Education and youth development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
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<th>2010 vs.GA</th>
<th>2011 vs.GA</th>
<th>2012 vs.GA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First grade readiness (proficient English and math skills)</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth grade reading proficiency</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-time high school graduation rate</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disengaged young adults (age 18-24)</td>
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<td>NO Trend</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>X</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenage birth rate (per 1,000 female 15-19 year-olds)</td>
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Health and Wellness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2010 vs.GA</th>
<th>2011 vs.GA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance coverage rate (for those under 65)</td>
<td>76.7% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-emergency use of hospital ER (per 1,000 persons)</td>
<td>83.6 NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school students with unhealthy weight</td>
<td>34.6% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy birthweight babies</td>
<td>89.8% X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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Economic Independence

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Metric</th>
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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2010 vs.GA</th>
<th>2011 vs.GA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working households that are low income</td>
<td>32.7% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank account ownership in low income households</td>
<td>72.7% X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeownership rate in low income households</td>
<td>26.6% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs in low income households (% spending more than 30% of household income)</td>
<td>75.6% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Regionalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
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<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2010 vs.GA</th>
<th>2011 vs.GA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index</td>
<td>158.0 NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Solid waste recycling (lbs. per person)</td>
<td>99.4 NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<td>Good air quality days (Percent)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of alternative transportation (percent of total trans.)</td>
<td>15.0% X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation ridership (per capita)</td>
<td>13.9 NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average commute time (minutes)</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td></td>
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Legend:

- **NO Trend**: no comparable past data
- **Favorable trend**: NA
- **Relative stability**: NA
- **Unfavorable trend**: NA
- **Out-performing Georgia**: NA
- **Similar to Georgia**: NA
- **Under-performing Georgia**: NA
Executive Summary

The Savannah::Chatham Community Indicators report provides data about twenty key indicators describing the well-being of the community that encompass education and youth development, health and wellness, economic independence and regionalism. The indicators are meant to provide information that is meaningful, valid, understandable and applicable. The purpose of reporting the information is three-fold: describe emerging trends, opportunities and challenges; serve as a catalyst for conversation among members of the community leading to action; and inform the citizenry of Chatham County on important issues.

The education and youth development indicators reveal mixed results. Indicators that moved in a favorable direction as compared to data from the previous period were on-time graduation rate, disengaged youth, and teenage birthrate. Fourth grade reading proficiency, on-time graduation rate, and out-of-school suspension data were less favorable than comparable state-level data. First grade readiness declined, but remained above state averages. Data for disengaged 16- to 19-year olds and teenage birthrate improved to be more favorable than Georgia data.

The health and wellness indicators reveal issues which present continuing challenges to the community. Deteriorating conditions were recorded for the health insurance coverage rate for those under 65, percentage of babies born with a healthy birth rate, and the percent of high school students who are overweight and obese. For these three indicators, the Chatham County data reveal underperformance as compared to Georgia as a whole. A significant worsening in conditions is noted for non-emergency use of the hospital ER services.

The economic independence indicators were mixed and continue to identify challenges for the community. Improvement was noted for homeownership rate in low income households and housing costs in low income households. Low income households in Chatham County remain under more financial stress than their state-wide counterparts, but the homeownership rate improved to equal the Georgia rate. Bank account ownership in low income working households declined along with the percentage of those households that were able to continuously maintain a combined balance of $300 in checking and saving accounts.

The regionalism indicators describing economic, environmental and transportation conditions were mixed. The general economy improved and is expected to strengthen through 2013. Recycling per person increased along with the use of public transportation. However, commute time lengthened, air quality diminished, and overall use of alternative transportation declined. Although air quality deteriorated, it remained better than for the state. Further, commuters in Chatham County spend less time in traffic than their state-wide counterparts and are more likely to use alternative transportation than others in Georgia.
Indicator Summary

**Education and youth development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>vs.GA</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First grade readiness (proficient English and math skills)</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark] ![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fourth grade reading proficiency</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>2012-13</td>
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<td>On-time high school graduation rate</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teenage birth rate (per 1,000 female 15-19 year-olds)</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark] ![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
<td></td>
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**Health and Wellness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>vs.GA</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health insurance coverage rate (for those under 65)</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-emergency use of hospital ER (per 1,000 persons)</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school students with unhealthy weight</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy birth weight babies</td>
<td>89.8%</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
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**Economic Independence**

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<th>vs.GA</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working households that are low income</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing costs in low income households</td>
<td>75.6%</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% spending more than 30% of household income)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Regionalism**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>vs.GA</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index</td>
<td>158.0</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark] ![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public transportation ridership (per capita)</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>2011-12</td>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark] ![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
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<td>44</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
<td>favorable trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td>unfavorable trend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yellow] ![Equals]</td>
<td>relative stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yellow] ![Equals]</td>
<td>similar to Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td>under-performing Georgia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trend</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>![Green] ![Checkmark]</td>
<td>out-performing Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Red] ![Cross] ![Red] ![Cross]</td>
<td>no comparable Georgia data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Yellow] ![Equals]</td>
<td>no comparable past data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Savannah::Chatham Community Indicators -------------- Armstrong Atlantic State University
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Introduction

The Savannah::Chatham Community Indicators project provides data about 20 key indicators of well-being describing four major areas: education and youth development, health and wellness, economic independence and regionalism. These indicators may be used to establish a baseline for identifying priorities, developing solutions and monitoring progress toward an improved quality of life in our community.

Many community stakeholders were involved in a strategic planning process that identified priority areas of interest covered by the indicators. This process included surveys of community and business leaders, a survey of the population, and focus group sessions with community and business leaders. The process was completed between late 2007 and 2009. The Savannah::Chatham Community Indicators database and this report emerged from that process.

The primary purposes of developing and updating the database are:

- **Describe emerging trends, opportunities and challenges** that can be prioritized and addressed by the people, governments and institutions of the region.

- **Serve as a catalyst for conversation** among people and policy-makers to monitor the effectiveness of strategies and to assess the deployment of public and private resources in addressing matters of community interest.

- **Inform the citizenry** of Chatham County and the region in providing information about the community on matters that are important to them.

In each category, the selection criteria for the indicators included the following:

- **Meaningful.** The indicator measures a specific condition of interest to the public, government or agencies. It characterizes a matter that spans community-wide interests.

- **Valid.** The indicator is obtained from a consistently reliable source. It is timely, readily available, accurate and measurable.

- **Understandable.** The indicator is easy to interpret and communicate to various constituencies.

- **Applicable.** The indicator facilitates the establishment of priorities, development of policy and evaluation of outcomes.

Although great care was exercised in compiling the indicators, an occasional practical problem such as initial collection or recent availability of new and relevant data resulted in minor variances in applying the selection criteria to the indicators. The project is a living work-in-progress capable of adjusting to the changing needs and preferences of the community. It is anticipated that the list of indicators will change through time.
The education of children and young adults is a crucial factor determining the long-term vitality and success of a community. Education is the gateway for opportunities, for overcoming poverty, and for individuals to obtain a higher quality of life. The goal of education is to facilitate intellectual development and to enable young adults to become contributing and productive members of their community. Below, six indicators are provided that are useful in monitoring progress toward the goal of providing a sound education that enables the community’s children and young adults to become productive members of society.

**Research Highlights**

The community’s efforts in education and youth development have yielded improving results, but some challenges remain.

The education and youth development indicators are first grade readiness, 4th grade reading proficiency, high school graduation rate, out of school suspensions, disengaged young adults and teenage birth rates. These six indicators provide information useful in assessing progress toward the goal of providing a sound education that enables the community’s children and young adults to become productive members of society.

First grade readiness is measured among kindergarten-age children by GKIDS (formerly GKAP) test scores. The indicator is the percentage of kindergarten children who enter first grade with proficient English and Math skills. In 2012, Chatham County’s entering first grader public school students scored higher than the state average in English and Math, but scores fell from the previous year.

