aquifer in Vicinity of Site 1.

Provisions in the construction contract will require the contractor to exercise every reasonable precaution during construction to prevent the pollution of groundwater and streams in the project.
vicinity. Where possible, early revegetation of disturbed areas will be practiced to hold soil movement to a minimum. Dumping of chemicals, fuels, lubricants, bitumens, raw sewage, or other harmful wastes into or alongside of streams or impoundments, or natural or man-made channels leading into these, will be prohibited.

Additional contract provisions will require the development of best management practices (BMPs) for storm water pollution prevention, which will consist of temporary erosion control measures as shown on the construction plans or as deemed necessary during construction. These temporary measures include the use of berms, dikes, dams, sediment basins, fiber mats, netting, gravel, mulches, grasses, slope drains, and other erosion control devices or methods, as applicable. In addition, the implementation of proper measures will be required for operation of the transit facility after construction to protect ground and surface water from potential hazardous material releases. These provisions are coordinated with the permanent erosion control features insofar as practical to assure economical, effective, and continuous erosion control throughout the construction and post-construction periods, and are in accordance with the Federal-Aid Policy Guide, Part 650, Subpart B.

Due to the distance of water resources from the proposed transit facility location at Site 1, no significant impacts to the water quality at Site 1 are expected to occur as a result of the proposed action.

H. Ecological Resources:

a. Existing Conditions: A reconnaissance survey of the property was conducted by LCRDC staff to determine the presence of any rare or
protected plant or animal species on the property. None were observed. In addition, an internal review of online data from the Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources Protected Species website\textsuperscript{10} was conducted to identify potential species and habitats occurring within the area of the proposed action. The following Federally and Georgia state protected species were listed for Stewart County (Table 7).

Table 7. List of Protected Species in Stewart County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECTED STATUS</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Aimophila aestivalis} Bachman’s Sparrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Fundulus escambiae} Russetfin Topminnow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Graptemys barbouri} Barbour's Map Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Heterodon simus} Southern Hognose Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Notropis hypsilepis} Highscale Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>\textit{Picoides borealis} Red-cockaded Woodpecker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Procambarus acutissimus} Sharpnose Crayfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Procambarus verrucosus} Grainy Crayfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Pteronotropis euryzonus} Broadstripe Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>\textit{Arabis georgiana} Georgia Rockcress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Croomia pauciflora} Croomia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Parietaria pensylvanica} Pennsylvania Pellitory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Quercus arkansana} Arkansas Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Rhododendron prunifolium} Plumeleaf Azalea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Scirpus etuberculatus} Canby’s Club-rush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Trillium decipiens} Mimic Trillium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>\textit{Warea sessilifolia} Sandhill-cress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No natural communities listed in Stewart county.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Rare Species web site revealed the following protected species within the vicinity of Site 1 (Table 8).

\textsuperscript{10} Georgia Rare Species web page from Georgia Department of Natural Resources Website (http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us/content/specieslocationbycounty.asp?lstCounty=Randolph)
Table 8. Protected Species within the Vicinity of Site 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECTED STATUS</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Aimophila aestivalis</em> Bachman's Sparrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Pteronotropis euryzonus</em> Broadstripe Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Aesculus parviflora</em> Bottlebrush Buckeye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Quercus arkansana</em> Arkansas Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Rhododendron prunifolium</em> Plumleaf Azalea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Warea sessilifolia</em> Sandhill-cress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b. Environmental Impact:

Bachman’s Sparrow

This large sparrow prefers to live in open pine or oak woods; old fields; or brushy areas. A suitable habitat for one sparrow typically encompasses at least 5 acres. The vacant, flat, no-vegetation state of the property at Site 1 makes it an unsuitable habitat for the Bachman’s Sparrow. No individuals were identified during the survey.

Broadstripe Shiner

This freshwater fish is usually found in flowing areas of medium-sized streams associated with sandy substrate and woody debris or vegetation. Threats to this species include pollution and habitat destruction. Suitable habitat for the Broadstripe Shiner is not present within the Site 1 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

Bottlebrush Buckeye

This deciduous perennial shrub thrives in rich mesic forests and silty alluvial woods. Suitable habitat for the Bottlebrush Buckeye is not present within the Site 1 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.
Arkansas Oak

This beech typically occurs in sandy or sandy clay uplands or upper ravine slopes near heads of streams in deciduous woods. Suitable habitat for the Arkansas Oak is not present within the Site 1 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

Plumleaf Azalea

This large shrub or small tree can be found in ravines and on steep stream banks that often are densely wooded with mixed hardwoods and pines. Suitable habitat for the Plumleaf Azalea is not present within the Site 1 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

Sandhill-cress

This summer annual herb is typically found in areas of raised and dry soils in pine and oak forests. Suitable habitat for the Sandhill-cress is not present within the Site 1 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

I. Physiographic Features:

c. Existing Conditions: The topography, soils, and slope elevations at Site 1 were assessed because they may affect the suitability of this location for a transit facility.

Stewart County is located in the Fall Line Hills District, a region highly dissected with relief ranging 50-250 ft, within the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee Flint (ACF) River Basin. Soils with the highest run-off rate are present in this basin and remain saturated.12

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Based on a review of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Map, Soils in the Norfolk Series are mapped on Site 1 (see Figure 7). These fine loamy soils are very deep, well drained, and moderately permeable found within the upland coastal plain. Figure 8 illustrates the slope elevations in the site area which ranged from 2 to 16 percent slope.

d. **Environmental Impact**: The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, the construction contractor will be required to prepare and properly implement an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&PC) Plan that meets the requirements of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission’s *Manual For Sediment and Erosion Control in Georgia* (5th Edition).

The plan will list appropriate BMPs that are designed to avoid adverse effects from erosion, increased runoff, increased siltation of surface water, and diminished water quality. These BMPs could include retaining and protecting existing vegetation where feasible; installing silt fences using baled straw and synthetic materials, and check dams; mulching exposed soils and otherwise covering exposed soils with sodding or permanent seeding as soon as practicable; and protecting storm water inlets and discharge points such as pipe outlets with rip-rap aprons placed on filter blankets or filter fabric to prevent erosion.
Figure 7. Soils in the Vicinity of Site 1.
Figure 8. Slope Elevations in the Vicinity of Site 1.
Site 2

Site 2 is centrally located in the study area along US Highway 82 in the Springvale Community in Randolph County, Georgia (see Figure 9 for site location). Figure 10 provides a view of this site.

Figure 9. Location of Site 2 in Randolph County
Randolph County lies in the upper half of the Georgia Coastal Plain Physiographic Province. The topography is flat to gently rolling, with elevations ranging from 275 to 590 feet above sea level.

Randolph County is 50 miles south of Columbus, 30 miles northwest of Albany and 10 miles east of Walter F. George Reservoir and the Chattahoochee River. The county is bordered on the north by Stewart and Webster Counties, the east by Terrell County, the south by Calhoun County and the west by Clay and Quitman Counties. Figure 11 shows the location of Site 2 in Randolph County.

A. Cultural Resources.

a. Existing Conditions: A review of existing information on previously identified historic properties revealed that no National Register listed properties, proposed National Register nominations, or National Historic Landmarks were identified in the 1999 DNR Randolph County survey.

