HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

PHASE ONE

September 2025

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

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2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Public Organizations

City of Valdosta

Lowndes County

Southern Georgia Regional Commission

Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority

Valdosta State University

Center for South Georgia Regional Impact, VSU

Moody Air Force Base

Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority

Valdosta Public Housing Authority

South Georgia Regional Library

Wiregrass Georgia Technical College

Lowndes County Schools

Valdosta City Schools

Private Organizations

One Valdosta-Lowndes Foundation

Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce

Graeter Valdosta United Way

South Georgia Homebuilders Association

LAMP – Lowndes Associated Ministries to People

South Georgia Black Chambers of Commerce

Southside Recreation Center

Saint Timothy African Methodist Episcopal Church

Georgia Power Company

Colquitt EMC

SGMC Health

SEEDS Business Resource Center

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PROJECT STUDY AREA

INTRODUCTION

The Enterprise Innovation Institute (EI2) is Georgia Tech's chief business outreach and economic development organization. Since its inception in 1960, its core mission is to help business, industry, entrepreneurs, and economic developers across Georgia grow and remain competitive. EI2 continues Georgia Tech's sixty-year legacy of commitment to community economic development by providing research and technical assistance to support economic development efforts in communities in Georgia and around the world.

The Center for Economic Development Research (CEDR) is an applied economic development unit of EI2. CEDR assists local elected officials, economic developers, policy makers, and community and state leaders who seek innovative tools and methods to leverage their local advantage and improve quality of life for their residents by attracting, maintaining, and growing business and industry within their areas.

The expertise of the CEDR team is concentrated in the areas of strategic planning, organizational development, labor market and workforce analysis, facilitation, research, and economic and fiscal impact analyses. All faculty have a depth of experience performing applied research for the economic development community. When needed, staff can supplement their skills by calling on Georgia Tech academic faculty to assist in specific research projects. Through their research, CEDR helps clients understand the opportunities and challenges in fostering local and regional economic development.

Project Background

Communities across the country are facing increasing challenges related to housing affordability, availability, and quality—issues that directly impact workforce retention, economic development, and overall quality of life. Recognizing these growing pressures, One Valdosta Lowndes Economic Development Foundation contacted CEDR to initiate a comprehensive Community Housing Needs Assessment and Neighborhood Redevelopment Plan to better understand current housing conditions, identify gaps in supply, and develop actionable strategies to support the development of quality housing that meet the needs of the community's workforce.

The study combines a data-driven assessment of community-wide demographics and housing needs with a targeted small area redevelopment plan focused on a high-priority neighborhood experiencing disinvestment, development pressure, or strategic opportunity. The redevelopment component will include land use analysis, zoning and infrastructure review, and identification of feasible infill, rehabilitation, or mixed-use opportunities to guide revitalization in alignment with community goals.