Academic achievement is measured by two indicators, reading proficiency in fourth grade and the on-time high school graduation rate. In 2012, the fourth grade CRCT scores in reading increased by a large amount in both the county’s public schools and on a state-wide basis. Local public school fourth graders score slightly below the state average in reading. However, in 2013 the county’s scores fell back down, while the state remained the same. The on-time graduation rate for public high school remains below the state average.

Youth development is measured by three indicators: proportion of young adults not in school or working, the out of school suspension rate, and teenage birth rate. The proportion of young adults age 18 to 24 in the county who are not in school or working is nearly four percentage points less than the state rate. Further, the level of disengagement among 16- to 19-year-olds substantially declined and is now less than the state rate. The out of school suspension rates for both 9th and 12th graders increased in 2012.
and remain above state averages. The teenage birth rate decreased dramatically and fell below the state level.

- The 2012-2013 GKIDS scores in Chatham County indicate 85.1% and 81.7% of the children met or exceeded the standard in math and English, respectively.

- The 2012-2013 combined English and math GKIDS exam scores in Chatham County decreased 8.2 percentage points from the previous year; similarly the combined score for Georgia fell 8.3 percentage points.

- CRCT reading scores for fourth graders decreased to 86.7% in 2013, and students in Chatham County public schools are still scoring below the state average of 90.2%, which remained the same as in 2012.

- The on-time graduation rate for 2012 is 63.3% in Chatham County public schools, while the state rate is 69.7%. The gap between the state and county rate significantly declined from 2011 to 2012.

- The percentage of disengaged 18- to 24-year-olds in Chatham County was 14%, which compares favorably to 17.7% for Georgia in 2005-2007.

- The percentage of disengaged 16- to 19-year-olds in Chatham County was 11.7%, which is less than the 14.2% rate for Georgia in 2011.

- The out of school suspension rate for 9th grade public school students in Chatham County increased from 28.9% in 2011 to 31.6% in 2012.

- The out of school suspension rate for 12th grade public school students in Chatham County increased from 15.8% to 18.7% in 2012.

- The teenage birth rate decreased in Chatham County to 40.3 per 1,000 females, as compared to 41.2 for the state in 2010. This indicator fell below birth rates typically recorded since 2003.
Readiness to Succeed in School
A child's readiness for schooling may be assessed in terms of cognitive, emotional, social and physical skills. Children preparing to enter the first grade in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System complete a standardized test that can provide information useful to parents, teachers, and system administrators. Detecting problems prior to elementary school entry is essential in fostering appropriate child development leading to success during the school years. Improving results through time indicate our community is placing a priority on creating a culture of successful learning and education.

Trend

INDICATOR 1: First grade readiness vs. GA

What does it measure?
The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS), that replaced the GKAP test, is a year-long performance-based assessment. It measures the percentage of kindergarten children who enter first grade ready to succeed in the areas of English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Approaches to Learning, and Personal/Social Development. ELA tests the child’s writing, reading and oral abilities. The Math assessment tests the child’s general understanding of numbers and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability. Approaches to Learning evaluates the development of positive approaches toward learning new skills as well as using knowledge and skills students already possess, such as creativity or curiosity. The Personal and Social Development category evaluates the child’s ability to interact with other children and their capacity for self-regulation. The GKIDS test was administered for the first time in 2008-2009.

Why is it important?
The goal of the assessment program is to provide kindergarten and first grade teachers with diagnostic information and to identify a student’s strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year, summary reports and individual student reports are generated based on the data the teacher has provided throughout the year. As the percentage of students ready to enter first grade increases, it suggests that the community is fostering a culture of learning and education prior to entering the elementary education system.

How are we doing?
The GKIDS results for the 2012-13 school year show that Chatham County English and Math results exceeded the Georgia results for the third consecutive year. However, the 2012-2013 English and Math GKIDS exam scores in Chatham County decreased 4.2 and 4.0 percentage points, respectively, from the previous year, as compared to similarly falling rates in Georgia. The smallest loss at the local level was achieved in Approach to Learning, falling 2.5 percentage points each to 79.3% of the children meeting or exceeding the standard.

In Georgia public schools, there were similar losses in English and Math, with the rates falling 4.8 and 3.5 percentage points, respectively, of students meeting or exceeding a standard. At the state level, the results for “Approach to Learning” were the most stable.
of scores, falling slightly to 75.1% from 76.5%. In general, results in Chatham County schools have increased substantially in “Approach to Learning” and “Personal/Social Development,” while results for Math and English have increased more modestly since 2008-09.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENTERING FIRST GRADE READY TO SUCCEED: GKIDS RESULTS 2008-2013 FOR SAVANNAH-CHATHAM COUNTY
Source: Savannah-Chatham County Public School System

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ENTERING FIRST GRADE READY TO SUCCEED: GKIDS RESULTS 2008-2013 FOR GEORGIA
Source: Georgia Department of Education
Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is clearly related to future economic success. Reading proficiency and on-time graduation rates are important measurements of a child’s academic achievement and a measure of the success of the school system in educating students. Children who meet or exceed reading standards in their grade level are more likely to master material and subsequently graduate in a timely manner. Graduating on-time increases the student’s probability of obtaining a college degree and benefiting from better employment and career opportunities. Higher test results in reading and higher on-time graduation rates will reflect the strength of a community’s educational system and its general well-being. Deficiencies identified by these data can lead to proactive policies that address problems in the educational system and thereby foster long-run economic self-sufficiency and community economic development.

INDICATOR 2: Fourth grade reading proficiency

What does it measure?
This indicator measures the percent of fourth grade students that met or exceeded the Georgia Performance Standard set for the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in reading in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

Why is it important?
It indicates how successful public schools were in meeting the annual measurable objectives established by the Georgia Department of Education. In general terms, reading skills in the fourth grade begin to transition from “Learning to Read” to “Reading to Learn.” Reading achievement is correlated with performance in other subjects because reading is a necessary building block for the development of other skills.

How are we doing?
CRCT reading scores decreased at the county level and stayed the same at the state level for the 2012-2013 school year, as compared to the previous year. The latest data follows the trend of Chatham County (86.7%) scoring below Georgia (90.2%), but now a modest gap of 3.5 percentage points separates the two.

CRCT-4 READING RESULTS
Source: Georgia Department of Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Chatham County</th>
<th>Georgia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
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<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>79%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>72%</td>
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</tr>
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<td>2004</td>
<td>72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>89.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>84.3%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>90.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INDICATOR 3: On-time graduation rate

What does it measure?
This indicator measures the percentage of high school students in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System who graduate on-time. In 2012 a new standardized definition of graduation rate was adopted by the Georgia Department of Education. The new measure includes all students who began in 9th and graduated in four years, taking into account dropouts, deaths, and transfers of students.

Why is it important?
High school graduation is an important indicator of the success of an individual and society at large. It is a key factor influencing the long-term economic success of an individual. The on-time graduation rate provides a clear picture of the degree to which students progress through the high school public education system because it reflects the number of students who earn a diploma within four years of entering the ninth grade.

How are we doing?
The difference between Chatham and Georgia public high school graduation rates was cut in half from 13 to 6.4 percentage points from 2011 to 2012. This more closely matches the previous differential of about four percentage points under the prior measure. Since 2007, the gap between the state and county on-time graduation rate substantially diminished. The graduation rate was 63.3% in Chatham in 2012, compared to 54.4% in 2011. The state experienced a smaller gain of 1.7 percentage points, rising to 69.7%.