In 2006, Site 2 was visited to (1) evaluate the presence or absence of previously identified archaeological or historic architectural resources
in the project’s area of potential effect (APE) and (2) to identify in preliminary fashion the presence of any archaeological or historic archaeological sites not previously identified.

Historic Structures: A survey of the property identified six (6) historic structures 50 years old or older not identified in the DNR survey (see Figure 9). These are located in the Springvale Community on both the North side and South side of US Hwy 82. Of the 6 properties 50 years old or older that were surveyed and to which the Criteria of Eligibility was applied, all have been recommended eligible for inclusion as part of a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Springvale Community was evaluated for eligibility for listing as a historic district in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4. Under Criterion B, there are no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented with the area. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the community under Criterion B. Also, there are no indications that the area is likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. This property does not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. The type and method of construction of properties in Springvale are not unique or unusual and represents a well-documented type or style of architecture. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the property under Criterion D.

The Springvale Community was evaluated as a district under Criterion A and Criterion C and appears to possess significance in the areas of community planning and development and architecture as an intact example of a crossroads community in rural southwest Georgia that developed from the 1850’s to the early 1950’s. The district is
significant in the area of community planning and development. The community is distinguished by its location at the junction of US Hwy 82, Union Church Road, and Reed Price Road. The intact plan of local roadways with the older resources clustered at the junction of US Hwy 82, Union Church Road, and Reed Price Road reflects the historical development of the community from its beginning in the 1850’s through the mid-twentieth century.

The Springvale Community was also evaluated under Criterion C and does appear to possess local significance in the area of architecture. The architecture of the neighborhood contains intact examples of gable-ell cottages, single pen, central hallway, shotgun, Georgian cottage, bungalow, minimal traditional and American small house types with no academic style. There have been no significant exterior alterations, additions or loss of original building materials to the majority of the contributing properties that have diminished the integrity of the district as a whole. In addition, there are minimal non-historic intrusions within the Springvale Historic District. Therefore, the district is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register under Criterion C in the area of architecture.

The proposed National Register boundary of the Springvale Historic District is a visual boundary and contains approximately 20 properties. The proposed boundary encompasses the residential, institutional, and commercial properties to the north and south of U.S. Hwy. 82 in Randolph County (see Figure 9). The proposed boundary contains all National Register-qualifying characteristics and features of the district and includes the contributing properties and associated landscape features.
Archaeological Sites: A search of the Georgia Natural Archaeological and Historic Resource website indicated that no archaeological sites have been identified within the APE of Site 2. Also, none were identified as a result of the review of the site area during coordination with the SHPO in May 2007. No NHRP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological sites are located within the APE of Site 2.

b. Environmental Impact (and Assessment of Effects): A finding of No Adverse Effect is anticipated for the Springvale Historic District. Project implementation would consist of the construction of a transit facility on the north side of US Hwy 82. Physical destruction of or damage to a contributing resource within the Springvale Historic District would not occur. Construction of the Transit facility would occur on a parcel outside the boundary of the historic district. Therefore, there would be No Adverse Impact to the resource.

No historic structures within the Springvale Historic District would be demolished or relocated as a result of the construction. The construction would not alter the relationship of the resources within the Springvale Historic District to one another. The proposed work would occur outside the boundary of the Springvale Historic District. As a result, project implementation would result in a finding of No Adverse Effect.

Project implementation would not result in a change in the character of the district’s use. There are no direct or indirect effects anticipated to the Springvale Historic District that would alter the character of the continued use of the properties in the community. Thus, there would be No Adverse Effect.

Project implementation would not result in a change in the character of the district’s physical features or setting that would take away from its
The construction of a transit facility outside the proposed boundary of the district would not detract from the district’s historic architectural significance, or its historic significance in the area of community planning and development as an intact example of a crossroads community in rural southwest Georgia that developed from the 1850’s to the early 1950’s. Therefore, project implementation would result in a finding of No Adverse Effect.

Project implementation would not result in the introduction of visual elements that diminish the integrity of Springvale’s significant historic characteristics or features. The proposed transit facility would be constructed on a parcel located outside the boundary of the historic district. The topography of the parcel and the design of the facility would not affect the visual perception from the district. The visual character of the surrounding area would not change. Thus, project implementation would result in a finding of No Adverse Effect.

Project implementation would not result in the introduction of atmospheric elements that diminish the integrity of the property’s significant historic characteristics or features. There would be no atmospheric effect to the Springvale Historic District as a result of project implementation. The project is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for air quality in the region.

Project implementation would not result in the introduction of audible elements that diminish the integrity of the Springvale Community’s significant historic characteristics or features. There would be no noticeable audible effect to the Springvale Community as a result of project implementation. The proposed project would have no impact on existing and planned development/zoning in the area of the property. Springvale would continue to be a viable historic district,
retaining its significant characteristics and features, following implementation of the project. Therefore, project implementation would result in a finding of No Adverse Effect.

There were no (0) archeological sites eligible for listing or listed on the NRHP identified within the APE of Site 2. Therefore, the proposed action would have no adverse impact on these resources.

c. **Section 4 (f) Applicability:** Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and constructive use of public owned land, specifically significant recreation land, parkland, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Because the proposed action will have no adverse impact on the cultural resources within the APE of Site 2, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act does not apply.

B. **Wetlands and Floodplains**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Randolph County has approximately 6,367 acres scattered throughout the county. Figure 11 depicts no protected wetlands, as identified in The National Wetland Inventory (NWI), within the vicinity of Site 2.\(^\text{13}\)

Randolph County has not been mapped for Floodplains under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Program. The property is not included on any Federal Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

b. **Environmental Impact:** Site 2 is not located within any identified wetland areas or 100-year floodplain areas; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these areas.

\(^{13}\) The wetland data was downloaded from [http://www.nwi.fws.gov/download.htm](http://www.nwi.fws.gov/download.htm)
Figure 11. Protected Wetlands in the Vicinity of Site 2.
C. **Ecologically Critical Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Other Unique Natural Resources**.

   a. **Existing Conditions**: As noted in the discussion above, there are no Ecologically Critical, Wild and Scenic, or other Unique Natural Resources in the Four County Project Area.

   b. **Environmental Impact**: There are no ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, or unique natural resources identified in the vicinity of Site 2; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.

D. **Air Quality**.

   a. **Existing Conditions**: Randolph County is currently not designated a noncontainment area of Georgia for ground level ozone and particulate matter PM$_{2.5}$. Therefore, the levels of these pollutants have not been determined to be in excess of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the EPA in the Clean Air Act (Amended 1990). Also, the construction phase will involve no open burning; thus, the primary air emissions will be associated with the operation of the construction equipment and vehicles used to deliver the building materials. The operation phase will involve routing a maximum of 16 vans and/or cars to and from the facility two to four times daily, resulting in a maximum of 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. The main emissions will be traffic-related from the vehicles. Since the facility’s roadways and parking areas are paved, fugitive dust will be kept to a minimum.

   b. **Environmental Impact**: In order to determine any potentially adverse impacts to air quality, the following guidance was used: the Clean Air Act, Section 176 (c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)). The proposed action was
evaluated for compliance with State and Federal air quality goals. The assessment methodology involved evaluation of the scope of the proposed project with available information, plans, and recommended procedures.