ON-TIME HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
Source: Kids Count, Georgia Dept. of Education, SCCPSS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Georgia</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>53.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011*</td>
<td>54.4%*</td>
<td>67.4%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012*</td>
<td>63.3%*</td>
<td>69.7%*</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* New Cohort definition
Productive and engaged young adults

Communities invest many resources in programs to help adolescents make a successful transition from high school to work life and to become productive and socially responsible members of society. Important indicators in this regard include the proportion of young adults who are neither in school nor working, the out-of-school suspension rate and teenage birth rates. The detachment or disconnection from roles or relationships that set young adults on the path to a productive life can create adverse long-term social and economic consequences for disconnected youth and the community as a whole. Poor school attendance or behavior and teenage births place young adults at a higher risk of not graduating from high school. The results are often lower educational attainment, reduced employment opportunities, and decreased financial stability. Unproductive and unengaged young adults often must rely on the social welfare system or public services in their adult life.

INDICATOR 4: Disengaged young adults

What does it measure?
This indicator measures the percentage of 18- to 24-year-old residents of Chatham County who are neither working nor in school. More recent supplemental information is provided for disengaged 16- to 19-year-olds.

Why is it important?
This indicator measures the productivity of young adults and is a predictor for long-term financial stability. Studies show that detached young adults are more likely to have lower work-life earnings, less stable employment, rely more often on social welfare programs, and face a higher risk of incarceration in the prison system.

How are we doing?
The percentage of 18- to 24-year-old residents of Chatham County who are neither working nor in school was below the comparable rate for the state in the most recent period for which data is available (2005-2007). The figure for Chatham County was 14%, which compares favorably to the state rate of 17.7%. It is likely that the lower county rate is partly a reflection of the relatively large presence of college-age students residing in Savannah and Chatham County. Variation in the level of reported percentages will characterize changes in the underlying level of disengagement of young adults, provided that the proportion of college-age persons in the county is relatively stable. The proportion of disengaged 16- to 19-year olds decreased from 2009 to 2011, falling to 11.7% from 16%. The state rate declined somewhat to 10.7% (2011) from 12% (2010).
The American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau recently added questions that allow for the estimation of 18- to 24-year-olds who are disengaged. As a result, the data is available at the county level for only one three-year period (2005-2007). To supplement this information, data for disengaged 16- to 19-year-olds is also provided. This data is available for 2007, 2009, and 2011 for Chatham County.

The percentage of 16- to 19-year-olds who are neither enrolled in school nor working was 11.7% in Chatham County during 2011. This is down from 16.3% in 2009. The rate for Georgia increased from 12.0% in 2010 to 14.2% in 2011. In Chatham County, the rate for 16- to 19-year-old females decreased from 11.8% in 2007 to 6.2% in 2011 and from 20.1% to 14.3% for males. The margin of error is wide for these estimates.

16- TO 19-YEAR-OLDS WHO ARE NOT WORKING AND NOT IN SCHOOL, 2011
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B14005)
**INDICATOR 5: Out of school suspensions**

**What does it measure?**
This indicator measures the percentage of out of school suspensions for 9th and 12th graders in the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System.

**Why is it important?**
Poor attendance and misbehavior greatly reduce the probability that the student will graduate, or graduate on-time. Out of school suspension occurrences increase the probability of delinquent behavior, but also identify students who may be at high risk for dropping out of school.

**How are we doing?**
The out of school suspension rate for 9th grade public school students in Chatham County increased from 28.9% in 2011 to 31.6% in 2012. For 12th graders, the rate increased from 15.8% to 18.7% in 2012. Suspension rates notably have declined from the peak recorded in 2008, but are beginning to rise slowly. For the state, both 9th and 12th grade saw a modest decline in the suspension rate from 2011 to 2012. The rate fell to 17.1% from 17.6% for 9th graders, while it fell to 8.5% from 9.1% for 12th graders.

**OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSION RATES**
*Source: Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, Georgia Department of Education*
INDICATOR 6: Teenage birth rate

What does it measure?
This indicator measures the total number of live births per 1,000 females from ages 15 to 19 in Chatham County.

Why is it important?
Teenage childbearing poses a risk to the mother’s health and reduces the mother's opportunity with respect to building a productive economic work life. Furthermore, their children are more likely to perform poorly at school and to become teenage parents themselves. The measure provides some insight about the potential social well-being, economic opportunity, and educational attainment of these young adults.

How are we doing?
In 2008, the teenage birthrate in Chatham County fell below the state rate for the first time since 2000. However, while the state rate declined to 47.3 in 2009, Chatham’s rate increased to 55.2. This is a substantial increase from 48.4 in the previous year and a return to typical birth rates recorded since 2003. However, in 2010, birth rates in both Georgia and Chatham County hit lows at 41.2 and 40.3, respectively.

<table>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>40.3</td>
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Links and Resources

Indicator 1: First grade readiness

Georgia Department of Education: GKIDS
http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Documents/About%20GKIDS.pdf
Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools: GKIDS

Parent's Guide to GKIDS (brochure)

Administration Manual for GKIDS

Indicator 2: Fourth grade reading proficiency

Georgia Department of Education: CRCT
http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/CRCT.aspx

"Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters," from Kids Count

Math and Reading Help (helpful links for parents for the 4th grade CRCT in Georgia)

Indicator 3: On-time high school graduation rate

National High School Center

National Center for Education Statistics
http://nces.ed.gov/annuals/

National Dropout Prevention Centers
http://www.dropoutprevention.org/

“Reducing the High School Dropout Rate," from Kids Count
Indicator 4: Disengaged young adults

“Preparing High School Students for Successful Transitions into Postsecondary Education and Employment," from the National High School Center
http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/PreparingHSStudentsforTransition_073108.pdf

"Reducing the Number of Disconnected Youth," from Kids Count
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/community_indicators/AECasey-Disconnected%20youth.pdf

Resources for students entering the workforce, from the Georgia Department of Labor
http://www.dol.state.ga.us/spotlight/sp_jobs_georgia_grads.htm

Indicator 5: Out of school suspensions

“How are suspension rates related to drop-out rates?" from the University of Virginia

Indicator 6: Teenage birth rate

U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, from the Guttmacher Institute
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/community_indicators/USTP_trends.pdf

Key Statistics from National Survey of Family Growth, from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/abc_list_t.htm#teen
Health

Health care has been an issue dominating the political landscape since 2010. According to the American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, 15.5% of Americans did not have health insurance in 2010. In Georgia, the figure was 19.7%, more than four percentage points higher than the national level. The uninsured rate for children under 18 in the U.S. was 8.0%, while it was 9.8% for Georgia. The national health care reform legislation aspires to make health insurance more affordable and aims to increase the access to health care in the nation. High quality health care for all in our community is essential to a high quality of life.

Research highlights

The health and wellness indicators reveal issues which present continuing challenges to the community.

The health and wellness indicators are health insurance coverage rate, non-emergency use of hospital emergency departments by self-paying or indigent patients, percentage of high school students with an unhealthy weight, and percentage of babies born with a healthy weight. Good health outcomes improve the quality of life, enhance productivity, and contribute to the well-being of a community as a whole.

Chatham County's health insurance coverage rate is two percentage points less than the state average for those ages 18 to 64. The non-emergency use of hospital emergency departments increased substantially from 2011 to 2012 and broke out a four-year period of relative stability. In 2012, the percentage of high school students in Chatham County who have unhealthy weight is approximately equal to the state (2011 YRBS data). In Chatham County, the prevalence of overweight adolescents was higher among females and African Americans. A lower proportion of babies were born with a healthy weight in Chatham County as compared to Georgia. The incidence of healthy birth weight babies favorably reversed a downward trend for the state, while the county rate fell for the second consecutive year.

- The health insurance coverage rate for those ages 18 to 64 in Chatham County was 71.2% in 2011, a decrease from 2010. The state rate was 73.2%.

- In 2011, 92% of Chatham County residents under 18 had health coverage, which is higher than the state rate of 90.5%.

- In 2012, the non-emergency use of emergency rooms by self-pay or indigent patients was 83.6 visits per 1,000 population, a substantial jump from 63 in 2011.

- The percentage of Chatham County high school students of unhealthy weight was 34.6% in 2012, as compared to 34.8% for the state (in 2011).

- In 2011, healthy birth weight incidence in Chatham County was 89.8%, while in Georgia it was 90.6%.
Family health and well-being

Good health is the most basic desire of a human being. Without it an individual is unable to perform everyday tasks and adverse health outcomes often jeopardize the economic well-being of the family unit. Presented below are several indicators reflecting family health and well-being across the age spectrum from birth to old age. The indicators characterize access to health care, healthy lifestyle outcomes among youth, and maternal and infant well-being.

INDICATOR 1: Health insurance coverage rate

What does it measure?
This indicator provides a broad measure of access to health care services. The variable measured is the health care insurance coverage rate among those under age 65 in Chatham County. The American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau began to collect health insurance coverage data in 2008. Prior to that, health insurance data was available only at the state level through the Community Population Survey.

Why is it important?
The indicator characterizes medical care access through health insurance coverage programs. People without health care insurance generally have reduced access to health care and tend to receive less preventive care. Their children are more likely to be uninsured as well which puts them at greater risk of having undetected health problems. In addition, low coverage rates among children can lead to adverse outcomes in other matters such as school attendance and learning outcomes.

How are we doing?
In 2011, 76.7% of Chatham County residents under the age of 65 had health care insurance. Compared to 2010, this is a 0.9 percentage point decrease in coverage for those residents. The state rate increased slightly to 78.2% from 78.1% in 2010.

Among those 18 and under, the proportion of Chatham County residents with health coverage increased to 92% from 89.6% in 2010. For Georgia, the coverage rate for those under 18 increased 0.3% from 2010 to 2011.

Among adults 18 to 64 years, 71.2% of Chatham County residents were insured, a decline of approximately two percentage points from 2010. This coverage rate is approximately two percentage points below Georgia’s coverage rate for the adult, non-retirement age population.
HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE RATE, 2008-2011
UNDER AGE 65
Source: U. S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B27001)

HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE RATE, 2008-2011
BY AGE GROUP
Source: U. S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B27001)
What does it measure?
This indicator is the number of emergency department visits that are not for medical emergencies per 1,000 persons at the two major health care systems (three hospitals) in Chatham County: St. Joseph's/Candler and Memorial University Medical Center. The data were provided by the hospitals and the measure is defined as emergency department patients classified as self-payers and indigent/charity visits with non-emergency (level 1 and level 2 acuity) cases. The data are standardized across the years by dividing by the U.S. Census Bureau population estimate for Chatham County.

Why is it important?
This indicator is an indirect measure of the lack of access to primary care physicians and/or the lack of a primary care “medical home” among the population. Reliance on emergency room care for non-emergencies that could be treated through primary care is cost inefficient and diverts resources from patients who require immediate care. Persons without health insurance tend to use hospital-based emergency department treatment because the emergency room provides immediate treatment without immediate payment. Increasing use of emergency rooms for non-emergency cases provides information about the degree to which hospital emergency departments are being substituted for primary health care.

How are we doing?
The number of county residents using hospital emergency rooms for non-emergency visits increased to 83.6 visits per 1,000 county residents in 2012 from 62.7 in 2011. The record-high level of use ends a four-year period of relative stability.
INDICATOR 3: High school students with unhealthy weight

What does it measure?
Percentage of high school students in Chatham County who are not of healthy weight, based on their Body Mass Index (BMI) for the appropriate age and gender percentiles in 2010 and 2012. Persons are characterized as being of unhealthy weight if their BMI is equal or greater than the 85th percentile of BMI’s for high school students based on the Center for Diseases Control growth charts for school age males and females in the U.S. Individuals whose BMI is at or above the 95th percentile range are considered to be obese. The data were collected by means of a county-wide survey conducted by the Armstrong Atlantic State University Public Service Center.

Why is it important?
This measure provides data about healthy lifestyle outcomes among high school aged children. Weight outcomes depend primarily on choices made about activity lifestyle and food intake. Childhood obesity has been linked to serious medical conditions both during childhood and later in life and has negative effects on the social and psychological development of children. The Body Mass Index is a measurement of body fatness based on weight, height, age and gender. The measure accounts for size and growth patterns among children of high school age.

How are we doing?
The percentage of high school aged children in Chatham County who are unhealthily overweight was 24.9% in 2010 and increased to 34.6% in 2012. In Georgia in 2011, the rate was 34.8%. In Chatham County, the rate was higher among females compared to males (37.5% vs. 23.5%) and among African Americans compared to whites (37.5% vs. 16%). The data indicates an increasing incidence of unhealthy weight among high school students in Chatham County from 2010 to 2012.

PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH UNHEALTHY WEIGHT,
BY GENDER AND RACE: 2010, 2012
Source: AASU Public Service Center
INDICATOR 4: Healthy birth weight babies

What does it measure?
The percentage of babies born in Chatham County whose birth weight is greater than 2500 grams, or equivalently, 5.5 pounds. The data are provided by the Georgia Department of Community Health.

Why is it important?
Babies born with low birth weight face increased risk for infant mortality. Additionally, low birth weight has been linked to higher frequencies of long-term disabilities and delayed or impaired motor and social development. It is a predictor of future medical needs. Common factors that cause low birth weight are smoking during pregnancy, low maternal weight or low pre-pregnancy weight.

How are we doing?
Chatham County data decreased for two consecutive years after peaking in 2009 at 90.3%, falling to 89.8% in 2011. The Georgia rate increased to 90.6% in 2011, favorably reversing a long-term downward trend.

**PERCENTAGE OF BABIES BORN WITH A HEALTHY BIRTH WEIGHT**
Source: Georgia Department of Community Health

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<td>89.3%</td>
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</table>
**Links and Resources**

**Indicator 1: Health insurance coverage rates**
Multi-year health insurance coverage rates by state and county in the United States, from the US Census Bureau
http://www.census.gov/did/www/sahie/data/interactive/

“Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011,” from US Census Bureau

Health Insurance Coverage Statistics, from the CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/hinsure.htm

**Indicator 2: Non-emergency use of hospital ER (emergency department)**

Emergency Department Visits for the U.S., from the CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/ervisits.htm

Press release [5/30/13] from the CDC about the 2012 *Health, United States* report with a special section on emergency care
http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2013/p0530-emergency-room.html

**Indicator 3: High school students with unhealthy weight**

"Childhood Obesity," from The Future of Children

BMI for Children and Teens, from the CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/assessing/bmi/childrens_bmi/about_childrens_bmi.html

Obesity Rates by State (2009), from Trust for America’s Health

"Childhood Overweight and Obesity," from the CDC
http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/index.html

Youth Online: High School YRBS, from CDC

**Indicator 4: Healthy birth weight babies**

Delivery of Very Low Birth Weight Infants (Georgia), 2012 HMA report
http://health.state.ga.us/pdfs/DeliveryofVeryLowBirthWeightInfantsGeorgia_HMAReport.pdf

"Preventing Low Birth Weight," from Kids Count
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/community_indicators/AECasey-LowBirthweight.pdf
Economic Independence

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the national poverty rate slightly decreased to 15.0% in 2011 from 15.1% in 2010. This is significantly lower than the poverty rate in Georgia and Chatham County, which were 19.2% at the state level and 22.5% locally. In Chatham County, the poverty rate was 16.3% in 2009 and 19.7% in 2010. (Data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates program.) The state poverty rate was 16.6% in 2009.

These figures indicate that many individuals and families increasingly struggle to address their basic needs. Persons living in poverty are generally unable to save for college, a home, or retirement and do not have the means to handle unexpected expenses.

Poverty affects the quality of life in a community by undermining its long-term potential for economic growth and development. Research by the Brookings Institute (2004) on the interdependence of central core cities and their surrounding metropolitan areas reveals a link between the long-term economic health of the core and periphery. Further, the reduction of poverty rates and income disparity in the central city was found to increase income growth in the surrounding and larger metropolitan area.