Qualitative PM$_{2.5}$ assessments are only required for projects of air quality concern within the PM$_{2.5}$ nonattainment area. Since Randolph County has not been designated as a nonattainment area for fine particulate matter, called PM$_{2.5}$, neither a qualitative nor quantitative analysis for this project area is required.

In assessing the impact of emissions from the construction of the transit facility and parking area, the construction air impacts were considered insignificant because of the relatively small magnitude of the impacts and temporary nature of the construction activities. As for the operation phase of the facility, the main emissions would be from the maximum 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. Such a small increase in the traffic volume should not produce an adverse air quality impact.

E. **Noise Assessment.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Based on site reconnaissance in 2007, the current main sources of noise in the vicinity of Site 2 appear to be vehicular traffic traveling on Highway 82. There are few residences in the general area.

b. **Environmental Impacts:** The initial source of noise from the construction activities will be temporary (approximately six (6) months). Other than the delivery of building materials and concrete, the noise anticipated from the proposed construction should be similar to that associated with residential construction. Although of a
temporal nature, construction noise can be minimized for off-site and onsite receptors by the following mitigative measures:

- Limiting hours of construction to between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday thru Saturday

- To lessen the potential noise impact to construction workers, those involved in daily operations on or around heavy equipment should wear protective ear safety equipment such as earplugs or muffs.

Impacts due to traffic generated noise once operation of the transit service has begun are expected to be minimal due to the low number of vehicles (16) which would be used for this operation, the staggered nature of their arrival and departure times, and the intermittently scheduled special appointment pickups. Any noise related to additional traffic would be confined to the parking area and adjacent roadways, and any noise increase would be inaudible. The system should operate between the hours 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday – Friday, minimizing the noise during times when nearby residents would be home from work with their families. One vehicle, a sedan or minivan and at least one driver per county, would be available for night time trips, as needed, but these trips would be kept to a minimum.

Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.

F. Environmental Justice.

a. Existing Conditions: Many of the residents in Randolph County are either minorities or earn low to moderate incomes. The percentage of black or African Americans is approximately 59.7% in Randolph County (Table 1). In terms of income, in 2002, Randolph County ranked 157th of the 159 Georgia counties (see Table 2).
Approximately 25.0% of the residents in Randolph County were below the poverty level (Table 1). Finally, in 2003, the county ranked higher than the state average in the percentage of unemployed in the county (see Table 4); thus contributing to the relatively high poverty level for the county.

b. **Environmental Impact**: It is anticipated that locally or regionally hired construction contractors and crews would be hired to work on the transit project. Local restaurants, gas stations, and other retail outlets are expected to experience increases in revenues during construction due to additional workers being in the area and potentially patronizing these establishments. Construction and operation of the facility is expected to stimulate the local economy and promote business for Randolph County.

Adverse environmental effects due to the implementation of the Proposed Action would be insignificant, as the construction would occur on a currently vacant, empty lot. There are no residential or commercial displacements associated with this proposed action. Furthermore, the proposed action would promote environmental justice by improving efficiency and connectivity of the public transportation system, which in turn provides for improved passenger safety and convenience. Therefore, no adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action.

G. **Available Water Resources**

a. **Existing Conditions**: While the total acreage for Site 2 is 4 acres, the construction on the centralized transit facility will disturb less than an acre. A well and septic system will need to be located on the site, thus
a. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit will be required.

In terms of water retention, there is no storm water system currently in place at the site or in the community; therefore, a storm water retention unit will be required.

The proposed site is located in the Clayton aquifer, a most significant groundwater recharge area with medium pollution susceptibility.

b. Environmental Impact: There are no surface water resources within the boundaries of the proposed action. Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area. However, given that the quality of the groundwater is unknown, appropriate quality testing should precede any use of the site groundwater involving contact or consumption by humans.

Provisions in the construction contract will require the contractor to exercise every reasonable precaution during construction to prevent the pollution of groundwater and streams in the project vicinity. Where possible, early revegetation of disturbed areas will be practiced to hold soil movement to a minimum. Dumping of chemicals, fuels, lubricants, bitumens, raw sewage, or other harmful wastes into or alongside of streams or impoundments, or natural or man-made channels leading into these, will be prohibited.

Additional contract provisions will require the development of best management practices (BMPs) for storm water pollution prevention, which will consist of temporary erosion control measures as shown on the construction plans or as deemed necessary during construction. These temporary measures include the use of berms, dikes, dams, sediment basins, fiber mats, netting, gravel, mulches, grasses, slope
drains, and other erosion control devices or methods, as applicable. In addition, the implementation of proper measures will be required for operation of the transit facility after construction to protect ground and surface water from potential hazardous material releases. These provisions are coordinated with the permanent erosion control features insofar as practical to assure economical, effective, and continuous erosion control throughout the construction and post-construction periods, and are in accordance with the Federal-Aid Policy Guide, Part 650, Subpart B.

Due to the distance of water resources from the proposed transit facility location at Site 2, no significant impacts to the water quality are expected to occur as a result of the proposed action.
H. Ecological Resources

a. Existing Conditions. A reconnaissance survey of the property was conducted by LCRDC staff to determine the presence of any rare or protected plant or animal species on the property. None were
observed. In addition, research was conducted on the Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources Protected Species website.

The following federal and state protected species were listed for Randolph County (Table 9).

Table 9. Protected Species in Randolph County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROTECTED STATUS</th>
<th>SPECIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Ambystoma tigrinum tigrinum</em> Eastern Tiger Salamander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>· <em>Drymarchon couperi</em> Eastern Indigo Snake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Elliptio purpurella</em> Inflated Spike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Lythrurus atrapiculus</em> Blacktip Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Pteronotropis euryzonus</em> Broadstripe Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Pteronotropis welaka</em> Bluenose Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Brickellia cordifolia</em> Heartleaf Brickella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Linum sulcatum var. harperi</em> Harper Grooved Flax</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Panax quinquefolius</em> American Ginseng</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Quercus arkansana</em> Arkansas Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Rhododendron prunifolium</em> Plumleaf Azalea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Sarracenia purpurea</em> Purple Pitcherplant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Silene regia</em> Royal Catchfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>· <em>Symphyotrichum georgianum</em> Georgia Aster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Thaspium chapmanii</em> Creamy Meadow-parsnip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Tragia cordata</em> Heartleaf Nettle Vine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Communities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research into Georgia Protected Species in Randolph County revealed only one threatened fish species in the vicinity of Site 2, that being the Broad Striped Shiner (*Pteronotropis euryzonus*).

b. **Environmental Impact:**

**Broadstripe Shiner:** This freshwater fish is usually found in flowing areas of medium-sized streams associated with sandy substrate and woody debris or vegetation. Threats to this species include pollution
and habitat destruction. Suitable habitat for the Broadstripe Shiner is not present within the Site 2 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

I. Physiographic Features

a. Existing Conditions: The topography, soils, and slope elevations at Site 2 were assessed because they may affect the suitability of this location for a transit facility.

Based on a review of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Map, soils in the Norfolk Series are mapped on Site 2 (see Figure 14). These fine loamy soils are very deep, well drained, and moderately permeable found within the upland coastal plain. (Monroe, 2005: 83-85).