Central city poverty tends to exacerbate problems associated with educational outcomes, health and crime rates, all of which undermine the long run vitality of the economy. An effective way to mitigate poverty in the long-run is to increase financial stability through income growth, to build personal savings, and to gain and sustain assets. Ultimately, this will enhance the financial independence of low income families and will foster a more economically vibrant community. Addressing the root causes of poverty, discussing them directly and creating meaningful lasting solutions are important to the long-run economic growth and health of our community.

Research highlights

With respect to economic self-sufficiency and independence fostered by income development, asset-building and home ownership, the indicators shed light on significant challenges continuing to face the community.

The economic independence indicators are the percent of working households that are low income, bank account ownership in low income households, the homeownership rate in low income households and housing costs in low income households. These indicators characterizing financial self-sufficiency and economic independence are important in monitoring progress in reducing the proportion of persons living in poverty in our area and increasing the long-term economic vitality of the community.

In Chatham County, the proportion of working households that were low income increased from 27% to 32.7% from 2009 to 2011. Nearly three-quarters of low income households had a checking and/or saving account, but there was slight decline from
2010 to 2012. The proportion of low income working households that were able to continuously maintain a combined balance of $300 in an account increased modestly to just over half of these households.

The remaining two economic independence indicators are related to homeownership and housing costs in low income households. The low income homeownership rate in Chatham County increased significantly from 2010 to 2011, and essentially equals the rate for similar households in Georgia. The financial stress placed on low income household finances from housing costs diminished slightly in Chatham County, and remains slightly above the financial stress level for similar households in Georgia.

The following statistics are for Chatham County, unless otherwise noted for state level data.

- The proportion of working households that were low income increased from 27% in 2009 to 32.7% in 2011.

- The incidence of checking or saving account ownership in low income working households was 72.7% in 2012, down slightly from 73.5% in 2010.

- In 2012, the incidence of checking or saving account ownership in fully employed low income households was 75.7%, as compared to 69.6% of low income working households that were not fully employed. The latter percentage is up from 63.7% in 2010.

- Among low income working households, the proportion that were able to continuously maintain a combined balance of $300 in checking or savings accounts was 50.4% in 2012, an increase from 48.1% in 2010.

- The homeownership rate among low income households increased substantially to 26.6% in 2011 from 22.8% in 2010.

- Low income homeownership rates in Chatham County increased to essentially eliminate the ownership gap as compared to state level data.

- In 2011, the housing cost burden on low income households was equal to or greater than 30% of household income for 75.6% of those households, a slight decline from 2010. The comparable rate for Georgia was 75.0%.
Income Development and Asset Building

The long-term goal of achieving economic independence depends on individuals and families earning increasing income, building savings, attaining and sustaining assets, and achieving financial stability. Effective community support programs help low income households provide for their families and increase opportunities to achieve economic independence in the long run. The following indicators related to financial self-sufficiency and economic independence are important benchmarks for monitoring progress in reducing the proportion of persons living in poverty in our area and increasing the long-term economic vitality of the community. The indicators were derived from a survey of Chatham County residents conducted by the Armstrong Public Service Center or obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

INDICATOR 1: Working households that are low income

What does it measure?
The indicator measures the percentage of fully employed working households in Chatham County that are low income. This includes households where one or two persons work 50 weeks per year or more, combined, and the total household income is less than 250 percent of the federal poverty income level for a one parent, two child household. In 2011, that income level was $45,308. The indicator is a measure of the standard of living in these households and provides insight about the flow of financial resources through these households in Chatham County.

Why is it important?
The financial stability and well-being of families is an important reflection of a community’s vitality and is related to the long run economic growth and development of the metropolitan area. Financial stability provides sufficient resources and income to support households and overcome short-term financial emergencies associated with short-term job loss, health concerns, unexpected automobile expenses, and emergency expenses required for the upkeep of the home or household. Low income workers generally have little, if any, financial reserves, and face a higher risk of poverty in the event the household faces a challenging financial crisis.

How are we doing?
The percentage of fully employed households increased from 68% to 75% between 2009 and 2011; however, a greater proportion of these households reported lower income. In Chatham County in 2011, 32.7% of fully employed working households were low income compared to 27% in 2009. In Chatham County’s white households, 21.2% of those fully employed were low income, while 54.5% of African American fully employed households were low income. The incidence of full-time employed low income households increased more significantly for African-American residents, 2009 to 2011. Not surprisingly, where part-time work was the norm, a much higher percentage of households were low income. The figure was 30 percentage points higher in African American households than white households.
PERCENT OF WORKING HOUSEHOLDS IN CHATHAM COUNTY THAT ARE LOW INCOME, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS: 2009, 2011
Source: AASU Public Service Center

PERCENT OF WORKING HOUSEHOLDS IN CHATHAM COUNTY THAT ARE LOW INCOME, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND ETHNICITY: 2009, 2011
Source: AASU Public Service Center
INDICATOR 2: Bank account ownership in low income households

What does it measure?
This indicator is the percentage of low income households in Chatham County that had a checking or savings account with a minimum balance of $300 at any given time during the past year. Low income households are defined as those where one or two persons work 50 weeks per year or more, combined, and the total household income is less than 250% of the federal poverty income level for a one parent, two child household ($45,308 in 2011).

Why is it important?
Building savings is essential for establishing an emergency reserve of financial assets to mitigate the adverse effects of unexpected financial emergencies such as job loss, health problems or for critical vehicle or home repair expenses. The establishment of a savings asset also provides a basis for long-term asset building for a home, higher education and retirement. Savings are especially important for individuals and families of lower income levels who have fewer assets and are much less likely to have access to credit from financial institutions.

The sum of $300 is the amount typically needed for a single, uncomplicated emergency. It reflects the average loan amount obtained through payday loan services. By maintaining a saving or checking account with $300, families can avoid high-fee check-cashing or payday loan services while enhancing the household’s creditworthiness.

How are we doing?
Among low income households in Chatham County in 2012, 72.7% had a checking or saving account, virtually the same as in 2010 (73.5%). Among those fully employed low income households, however, those with accounts fell to 75.7% from 84.7%. Among those households where individuals were not fully employed, the incidence of bank account ownership increased to 69.6% in 2012 from 63.7% in 2010.

In 2012, 50.4% of low income households in Chatham County were able to maintain a continuous combined balance of $300 in checking and saving accounts, up from 48.1% in 2010. Among fully employed households, 44.3% were able to maintain a balance of $300 in their bank accounts, a decline from 57.3% in 2010. But in households where individuals were not fully employed, the incidence of those who could maintain a balance of $300 increased to 57.1% in 2012 from 40.2% in 2010.
LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH A SAVING OR CHECKING ACCOUNT: 2010, 2012
Source: AASU Public Service Center

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS WITH CONTINUOUS COMBINED BALANCE OF $300 IN SAVING OR CHECKING ACCOUNT: 2010, 2012
Source: AASU Public Service Center
INDICATOR 3: Homeownership rate in low income households vs. GA

What does it measure?
This indicator is the homeownership rate for low income (less than $50,000) households in Chatham County.

Why is it important?
Gaining and sustaining assets provides a pathway for families to overcome poverty. Owning a house is considered to be the most significant asset for a family. Since housing costs are typically a household’s largest expense, the development of affordable housing is an effective way to improve the home ownership rate. Other programs supporting home ownership such as financial education, access to credit, and revolving loan funds, among others, enhance the financial stability of the family and increase the financial health and vitality of a community.

How are we doing?
The homeownership rate among low income households in Chatham County increased substantially to 26.6% in 2011 from 22.8% in 2010. This returns the rate to comparable levels experienced in 2009. The rate for Georgia was 26.7% in 2011, and is down from 27.5% in 2010. Chatham County closed the homeownership gap with the state in 2011.
INDICATOR 4: Housing costs in low income households

What does it measure?
This indicator is the percentage of low income (less than $50,000) households in Chatham County where housing costs are equal to or greater than 30% of household income. Housing costs include debt service on mortgages or rent, insurance, utilities, neighborhood association fees, or other rental or leasing fees. The indicator is computed for owner occupied units with a mortgage and renter occupied units.