Figure 15 illustrates the slope elevations in the vicinity of Site 2 which range from 5 to 20%.

b. Environmental Impact: The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, the construction contractor will be required to prepare and properly implement an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&PC) Plan that meets the requirements of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission’s Manual For Sediment and Erosion Control in Georgia (5th Edition).
Figure 14. Soils in the Vicinity of Site 2.
Figure 15 Showing Slope Elevation in the Vicinity of Site 2.
The plan will list appropriate BMPs that are designed to avoid adverse effects from erosion, increased runoff, increased siltation of surface water, and diminished water quality. These BMPs could include retaining and protecting existing vegetation where feasible; installing silt fences using baled straw and synthetic materials, and check dams; mulching exposed soils and otherwise covering exposed soils with sodding or permanent seeding as soon as practicable; and protecting storm water inlets and discharge points such as pipe outlets with rip-rap aprons placed on filter blankets or filter fabric to prevent erosion.

Site 3

Site 3 is located in Randolph County, across Highway 82 from Site 2 in the central portion of the study area (see Figure 9 for site location). Figure 16 provides a view of this site.

Figure 6. View of Site 3 in Randolph County (Map 011A, Parcel 15).
A. Cultural Resources.

a. Existing Conditions: A review of existing information on previously identified historic properties revealed that no National Register listed properties, proposed National Register nominations, or National Historic Landmarks were identified in the 1999 DNR Randolph County survey.

In 2006, Site 3 was visited to (1) evaluate the presence or absence of previously identified archaeological or historic architectural resources in the project’s area of potential effect (APE) and (2) to identify in preliminary fashion the presence of any archaeological or historic archaeological sites not previously identified.

Historic Structures: A survey of the property identified six (6) historic structures over 50 years of age and potentially eligible as part of a historic district on the National Register not identified in the DNR survey. These are located in the Springvale Community on both the North and South sides of Highway 82 and may be included in the proposed Springvale historic district (see detailed description of this proposed district and an evaluation of its inclusion on the National Register in the Site 2 discussion above). Of the six properties, all were recommended eligible for inclusion as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

A search of the Georgia Natural Archaeological and Historic Resource website indicated that no archaeological sites have been identified within the APE of Site 3. Also, none were identified as a result of the review of the site area during coordination with the SHPO in May 2007. No NHRP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological sites are located within the APE of Site 3.
d. **Environmental Impact:** A finding of No Adverse Effect is anticipated for the Springvale Historic District. Project implementation would consist of the construction of a transit facility on the north side of US Hwy 82. Physical destruction of or damage to a contributing resource within the Springvale Historic District would not occur. Construction of the Transit facility would occur on a parcel outside the boundary of the historic district. Therefore, there would be No Adverse Impact to the resource (*refer to the Site 2 discussion above for a detailed assessment of affects*).

There were no (0) archeological sites eligible for listing or listed on the NRHP identified within the APE of Site 3. Therefore, the proposed action would have no adverse impact on these resources.

c. **Section 4 (f) Applicability:** Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and constructive use of public owned land, specifically significant recreation land, parkland, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Because the proposed action will have no adverse impact on the cultural resources within the APE of Site 3, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act does not apply.

**B. Wetlands and Floodplains.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Randolph County has approximately 6,367 acres scattered throughout the county. Figure 10 depicts no protected wetlands, as identified in The National Wetland Inventory (NWI), within the vicinity of Site 3.
Randolph County has not been mapped for Floodplains under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Program. The property is not included on any Federal Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

b. **Environmental Impact:** Site 3 is not located within any identified wetland areas or 100-year floodplain areas; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these areas.

C. **Ecologically Critical Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Other Unique Natural Resources**

a. **Existing Conditions:** As noted in the discussion above, there are no Ecologically Critical, Wild and Scenic, or other Unique Natural Resources in the Four County Project Area.

b. **Environmental Impact:** There are no ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, or unique natural resources identified in the vicinity of Site 3; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.

D. **Air Quality.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Randolph County is currently not designated a noncontainment area of Georgia for ground level ozone and particulate matter PM$_{2.5}$. Therefore, the levels of these pollutants have not been determined to be in access of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the EPA in the Clean Air Act (Amended 1990). Also, the construction phase will involve no open burning; thus, the primary air emissions will be associated with the operation of the construction equipment and vehicles used to deliver the building materials. The operation phase will involve routing a maximum of 16 vans and/or cars to and from the facility two to four times daily, resulting in a maximum of 84 additional vehicles on the
roadways. The main emissions will be traffic-related from the vehicles. Since the facility’s roadways and parking areas are paved, fugitive dust will be kept to a minimum.

b. **Environmental Impact**: In order to determine any potentially adverse impacts to air quality, the following guidance was used: the Clean Air Act, Section 176 (c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)). The proposed action was evaluated for compliance with State and Federal air quality goals. The assessment methodology involved evaluation of the scope of the proposed project with available information, plans, and recommended procedures.

Qualitative PM$_{2.5}$ assessments are only required for projects of air quality concern within the PM$_{2.5}$ nonattainment area. Since Randolph County has not been designated as a nonattainment area for fine particulate matter, called PM$_{2.5}$, neither a qualitative nor quantitative analysis for this project area is required.

In assessing the impact of emissions from the construction of the transit facility and parking area, the construction air impacts were considered insignificant because of the relatively small magnitude of the impacts and temporary nature of the construction activities. As for the operation phase of the facility, the main emissions would be from the maximum 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. Such a small increase in the traffic volume should not produce an adverse air quality impact.

**E. Noise Assessment**

a. **Existing Conditions**: Based on site reconnaissance in 2007, the current main sources of noise in the vicinity of Site 3 appear to be vehicular traffic traveling on Highway 82. There are few residences in the general area.
b. **Environmental Impacts:** The initial source of noise from the construction activities will be temporary (approximately six (6) months). Other than the delivery of building materials and concrete, the noise anticipated from the proposed construction should be similar to that associated with residential construction. Although of a temporary nature, construction noise can be minimized for off-site and onsite receptors by the following mitigative measures:

- Limiting hours of construction to between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday thru Saturday

- To lessen the potential noise impact to construction workers, those involved in daily operations on or around heavy equipment should wear protective ear safety equipment such as earplugs or muffs.

Impacts due to traffic generated noise once operation of the transit service has begun are expected to be minimal due to the low number of vehicles (16) which would be used for this operation, the staggered nature of their arrival and departure times, and the intermittently scheduled special appointment pickups. Any noise related to additional traffic would be confined to the parking area and adjacent roadways, and any noise increase would be inaudible. The system should operate between the hours 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday – Friday, minimizing the noise during times when nearby residents would be home from work with their families. One vehicle, a sedan or minivan and at least one driver per county, would be available for night time trips, as needed, but these trips would be kept to a minimum.

Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.
F. **Environmental Justice.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Many of the residents in Randolph County are either minorities or earn low to moderate incomes. The percentage of black or African Americans is approximately 59.7% in Randolph County (Table 1). In terms of income, in 2002, Randolph County ranked 157th of the 159 Georgia counties (see Table 2). Approximately 25.0% of the residents in Randolph County were below the poverty level (Table1). Finally, in 2003, the county ranked higher than the state average in the percentage of unemployed in the county (see Table 4); thus contributing to the relatively high poverty level for the county.

b. **Environmental Impact:** It is anticipated that locally or regionally hired construction contractors and crews would be hired to work on the transit project. Local restaurants, gas stations, and other retail outlets are expected to experience increase revenues during construction due to additional workers being in the area and potentially patronizing these establishments. Construction and operation of the facility is expected to stimulate the local economy and promote business for Randolph County.