Why is it important?
Families who spend 30% or more of their income on housing are under great financial stress. They must cope with the unrelenting pressure of prioritizing the allocation of household income among housing costs and basic needs such as food, clothing, health care, child care or other necessities. For these families, income increasing strategies and affordable housing are essential to survive, especially for families who live in urban areas with higher costs of living. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the definition of affordable housing is housing costs that are less than 30% of annual household income.

How are we doing?
The housing cost burden on low income owner and renter households in Chatham County dropped from 2010 to 2011. However, the rate in Georgia continued its upward trend in 2011, with 75.0% of these households spending more than 30% of household income on housing. This marks a 10% increase since 2005 for Georgia. In contrast, the housing cost burden on low income households in Chatham County fell since 2005.

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING MORE THAN 30% OF INCOME ON HOUSING COSTS, OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS WITH A MORTGAGE AND RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B25106 and B25101)
The housing cost burden in low income, **renter occupied** housing in Chatham County increased from 2010 to 2011. Among these households in 2011, 75.2% spent more than 30% of household income on housing costs, up from 73.0% in 2010. For Georgia, the figure continued its upward trend, rising to 72.2% from 71.3% in 2011. Since 2005, the rate for Georgia increased by nearly ten percentage points.

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING MORE THAN 30% OF INCOME ON HOUSING COSTS, RENTER OCCUPIED UNITS
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B25106)

The housing cost burden in low income, **owner occupied** housing units with a mortgage in Chatham County decreased substantially from 2010 to 2011. In these households, 76.2% spent more than 30% of household income on housing costs in 2011, down from 85.6% in 2010. For Georgia, the figure increased slightly to 79.5% from 79.2%.

LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING MORE THAN 30% OF INCOME ON HOUSING COSTS, OWNER OCCUPIED UNITS WITH A MORTGAGE
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table B25101)
Links and Resources

Indicator 1: Working households that are low income

Basic Family Budget Calculator, from the Economic Policy Institute
http://www.epi.org/content/budget_calculator/

“Wealth Building and Financial Understanding,” from Step Up Savannah

“Financial Coaching: A New Approach for Asset Building?” from Policy Lab
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/community_indicators/AECasey_AssetBuilding.pdf

Indicator 2: Bank account ownership in low income households

“Asset Accumulation Among Low-Income Households,” from the Brookings Institute

“Asset Poverty and Debt Among Families with Children,” from the National Center for
Children in Poverty
http://www.armstrong.edu/images/community_indicators/AECasey_AssetPoverty.pdf

“Building Family Economic Success: Financial Services,” from Family Economic Success

“Bank the un-banked,” from Step Up Savannah
http://stepupsavannah.org/category/tags/bank-unbanked

Indicator 3: Homeownership rate in low income households

“Homeownership: Georgia,” from US Department of Housing and Urban Development

“The Financial Returns to Low-Income Homeownership,” from the Joint Center for
Housing Studies

“Assets and Opportunity Profile: Savannah,” from Step Up Savannah
Indicator 4: Housing costs in low income households


Percent of Renter-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Rent and Utilities
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t
(select “Advanced Search” and type B25106 in for “Table Name” and Chatham County, GA" into the geography block)

Percent of Owner-Occupied Units Spending 30% or More of Household Income on Selected Monthly Ownership Costs
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t
(select “Advanced Search” and type B25106 in for “Table Name” and Chatham County, GA" into the geography block)
REGIONALISM

A strong regional economy with an efficient transportation network and a healthy environment are essential to our quality of life. It is our responsibility to optimally manage environmental resources for the benefit of present and future generations. Environmental stewardship and the efficient use of energy in transportation applications will improve the long-run well-being of the community. This enhances the performance of the regional economy, contributes to a high standard of living in the community, and improves the long-run attractiveness and growth prospects for the region.

Research highlights

In matters related to regionalism, the community's efforts have generally resulted in mixed results in measures characterizing economic activity, environmental quality and transportation.

The regionalism indicators are the Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index, solid waste recycling per person, air quality, use of alternative transportation, public transportation ridership, and average commute time. A strong regional economy, interwoven with an efficient transportation network and a healthy environment are essential to the quality of life for the area's citizens.

Regional economic activity is measured by the Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index. In the first quarter of 2013, the economy held steady, but remains on pace to register about 2% growth through 2013. The underlying fundamentals of the regional economy in overall employment, port activity, manufacturing and tourism are strong, while the housing market is showing increasing strength.

The region's environmental quality is characterized by recycling activity and air quality. Air quality decreased somewhat from 2011 to 2012, but remains better than elsewhere in Georgia. Recycling in the city of Savannah increased on a per person basis, reaching nearly 100 pounds per person. Private sector recycling activity is likely increasing alongside municipal recycling as the desire for recycling in underserved areas strengthens. However, data from private recycling businesses is not available.

There are mixed signals from the region’s transportation indicators. Among alternative forms of transportation, carpooling and walking declined, while bicycling and use of public transportation increased. Chatham Area Transit ridership increased on a per person and per mile basis in 2012, as compared to 2011. Commute time to work increased slightly but remains nearly 20% shorter than the state average.
• The Coastal Empire coincident economic index increased by 1.9% on an over-the-year basis, rising to 158.0 in the first quarter of 2013.

• In 2012, 99.4 pounds of waste per person was recycled, an increase of 21% from the previous year.

• In 2012, the percent of ‘Good’ air quality days in Savannah decreased to 62.3% from 64.1% (2011). Georgia also experienced a decline in the percent of ‘Good’ air quality days in 2012 (48.9%) from 2011 (51.2%).

• Alternative transportation was used by 15% of the commuters in Chatham County in 2011, and the county outperforms the state level of 14.6%.

• Carpooling and walking decreased from 2010 to 2011, while bicycling and use of public transportation increased.

• Public transportation usage increased by 4.9% from 2011 to 2012; at the same time, the number of bus riders per mile driven increased from 1.37 (2011) to 1.46 (2012).

• Commute time in Chatham County rose to 22.1 minutes from 2010 to 2011. Georgia commute time was little changed between 2010 (27.0 minutes) and 2011 (27.1 minutes).
Regional economic activity

The Coastal Empire coincident economic index indicates the Savannah metro economy entered a period of recovery in early 2010 that continued through the close of the first quarter of 2013. This does not mean the economy has returned to pre-recession levels, but that the period of economic decay (recession) has ended. Nearly every current indicator of regional economic activity has increased since the start of 2010. The underlying indicators comprising the coincident economic index for the Savannah MSA (Bryan, Chatham and Effingham counties) include:

- Non-agricultural employment
- Port activity (shipping containers handled)
- Electricity sales to residential, commercial and industrial consumers
- Retail Sales
- Hotel Room Rentals
- Boardings at the Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport
- Consumer confidence in the South Atlantic states

The coincident index monitors the current economic heartbeat of the region.

**INDICATOR 1: Coastal Empire Economic Index**

What does it measure?
Regional economic activity is measured by the Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index. The index is developed from underlying indicators of current economic activity important in our region. The variables are employment, port activity, electricity sales, retail sales, hotel room rentals, airport boardings and consumer confidence in the South Atlantic states. The data are adjusted for typical seasonal swings and the effect of inflation so that the combined index clearly reflects regional economic activity. The data is summarized and analyzed in a complementary quarterly publication, the Economic Monitor, and is available by email and at the Center for Regional Analysis website.

Why is it important?
The index measures the current economic heartbeat of the region. Overall, a strong economy provides opportunities for income and employment growth and thereby increases the standard of living. The health of the regional economy affects the well-being of its citizens, businesses and institutions.