Adverse environmental effects due to the implementation of the Proposed Action would be insignificant, as the construction would occur on a currently vacant, empty lot. There are no residential or commercial displacements associated with this proposed action. Furthermore, the proposed action would promote environmental justice by improving efficiency and connectivity of the public transportation system, which in turn provides for improved passenger safety and convenience. Therefore, no adverse impacts to minority or
low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action.

G. **Available Water Resources.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** While the total acreage for Site 3 is 1.7 acres, the construction on the centralized transit facility will disturb less than an acre. A well and septic system will need to be located on the site, thus a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit will be required.

In terms of water retention, there is no storm water system currently in place at the site or in the community; therefore, a storm water retention unit will be required.

The proposed site is located in the Clayton aquifer, a most significant groundwater recharge area with medium pollution susceptibility.

b. **Environmental Impact:** There are no surface water resources within the boundaries of the proposed action. Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area. However, given that the quality of the groundwater is unknown, appropriate quality testing should precede any use of the site groundwater involving contact or consumption by humans.

Provisions in the construction contract will require the contractor to exercise every reasonable precaution during construction to prevent the pollution of groundwater and streams in the project vicinity. Where possible, early revegetation of disturbed areas will be practiced to hold soil movement to a minimum. Dumping of chemicals, fuels, lubricants, bitumens, raw sewage, or other harmful wastes into or
alongside of streams or impoundments, or natural or man-made channels leading into these, will be prohibited.

Additional contract provisions will require the development of best management practices (BMPs) for storm water pollution prevention, which will consist of temporary erosion control measures as shown on the construction plans or as deemed necessary during construction. These temporary measures include the use of berms, dikes, dams, sediment basins, fiber mats, netting, gravel, mulches, grasses, slope drains, and other erosion control devices or methods, as applicable. In addition, the implementation of proper measures will be required for operation of the transit facility after construction to protect ground and surface water from potential hazardous material releases. These provisions are coordinated with the permanent erosion control features insofar as practical to assure economical, effective, and continuous erosion control throughout the construction and post-construction periods, and are in accordance with the Federal-Aid Policy Guide, Part 650, Subpart B.

Due to the distance of water resources from the proposed transit facility location at Site 3, no significant impacts to the water quality are expected to occur as a result of the proposed action.

H. Ecological Resources:

a. Existing Conditions: A reconnaissance survey of the property was conducted by LCRDC staff to determine the presence of any rare or protected plant or animal species on the property. None were observed. In addition, research was conducted Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources Protected Species website. Please refer to Section 6b for a discussion of the protected species found in Randolph County (see Table 20). Research into Georgia Protected Species in Randolph County revealed only one threatened fish species in the
vicinity of Site 3, that being the Broad Striped Shiner [Pteronotropis euryzonus].

b. Environmental Impact:

Broad Striped Shiner: This freshwater fish is usually found in flowing areas of medium-sized streams associated with sandy substrate and woody debris or vegetation. Threats to this species include pollution and habitat destruction. Suitable habitat for the Broadstripe Shiner is not present within the Site 3 project area, and no individuals were identified during the survey.

I. Physiographic Features

a. Existing Conditions: The topography, soils, and slope elevations at Site 3 were assessed because they may affect the suitability of this location for a transit facility.

Based on a review of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Map, soils in the Norfolk Series are mapped on Site 3 (see Figure 14). These fine loamy soils are very deep, well drained, and moderately permeable found within the upland coastal plain. (Monroe, 2005: 83-85).

Figure 15 illustrates the slope elevations in the vicinity of Site 3 which range from 5 to 20%.

b. Environmental Impact: The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, the construction contractor will be required to prepare and properly implement an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control
Site 4

Site 4 is located in the western portion of the study area in Quitman County, along US Highway 82 in Georgetown, Georgia (see Figure 17 for site location). Figure 18 provides a view of this site.

Figure 18. View of Site 4 in Quitman County (Map 008C, Parcel A001)
Figure 17. Location of Site 4 in Quitman County.
A. Cultural Resources.

a. Existing Conditions: A review of existing information on previously identified historic properties revealed that no National Register listed properties, proposed National Register nominations, or National Historic Landmarks were identified in the DNR Quitman County survey.

In 2006, a survey by the LCRDC of the property identified five (5) historic structures 50 years old or older not identified in the DNR survey (Quitman 001 through 005). These are located in Georgetown in the vicinity of Kegler Road on both the North side and South side of US Hwy 82. Of the five (5) properties 50 years old or older that were surveyed and to which the Criteria of Eligibility was applied, one (Quitman 001) was recommended eligible for inclusion as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Structures: Quitman 001 through 005 were evaluated for eligibility for listing in the National Register using the National Register Criteria for Evaluation as outlined in 36 CFR Part 60.4. There were no known associations with individuals whose specific contributions to history can be identified and documented with these properties. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the properties under Criterion B. Also, there were no indications that the properties were likely to yield information on important research questions in history or prehistory. These properties do not appear to have the potential to be the principal source of important information. Therefore, there was no basis for evaluating the properties under Criterion D.
Quitman 001 through 005 were also evaluated under Criterion A and Criterion C. Under Criterion A, there were no known associations with events that have made a significant contribution to the development in the area. Under Criterion C, only Quitman 001 appeared to possess significance in the area of architecture. The type and method of construction of the property are unique or unusual in the area. Alterations to the main building and setting are historic in their own right and include a rear addition on the north façade of the building. Because Quitman 001 has not lost integrity in this area, it is recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Regarding Quitman 002 through 005, these properties did not appear to possess significance in the area of architecture. The type and method of construction of the properties are not unique or unusual and the properties represent well-documented types or styles of architecture. Because Quitman 002 through 005 are not considered significant based on evaluation under Criterion A and Criterion C, they are recommended not eligible for inclusion in the National Register.

A search of the Georgia Natural Archaeological and Historic Resource website indicated that no archaeological sites have been identified within the APE of Site 4. Also, none were identified as a result of the review of the site area during coordination with the SHPO in May 2007. No NHRP eligible or potentially eligible archaeological sites are located within the APE of Site 4.

c. Environmental Impact: One historic site (Quitman 001) recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register was identified within the APE of Site 4. The proposed action would necessitate the demolition of this building, and therefore, would have an adverse impact on this historic resource.
d. **Section 4 (f) Applicability:** Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act refers to the temporary and/or permanent use and constructive use of public owned land, specifically significant recreation land, parkland, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Because the proposed action will have no adverse impact on the cultural resources within the APE of Site 1, Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act does apply.

B. **Wetlands and Floodplains**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Quitman County has approximately 151.6 square miles scattered throughout the county. Figure 19 depicts no protected wetlands, as identified in The National Wetland Inventory (NWI), within the vicinity of Site 4.

Quitman County has been mapped for Floodplains under the Federal Emergency Management Agency Program. Site 4 is located in Flood Zone X (Figure 20) which is defined as Areas outside the 1-percent annual chance floodplain, areas of 1% annual chance sheet flow flooding where average depths are less than 1 foot, areas of 1% annual chance stream flooding where the contributing drainage area is less than 1 square mile, or areas protected from the 1% annual chance flood by levees.

b. **Environmental Impact:** Site 4 is not located within any identified wetland areas or 100-year floodplain areas; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these areas.

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14 Researched on the FEMA website: [http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=floodZones&title=FEMA%20Flood%20Zone%20Designations](http://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/info?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1&content=floodZones&title=FEMA%20Flood%20Zone%20Designations)
Figure 19. Protected Wetland Areas in Vicinity of Site 4.
Figure 20. FEMA Floodzones in the Vicinity of Site 4.
C. **Ecologically Critical Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Other Unique Natural Resources.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** As noted in the discussion above, there are no Ecologically Critical, Wild and Scenic, or other Unique Natural Resources in the Four County Project Area.

b. **Environmental Impact:** There are no ecologically critical areas, wild and scenic rivers, or unique natural resources identified in the vicinity of Site 4; thus, the proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.

D. **Air Quality.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** Quitman County is currently not designated a noncontainment area of Georgia for ground level ozone and particulate matter PM$_{2.5}$. Therefore, the levels of these pollutants have not been determined to be in access of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) established by the EPA in the Clean Air Act (Amended 1990). Also, the construction phase will involve no open burning; thus, the primary air emissions will be associated with the operation of the construction equipment and vehicles used to deliver the building materials. The operation phase will involve routing a maximum of 16 vans and/or cars to and from the facility two to four times daily, resulting in a maximum of 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. The main emissions will be traffic-related from the vehicles. Since the facility’s roadways and parking areas are paved, fugitive dust will be kept to a minimum.

b. **Environmental Impact:** In order to determine any potentially adverse impacts to air quality, the following guidance was used: the Clean Air Act, Section 176 (c) (42 U.S.C. 7506 (c)). The proposed action was evaluated for compliance with State and Federal air quality goals. The...
assessment methodology involved evaluation of the scope of the proposed project with available information, plans, and recommended procedures.

Qualitative PM$_{2.5}$ assessments are only required for projects of air quality concern within the PM$_{2.5}$ nonattainment area. Since Randolph County has not been designated as a nonattainment area for fine particulate matter, called PM$_{2.5}$, neither a qualitative nor quantitative analysis for this project area is required.

In assessing the impact of emissions from the construction of the transit facility and parking area, the construction air impacts were considered insignificant because of the relatively small magnitude of the impacts and temporary nature of the construction activities. As for the operation phase of the facility, the main emissions would be from the maximum 84 additional vehicles on the roadways. Such a small increase in the traffic volume should not produce an adverse air quality impact.

E. Noise Assessment.

a. **Existing Conditions:** Based on site reconnaissance in 2007, the current main sources of noise in the vicinity of Site 4 appear to be vehicular traffic traveling on Highway 82. There are several houses and public buildings located nearby along Kagler Rd, including an elementary school and recreation facility.

b. **Environmental Impacts:** The initial source of noise from the construction activities will be temporary (approximately six (6) months). Other than the delivery of building materials and concrete, the noise anticipated from the proposed construction should be similar to that associated with residential construction. Although of a
temporary nature, construction noise can be minimized for off-site and onsite receptors by the following mitigative measures:

- Limiting hours of construction to between 7:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Monday thru Saturday
- To lessen the potential noise impact to construction workers, those involved in daily operations on or around heavy equipment should wear protective ear safety equipment such as earplugs or muffs.

Impacts due to traffic generated noise once operation of the transit service has begun are expected to be minimal due to the low number of vehicles (16) which would be used for this operation, the staggered nature of their arrival and departure times, and the intermittently scheduled special appointment pickups. Any noise related to additional traffic would be confined to the parking area and adjacent roadways, and any noise increase would be inaudible. The system should operate between the hours 6 A.M. to 6 P.M. Monday – Friday, minimizing the noise during times when nearby residents would be home from work with their families. One vehicle, a sedan or minivan and at least one driver per county, would be available for night time trips, as needed, but these trips would be kept to a minimum.

Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.

F. Environmental Justice.

a. Existing Conditions: Many of the residents in Quitman County are either minorities or are low to moderate income. The percentage of black or African Americans is approximately 47% in Quitman County (Table 1). In terms of income, in 2002, Quitman County ranked 147th...
of the 159 Georgia counties (see Table 2). Approximately 22.4% of the residents in Quitman County were below the poverty level (Table 1). Finally, in 2003, the county had an unemployment rate of 6.1% of the population (see Table 4); thus contributing to the relatively high poverty level for the county.

b. **Environmental Impact**: It is anticipated that locally or regionally hired construction contractors and crews would be hired to work on the transit project. Local restaurants, gas stations, and other retail outlets are expected to experience increased revenues during construction due to additional workers being in the area and potentially patronizing these establishments. Construction and operation of the facility is expected to stimulate the local economy and promote business for Randolph County.

Adverse environmental effects due to the implementation of the Proposed Action would be insignificant, as the construction would occur on a currently vacant, empty lot. There are no residential or commercial displacements associated with this proposed action. Furthermore, the proposed action would promote environmental justice by improving efficiency and connectivity of the public transportation system, which in turn provides for improved passenger safety and convenience. Therefore, no adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action.
G. **Available Water Resources.**

a. **Existing Conditions:** While the total acreage for this site is 19.0 acres, the construction on the centralized transit facility will disturb less than an acre. A well and septic system will need to be located on the site, thus a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit will be required.

In terms of water retention, there is no storm water system currently in place at the site or in the community; therefore, a storm water retention unit will be required.

The proposed site is located in the Cretaceous-Tertiary aquifer (see Figure 21). This groundwater system is the deepest of the principal aquifers in South Georgia. It serves as a major source of water in the northern one-third of the Coastal Plain.

b. **Environmental Impact:** There are no surface water resources within the boundaries of the proposed action. Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area. However, given that the quality of the groundwater is unknown, appropriate quality testing should precede any use of the site groundwater involving contact or consumption by humans.
Figure 7. Groundwater Recharge Area in the Vicinity of Site 4.
H. Ecological Resources:

a. A reconnaissance survey of the property was conducted by LCRDC staff to determine the presence of any rare or protected plant or animal species on the property. None were observed. In addition, research was conducted Georgia’s Department of Natural Resources Protected Species website (see Table 10).

Table 10. List of Protected Species in Quitman County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Status</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Elliptio arctata</em> Delicate Spike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>· <em>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</em> Bald Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Macrophelys temminckii</em> Alligator Snapping Turtle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Moxostoma sp. 1</em> Apalachicola Redhorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>· <em>Procambarus acutissimus</em> Sharpnose Crayfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Pteronotropis euryzonius</em> Broadstripe Shiner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Aesculus parviflora</em> Bottlebrush Buckeye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Brickellia cordifolia</em> Heartleaf Brickellia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Croomia pauciflora</em> Croomia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Quercus arkansana</em> Arkansas Oak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Rhododendron prunifolium</em> Plumleaf Azalea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No natural communities listed in Quitman county.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research into Georgia Protected Species in Quitman County revealed two animal species and three plant species in the vicinity of Site 4 (Table 11).