How are we doing?
The Coastal Empire coincident economic index (in red below) increased 1.9% on an over-the-year basis to 158.0 through the first quarter of 2013. Growth in employment, port activity and tourism are supporting the economy. Employment in the service sector of the economy is increasing steadily while the goods-producing sector of the economy continues to gain forward momentum. Although consumer confidence fell somewhat in the first quarter, retail sales activity held up.
The leading index (in blue below) is designed to provide a short-term forecast of the region’s economic activity in the upcoming six to nine months. The forecasting index increased for the fifth consecutive quarter. Noticeably improved conditions in the housing market and continued healing in the regional labor market account for this. Improving growth is expected through the remainder of 2013.

### Coastal Empire Economic Indicators

**Leading and Coincident Indices**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Coincident Index</th>
<th>Leading Index</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>137.2</td>
<td>138.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>136.2</td>
<td>133.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>136.3</td>
<td>133.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>137.0</td>
<td>136.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>143.9</td>
<td>147.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>150.2</td>
<td>154.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>156.3</td>
<td>153.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>161.4</td>
<td>146.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>158.0</td>
<td>123.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>151.8</td>
<td>108.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>151.9</td>
<td>114.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>153.3</td>
<td>118.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>157.0</td>
<td>123.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013 YTD</td>
<td>158.0</td>
<td>127.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: AASU Center for Regional Analysis
Environmental quality
The development and implementation of sustainable environmental policies is becoming more and more essential for the preservation of the regional quality of life. The community’s efforts in improving waste management and controlling air pollution contribute to the protection of living conditions and the conservation of natural resources. These outcomes are vital for both nature and human beings. The importance of these initiatives, among others, is reflected in the Chatham County Commission’s declaration that it desires to help Chatham County become the “greenest county” in the state.

INDICATOR 2: Solid waste recycling

What does it measure?
This indicator measures pounds of solid waste recycled per person in the City of Savannah. As municipalities in the county introduce or expand recycling programs, the level of participation by the county’s residents will determine the amount of waste diverted from landfills and recycled.

Why is it important?
The level of recycling of solid waste in a community has an impact on its environment, health and economic development. Recycling reduces landfill waste and contributes to the conservation of natural resources. Chatham County and its municipalities have significantly increased the number of curbside recycle programs and drop-off recycling centers as part of environmentally friendly programs to promote recycling.

How are we doing?
The amount of solid waste recycled per person increased from 2009 to 2012. In 2012, 99.4 pounds of waste per person was recycled, 21% higher than the previous year. The amount of recycled material collected by the City of Savannah has dramatically increased since 2009 when curbside recycling started. Data do not include the volume of recycled material through private sector enterprises in the recycling industry.
What does it measure?
This indicator measures the percent of days on which the daily maximum hourly Air Quality Index (AQI) was in the “Good” range. The measured pollutant concentration in the air is converted to a number from 0 to 500. A “Good” air quality index rating is defined as less than 50 on this scale. AQI from 51 to 100 means that there is a moderate level of air pollution but it will be safe for most people. When AQI is from 101 to 150, the air is unhealthy for sensitive groups such as older adults, younger children and those with respiratory sensitivity. The air is unhealthy when AQI is from 151 to 200, and very unhealthy from 201 to 300. When AQI is over 300, the air is hazardous and the entire population is likely to be affected.

Why is it important?
Good air quality improves the quality of life of the people living in a community. The Air Quality Index is a nationally standardized measure of daily air quality conditions in relation to its effects on health. The pollutants measured daily are ground level of ozone, particulate matter, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. An unhealthy level of these air pollutants caused by an increasing amount of motor fuels or factory exhaust generates health problems and harms the environment. It especially endangers the health of sensitive groups such as asthmatics, children, or elderly people. Therefore it is essential for a community to regularly monitor the level of air pollution and develop policies to meet or exceed federal standards for air quality.

How are we doing?
In 2012 the percent of “Good” air quality days in Savannah decreased to 62.3% from 64.1% (2011). Although there was a decrease in the percentage of “Good” days, Savannah’s air quality continues to be better than that of Georgia’s urban areas. The seven metropolitan areas are Athens, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, Macon, North Georgia, and Savannah. Across Georgia, the percent of “Good” days decreased from 51.2% (2011) to 48.9% (2012). There was a decrease in percent of days under Moderate, Worse than Moderate, and Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups in Georgia’s urban areas from 2011 to 2012. For both Savannah and Georgia, about 19% of the data were not available.
### Savannah

#### Good
- 2000: 87.4%
- 2001: 91.5%
- 2002: 92.9%
- 2003: 84.9%
- 2004: 64.5%
- 2005: 48.5%
- 2006: 44.1%
- 2007: 54.0%
- 2008: 66.4%
- 2009: 79.7%
- 2010: 74.5%
- 2011: 64.1%
- 2012: 62.3%

#### Moderate
- 2000: 12.3%
- 2001: 7.1%
- 2002: 5.8%
- 2003: 14.8%
- 2004: 33.9%
- 2005: 46.8%
- 2006: 54.8%
- 2007: 40.8%
- 2008: 33.3%
- 2009: 17.8%
- 2010: 23.0%
- 2011: 29.6%
- 2012: 18.3%

#### Worse than Moderate
- 2000: 0.3%
- 2001: 0.0%
- 2002: 0.0%
- 2003: 1.4%
- 2004: 1.6%
- 2005: 1.1%
- 2006: 3.0%
- 2007: 0.3%
- 2008: 0.0%
- 2009: 0.0%
- 2010: 0.0%
- 2011: 0.0%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Unhealthy for sensitive groups
- 2000: 0.3%
- 2001: 0.0%
- 2002: 0.0%
- 2003: 1.4%
- 2004: 1.4%
- 2005: 0.5%
- 2006: 2.5%
- 2007: 0.3%
- 2008: 0.0%
- 2009: 0.0%
- 2010: 0.0%
- 2011: 0.0%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Unhealthy
- 2000: 0.0%
- 2001: 0.0%
- 2002: 0.0%
- 2003: 0.0%
- 2004: 0.0%
- 2005: 0.0%
- 2006: 0.5%
- 2007: 0.0%
- 2008: 0.0%
- 2009: 0.0%
- 2010: 0.0%
- 2011: 0.0%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Very Unhealthy
- 2000: 0.0%
- 2001: 0.0%
- 2002: 0.0%
- 2003: 0.0%
- 2004: 0.0%
- 2005: 0.0%
- 2006: 0.0%
- 2007: 0.0%
- 2008: 0.0%
- 2009: 0.0%
- 2010: 0.0%
- 2011: 0.0%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Not available
- 2000: 0.0%
- 2001: 1.4%
- 2002: 1.4%
- 2003: 0.3%
- 2004: 3.0%
- 2005: 0.0%
- 2006: 2.2%
- 2007: 0.0%
- 2008: 2.5%
- 2009: 2.5%
- 2010: 3.6%
- 2011: 19.4%

Note: Worse than Moderate includes unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy, and very unhealthy.

### Georgia

#### Good
- 2000: 63.4%
- 2001: 61.2%
- 2002: 62.3%
- 2003: 58.9%
- 2004: 52.3%
- 2005: 46.0%
- 2006: 44.4%
- 2007: 49.7%
- 2008: 55.5%
- 2009: 60.9%
- 2010: 56.1%
- 2011: 51.2%
- 2012: 48.9%

#### Moderate
- 2000: 12.1%
- 2001: 12.5%
- 2002: 12.8%
- 2003: 26.5%
- 2004: 40.4%
- 2005: 47.3%
- 2006: 51.9%
- 2007: 43.1%
- 2008: 39.3%
- 2009: 32.8%
- 2010: 39.1%
- 2011: 42.0%
- 2012: 30.3%

#### Worse than Moderate
- 2000: 3.7%
- 2001: 1.4%
- 2002: 2.5%
- 2003: 1.4%
- 2004: 2.9%
- 2005: 3.2%
- 2006: 3.3%
- 2007: 4.5%
- 2008: 2.4%
- 2009: 1.0%
- 2010: 2.0%
- 2011: 2.9%
- 2012: 1.4%

#### Unhealthy for sensitive groups
- 2000: 2.9%
- 2001: 1.3%
- 2002: 2.2%
- 2003: 1.2%
- 2004: 2.8%
- 2005: 3.1%
- 2006: 2.7%
- 2007: 3.7%
- 2008: 2.2%
- 2009: 0.9%
- 2010: 1.7%
- 2011: 2.7%
- 2012: 1.3%

#### Unhealthy
- 2000: 0.7%
- 2001: 0.1%
- 2002: 0.3%
- 2003: 0.2%
- 2004: 0.0%
- 2005: 0.1%
- 2006: 0.5%
- 2007: 0.8%
- 2008: 0.2%
- 2009: 0.1%
- 2010: 0.2%
- 2011: 0.1%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Very Unhealthy
- 2000: 0.1%
- 2001: 0.0%
- 2002: 0.0%
- 2003: 0.0%
- 2004: 0.0%
- 2005: 0.1%
- 2006: 0.0%
- 2007: 0.0%
- 2008: 0.1%
- 2009: 0.0%
- 2010: 0.0%
- 2011: 0.0%
- 2012: 0.0%

#### Not available
- 2000: 20.9%
- 2001: 24.9%
- 2002: 22.4%
- 2003: 13.3%
- 2004: 4.4%
- 2005: 3.4%
- 2006: 0.5%
- 2007: 2.7%
- 2008: 2.7%
- 2009: 5.3%
- 2010: 2.6%
- 2011: 3.9%
- 2012: 19.5%

Note: Worse than Moderate includes unhealthy for sensitive groups, unhealthy, and very unhealthy.
**Transportation**

An effective transportation system allows for the quick and efficient movement of people and goods, thereby enhancing the economic productivity of the regional citizenry and improving their quality of life. An optimally designed transportation network includes and encourages the use of alternative transportation such as public transportation, carpooling, bicycling and walking. This, combined with the efficient transport of people and goods, yields efficiency gains in the use of time, resources, and energy.

**INDICATOR 4: Use of alternative transportation**

**What does it measure?**
This indicator measures the percentage of commuters using alternative transportation to work in Chatham County. This includes the use of public transportation, carpools, bicycles and walking.

**Why is it important?**
Traffic congestion means delays, lost productivity, wasted resources and stress. Additionally, motor vehicles are a major cause of air pollution. Collectively, the use of alternative methods of transportation will reduce traffic congestion, commuter time, vehicle emissions and damage to the environment.

**How are we doing?**
Alternative transportation was used by 15.0% of the commuters in Chatham County in 2011, a decline from 15.6% in 2011. In Georgia, the use of alternative transportation increased from 14.3% in 2010 to 14.6% in 2011.

**USE OF ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION TO WORK**
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table C08006)
The market share of alternative means of transportation to work drifted down in 2011. The proportion of those using carpooling as a means of commuting decreased from 10.2% in 2010 to 9.6%. The share of those walking to work decreased from 3.0% in 2010 to 1.9% in 2011. However, public transportation usage increased eight-tenths of one percent from 2010 (1.9%) to 2011 (2.7%) and commuting by bicycle increased to 0.8% of all commuters in 2011, up from 0.5% in 2010.

**ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION USAGE (TO WORK), AS PERCENT OF TOTAL TRANSPORTATION**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (American Community Survey, Table C08006)

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Carpool</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Walk</th>
<th>Bike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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INDICATOR 5: Public transportation ridership

What does it measure?
There are two indicators characterizing the usage of the public transportation bus network. First, the capture of potential market share is measured by the number of passengers on CAT busses divided by Chatham County population. Second, the intensity of usage of the public transportation network is measured by the number of passengers on CAT busses divided by total miles traveled by CAT busses. Total system route mileage traveled by busses and number of passengers was provided by the Chatham Area Transportation Authority, the fiscal year of which starts July 1 and ends June 30.

Why is it important?
Public transportation is an alternative for residents who choose not to use other means of transportation, whether for economic reasons or personal preferences. Increasing the use of public transportation is a cost-effective way to reduce traffic congestion and commuting time, as well as exhaust pollution. The data provides insight about the capture of potential market share in the county. Convenience of bus schedules and route proximity to points of origin and destination will influence market share and intensity of usage. Relative differences in the cost of other forms of transportation (fuel prices, etc.) will also influence market share and intensity of usage.

How are we doing?
Riders per capita increased 4.9% from 2011 to 2012. This number trended down from 2006 to 2009 before beginning a steady climb in 2010. Riders per capita reached 13.9 in 2012, having risen from 12.5 in 2009. The number of riders per miles traveled by busses (passengers per mile) increased from 1.37 (2011) to 1.46 (2012).
## PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION RIDERSHIP

Source: Chatham Area Transit

### Riders Per Capita

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riders (Riders) per Mile</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.45</td>
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<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riders per Capita</td>
<td>232,347</td>
<td>233,592</td>
<td>235,712</td>
<td>236,488</td>
<td>238,992</td>
<td>239,889</td>
<td>243,761</td>
<td>248,596</td>
<td>256,992</td>
<td>265,128</td>
<td>267,779</td>
<td>276,975</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Riders per Mile

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riders</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<td>11.0</td>
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<td>14.5</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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</table>
INDICATOR 6: Average commute time

What does it measure?
This indicator measures the average commute time of Chatham County residents. It is a reflection of road and highway congestion. Commute time is affected by the intensity of use and by investment in regional transportation infrastructure.

Why is it important?
The information provided by this indicator helps transportation planners develop improvements to the regional transportation system. Commute times reflect the physical gap between home, community, and work and the level of congestion in the transportation system. Long commute times adversely affect personal health and well-being and simultaneously reduce the region’s productive capacity.

How are we doing?
Average commute time in Chatham County increased from 20.8 to 22.1 minutes in 2011. Georgia commute time was little changed between 2010 (27.0 minutes) and 2011 (27.1 minutes).

AVERAGE COMMUTE TIME
Source: U.S. Census Bureau
(American Community Survey, Tables B08013 and C08006)
**Links and Resources**

**Indicator 1: Coastal Empire Coincident Economic Index**

*Armstrong Economic Monitor*
http://www.armstrong.edu/Liberal_Arts/economics/economics_economic_monitor

U.S. Business Cycle Information with:
U.S. Coincident, Leading and Lagging Economic Indexes, from The Conference Board
http://www.conference-board.org/data/bcicountry.cfm?cid=1

**Indicator 2: Solid waste recycling**

Chatham County recycling information

Curbside recycling in Savannah

**Indicator 3: Good air quality days**

Georgia Air Quality, from the Department of Natural Resources
http://www.georgiaair.org/retrofit/html/GeorgiaAirQualityfactspage.htm

State of the Air in the US in 2013, from the American Lung Association
http://www.stateoftheair.org/

AQL and Health Brochure, from the US EPA
http://www.epa.gov/airnow/aqi_brochure_08-09.pdf
Indicator 4: Use of alternative transportation

Percent of workers who traveled to work by public transportation, from the US Census Bureau
http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tables-services/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_1YR_C08006&prodType=table

Benefits of Alternative Transportation, from the American Public Transportation Association
http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/ptbenefits/Pages/default.aspx

Indicator 5: Public transportation ridership

Chatham Area Transit
http://www.catchacat.org/

History of Public Transportation in Savannah, from CAT
http://www.catchacat.org/about/History/index.html

Indicator 6: Average commute time

"Wellbeing Lower Among Workers With Long Commutes," from Gallup
"Well-being Lower Among Workers With Long Commutes," from Gallup