Table 11. List of Protected Species in Vicinity of Site 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Protected Status</th>
<th>Species</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Elliptio arctata</em> Delicate Spike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>· <em>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</em> Bald Eagle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Brickellia cordifolia</em> Flyr’s Brickell-bush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Croomia pauciflora</em> Croomia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GA</td>
<td>· <em>Rhododendron prunifolium</em> Plumleaf Azalea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
b. **Environmental Impact:**

**Delicate Spike**

This freshwater mussel is typically found in large rivers and creeks with some current in sand and limestone rock substrates. There is no suitable habitat for the Delicate Spike present in the Site 4 project area; and no individuals were identified during the survey.

**Bald Eagle**

The Bald Eagle is typically found along the edges of lakes & large rivers, and along seacoasts. There is no suitable habitat for the Bald Eagle present in the Site 4 project area; and no individuals were identified during the survey.

**Flyr’s Brickell-bush**

This flowering plant is typically found in rich, mature mesic forests. There is no suitable habitat for the Flyr’s Brickell-bush present in the Site 4 project area; and no individuals were identified during the survey.

**Croomia**

This flowering plant typically grows in rich, moist, loamy soils in mixed hardwood forests, usually on the steep slopes of ravines or bluffs, often over limestone. There is no suitable habitat for the Croomia present in the Site 4 project area; and no individuals were identified during the survey.

**Plumleaf Azalea**

This large shrub or small tree can be found in ravines and on steep stream banks that often are densely wooded with mixed hardwoods
and pines. While suitable habitat for the Plumleaf Azalea may be present within the Site 4 project area, no individuals were identified during the survey.

I. Physiographic Features.

a. Existing Conditions: The topography, soils, and slope elevations at Site 4 were assessed because they may affect the suitability of this location for a transit facility.

Based on a review of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Soils Map, soils in the Norfolk Series are mapped on Site 4 (see Figure 22). These fine loamy soils are very deep, well drained, and moderately permeable found within the upland coastal plain. (Monroe, 2005: 83-85). Figure 23 illustrates the slope elevations in the vicinity of Site 4. The elevations range from 4 to 33%.

b. Environmental Impact: The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, the construction contractor will be required to prepare and properly implement an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&PC) Plan that meets the requirements of the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission’s Manual For Sediment and Erosion Control in Georgia (5th Edition).
Figure 22. Soils in Vicinity of Site 4.
Figure 23.  Ground Slope Elevations in Vicinity of Site 4.
Summary of Impacts and Required Mitigation

Table 12 presents a summary of the Environmental Assessments for each proposed transit facility location. The only adverse environmental impact identified during this assessment was to the potentially eligible NRHP historic property at Site 4. If this site is chosen as the location for the transit facility, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) will then be prepared to propose activities to mitigate the adverse effects to this historic site.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Aspect</th>
<th>Site 1</th>
<th>Site 2</th>
<th>Site 3</th>
<th>Site 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Resources</td>
<td>Two (2) structures over 50 yrs, None are eligible for listing or are listed on NRHP. No adverse impact to cultural resources.</td>
<td>Six (6) structures over 50 yrs, All are recommended for inclusion into NRHP Historic District. Proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.</td>
<td>Six (6) structures over 50 yrs, All are recommended for inclusion into NRHP Historic District. Proposed action will have no adverse impact on these resources.</td>
<td>One (1) structure over 50 yrs recommended eligible for listing or are listed on NRHP. Proposed action will have an adverse impact on this cultural resource.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands and Floodplains</td>
<td>No Wetlands, Flood zone X. No adverse impact to defined wetland or floodplain areas.</td>
<td>No Wetlands, Flood zones not mapped. No adverse impact to defined wetland or floodplain areas.</td>
<td>No Wetlands, Flood zones not mapped. No adverse impact to defined wetland or floodplain areas.</td>
<td>No Wetlands, Flood zone X. No adverse impact to defined wetland or floodplain areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecologically Critical Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Other Unique Natural Resources</td>
<td>None identified in Site area. No adverse impact to these resources.</td>
<td>None identified in Site area. No adverse impact to these resources.</td>
<td>None identified in Site area. No adverse impact to these resources.</td>
<td>None identified in Site area. No adverse impact to these resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Quality</td>
<td>Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility at this location is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.</td>
<td>Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility at this location is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.</td>
<td>Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility at this location is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.</td>
<td>Construction and operation of the proposed transit facility at this location is not anticipated to result in a significant increase in exterior noise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise Assessment</td>
<td>Minorities make of 61.5% of total population in Quitman County; approximately 22.6% live below the poverty level. No adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action at this location.</td>
<td>Minorities make of 57.9% of total population in Randolph County; approximately 25.0% live below the poverty level. No adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action at this location.</td>
<td>Minorities make of 57.9% of total population in Randolph County; approximately 25.0% live below the poverty level. No adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action at this location.</td>
<td>Minorities make of 47.0% of total population in Quitman County; approximately 25.0% live below the poverty level. No adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations will occur as a result of implementation of the proposed action at this location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Justice</td>
<td>Cretaceous-Tertiary Aquifer; Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area.</td>
<td>Clayton Aquifer; Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area.</td>
<td>Clayton Aquifer; Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area.</td>
<td>Cretaceous-Tertiary Aquifer; Construction activities will not occur at depths that would cause an adverse effect to groundwater resources in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Water Sources</td>
<td>1 Bird, 1 Fish, 4 Plants; a suitable habitat for these species does not occur in the site area and no individuals were identified during the survey.</td>
<td>1 Bird; a suitable habitat for these species does not occur in the site area and no individuals were identified during the survey.</td>
<td>1 Bird; a suitable habitat for these species does not occur in the site area and no individuals were identified during the survey.</td>
<td>1 Fish, 1 Bird, 3 Plants; a suitable habitat for these species does not occur in the site area and no individuals were identified during the survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Resources</td>
<td>Norfolk Series Soils, 2-16% Slope; The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&amp;PC) Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Norfolk Series Soils, 5-20% Slope; The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&amp;PC) Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Norfolk Series Soils, 5-20% Slope; The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&amp;PC) Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Norfolk Series Soils, 4-33% Slope; The proposed construction of the facility would slightly impact the existing site contours but would not require excessive site modification to bring the site to grade. Onsite soils could erode during construction of the facility. To minimize adverse impacts, an Erosion, Sediment, and Pollution Control (ES&amp;PC) Plan will be prepared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiographic Features</td>
<td>Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Plan will be prepared.</td>
<td>Plan will be prepared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Findings

A. Site Rankings

As seen in the table below, Site 2 ranked the highest of the four potential sites in terms of the site evaluation criteria, scoring 63.5 (94%) out of a possible 67.5 points. This site’s central location and accessibility to a major highway contributed greatly to its being seen as the most effective location within the four county area for the transit facility. Although there are historic sites within the APE recommended for inclusion in a potentially eligible historic district, the proposed action with have no adverse impacts on these resources. Thus, Site 2 is the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for this project. The remaining sites ranked as follows: Site 1 in Stewart County (2nd), Site 4 in Quitman County (3rd), and Site 3 in Randolph County (4th). Table 25 displays the ranking for each site:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 13: Site Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weighting</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrounding Land Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Considerations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic/Circulation/Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Preparation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Score</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Alternative Actions

Five Alternative Actions were proposed at the beginning of this report: 1) No Action, 2) Constructing a Centralized Facility and Operating a Regional Transit Program at Site 1, 3) Constructing a Centralized Facility and Operating a Regional Transit Program at Site 2, 4) Constructing a Centralized Facility and Operating a Regional Transit Program at Site 3, and 5) Constructing a Centralized Facility and Operating a Regional Transit Program at Site 4. Each is discussed and considered below.

1. **Alternative Action 1**: By implementing the first Alternative Action, the “No-Build” Alternative, no centralized regional transit facility would be constructed or operated within the region, and the residents within the Four County Project Area will continue to have no access to regional public transportation. Although Clay and Quitman Counties operate transportation systems within their jurisdictions, these systems do not service the other two counties. And Randolph and Stewart Counties have no public transportation systems at all. If no regional transit system is built, all of these residents, even those in Clay and Quitman Counties, will be isolated from readily available urban services and employment centers, because many necessary services and sources of employment can only be found on a regional basis. No adverse environmental impacts would result from implementing this alternative.
2. **Alternative Action 2**: The second Alternative Action involves constructing and operating a Regional Transit Facility at Site 1. Although this environmental assessment found no adverse effects to result from constructing and operating the facility at this location, the site’s major deficiency was its location in the northeastern portion of the Project area, rather than in a more centralized location for greater accessibility for all the residents in the Four County Project Area.

3. **Alternative Action 3**: The third Alternative Action involves constructing and operating a Regional Transit Facility at Site 2. This is the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) because this site scored the highest in suitability for location of the transit facility. It is centrally located, adequately sized, located along a well traveled highway, and needs relatively little site preparation in order to construct the facility. Placement of the facility at this site will have no adverse environmental impacts. The proposed action consists of constructing and operating a centralized transit facility at this location. The centralized operating facility should house a dispatch office and a vehicle maintenance garage. The building will be approximately 3,500 square feet for office space and four maintenance bays. The area will need additional space for at least 16 vans and/or cars to park, as well as employee parking. In order to accommodate these uses and future expansion, the site will need to be a minimum of three acres in size. The number of vehicles was determined based on the four-county population of 18,998 and expected ridership of approximately 22,797 per year (please see Transportation Development Plan for calculations)\(^{15}\). The public transportation system would provide a mixture of door-to-door, demand-response and subscription service. The system would operate on weekdays Monday-Fridays 6A.M. – 6 P.M. In addition, a sedan or minivan and at least 1 driver per county.

\(^{15}\) *Four Counties Rural Transportation Development Plan for Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart County, July 2007, Developed by the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center, Table 28*, pg. 60
would be available for night time trips, as needed, and weekend trips, upon demand.

4. **Alternative Action 4**: The fourth Alternative Action involves constructing and operating a Regional Transit Facility at Site 3. Although this environmental assessment found no adverse effects to result from constructing and operating the facility at this location, the site’s major deficiency was that it was too small to house the facility and parking area, and the adjacent roads were not paved, which would inhibit traffic flow and decrease the accessibility into facility in case of rain or other hazardous weather.

5. **Alternative Action 5**: The fifth Alternative Action involves constructing and operating a Regional Transit Facility at Site 4. Construction and operation of the transit facility at this site was found to have an adverse impact on a potentially eligible NRHP site within the APE of Site 4. The proposed action would necessitate demolition of this resources, and would involve Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act. In addition, the site had several major deficiencies as far as suitability for the site including the presence of several public buildings nearby, an existing structure on the property that would need to be removed, and the location of the property in the western portion of the four county project area. For these reasons, Site 4 is not the preferred site for location of the transit facility.

Overall, a centralized rural transportation system, as proposed, is expected to have a significant impact in the four county region by:

a. providing a means for residents to obtain local and regional services as needed;

b. demonstrating and possibly increasing intergovernmental coordination for transportation services;
c. removing transportation barriers from local agencies who provide transportation as part of their service delivery;
d. enhancing the transportation element of regional and local comprehensive planning; and
e. providing an economic tool to attract industry.

Based on the Environmental Assessment completed in this report, Site 2 is recommended as the Locally Preferred Alternative for construction and operation of a regional transit system.
7. Public Participation

An Environmental Assessment involves agency and public notification of the intent to implement the Proposed Action, and provides the opportunity for agency and public review and comment upon the assessment document. The following scoping and public/agency notification activities have or are occurring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Participation Task</th>
<th>Documentation</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four-County Transit Meeting</td>
<td>Sign-In Sheet and Minutes from meeting at Randolph County Public Library in Cuthbert, GA</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9/14/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-County Transit Meeting</td>
<td>Sign-In Sheet and Minutes from meeting at Randolph County Public Library in Cuthbert, GA</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12/15/2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-County Transit Meeting</td>
<td>Sign-In Sheet and Minutes from meeting at the Four County Chamber of Commerce in Cuthbert, GA</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7/27/2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-County Transit Meeting</td>
<td>Sign-In Sheet and Minutes from meeting at the Four County Chamber of Commerce in Cuthbert, GA</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10/12/2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-County Transit Meeting</td>
<td>Sign-In Sheet and Minutes from meeting at the Southwest Chamber of Commerce in Cuthbert, GA</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1/10/2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Coordination Request Letters</td>
<td>Early coordination request letters mailed to all interested local, tribal, planning, and regulatory agencies, with 30-day comment period.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12/12/2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notice of Availability</td>
<td>Public notice of availability of draft environmental assessment placed in local newspapers in Clay, Quitman, Randolph, and Stewart Counties, GA, with 45-day comment period.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12/12/2007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After review of comments received during the comment period for this Environmental Assessment, this report will be sent to the Georgia State Clearinghouse where it will then be forwarded to the appropriate agencies. In addition, the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center will advertise the availability of this Environmental Assessment and will provide the opportunity to hold a public hearing.
Upon completion of review of this document, a decision will be made by the responsible officials concerning which alternative will be selected. None has been selected at this time.

Any comments concerning this environmental assessment should be addressed to the following:

Harvey Keepler or Myra Immings
Office of Intermodal Programs Community Planner
GDOT TRO-04
276 Memorial Dr. SW Federal Transit Administration
Atlanta, GA 30303-3743 Southeastern Region
Atlanta, GA 30303-8917
REFERENCES


Tyson, Anthony W., Extension Engineer, Georgia’s Ground Water Resources.

WEBSITES:

Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality
http://www.epa.gov/region4/air/naaqs/index.htm

Federal Emergency Management Agency Map Service Center

Georgia Department of Driver Services
http://www.dds.ga.gov/

Georgia Department of Labor
ftp://quicksource.dol.state.ga.us/Data_Compilations/

Georgia Department of Motor Vehicle Safety
http://www.dmvs.ga.gov/

Georgia Department of Natural Archaeological and Historic Resources

Rural Transportation 97
www.gnshpo.org

Georgia Rare Species web page from Georgia Department of Natural Resources
http://georgiawildlife.dnr.state.ga.us


Natural, Archaeological, and Historical Resources GIS (NAHRGIS)
https://www.itos.uga.edu/nahrgis/

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wetland Inventory
http://www.nwi.fws.gov

U.S. Geological Survey’s National Water Quality Assessment (NAWQA) Program’s
Appalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin Study