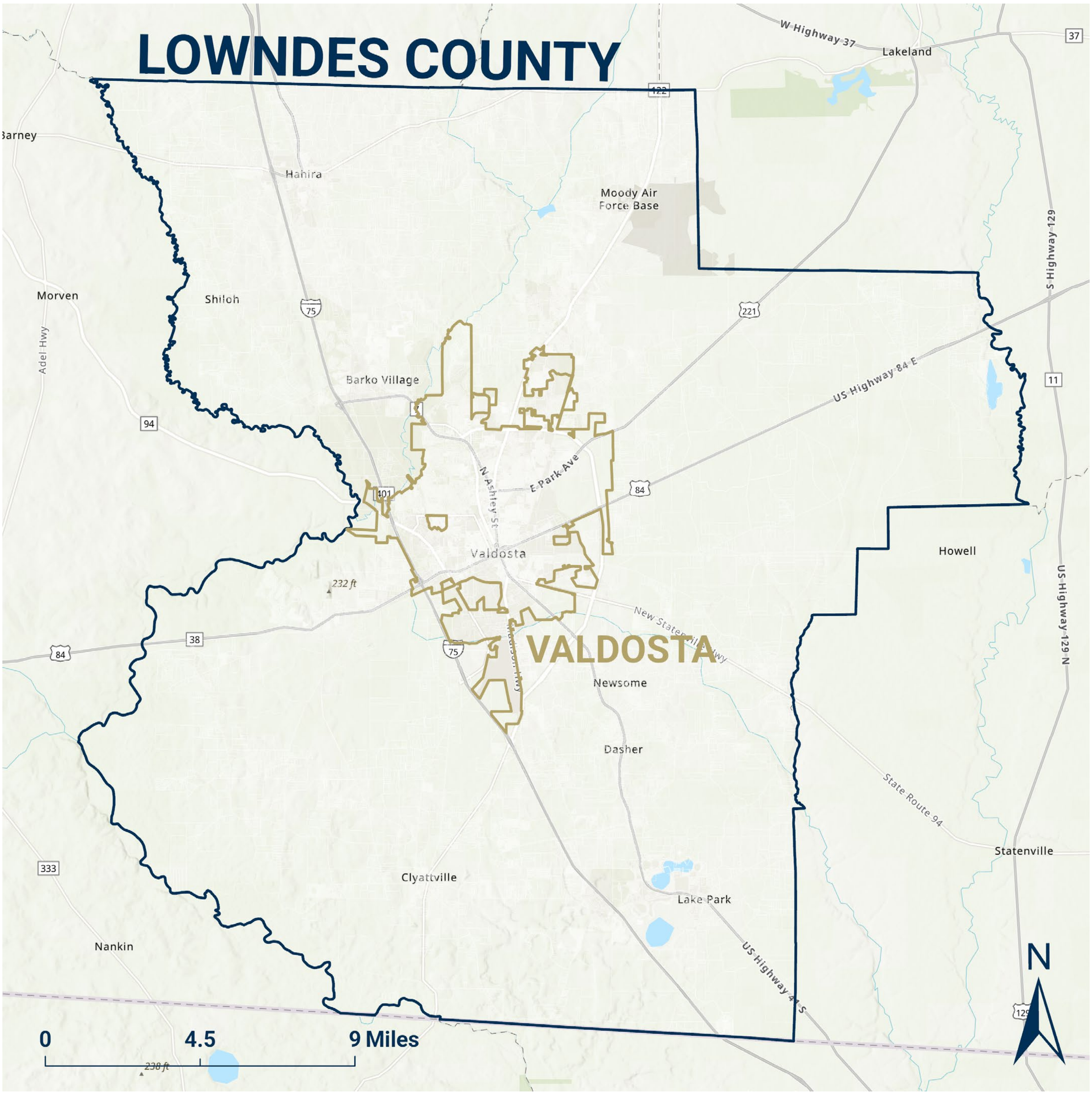
Recognizing the importance of local voices, the CEDR team hosted a series of stakeholder listening sessions to incorporate community perspectives and shape the report around the community's needs and expectations. This inclusive approach ensures that the final strategy is not only grounded in data but also rooted in lived experience.

The Housing Study and Redevelopment Plan will serve as a roadmap to guide public policy, inform funding and investment decisions, and support equitable, long-term development that reflects the values and aspirations of Valdosta and Lowndes County.

Project Area

Founded in 1825, Lowndes County has been a hub for agriculture, timber, and transportation in South Georgia. The City of Valdosta became the county seat in 1860, growing rapidly due to its location on the railroad. Over time, the local economy diversified beyond cotton to include manufacturing, logistics, and education—anchored by Valdosta State University, established in 1906. Today, Valdosta and Lowndes County continue to benefit from strong transportation access, a stable public sector, and steady regional growth, making the area an attractive market for residential development and investment.

Figure 1: Project Study Area



02

PREVIOUS PLANS

PREVIOUS PLAN OVERVIEW

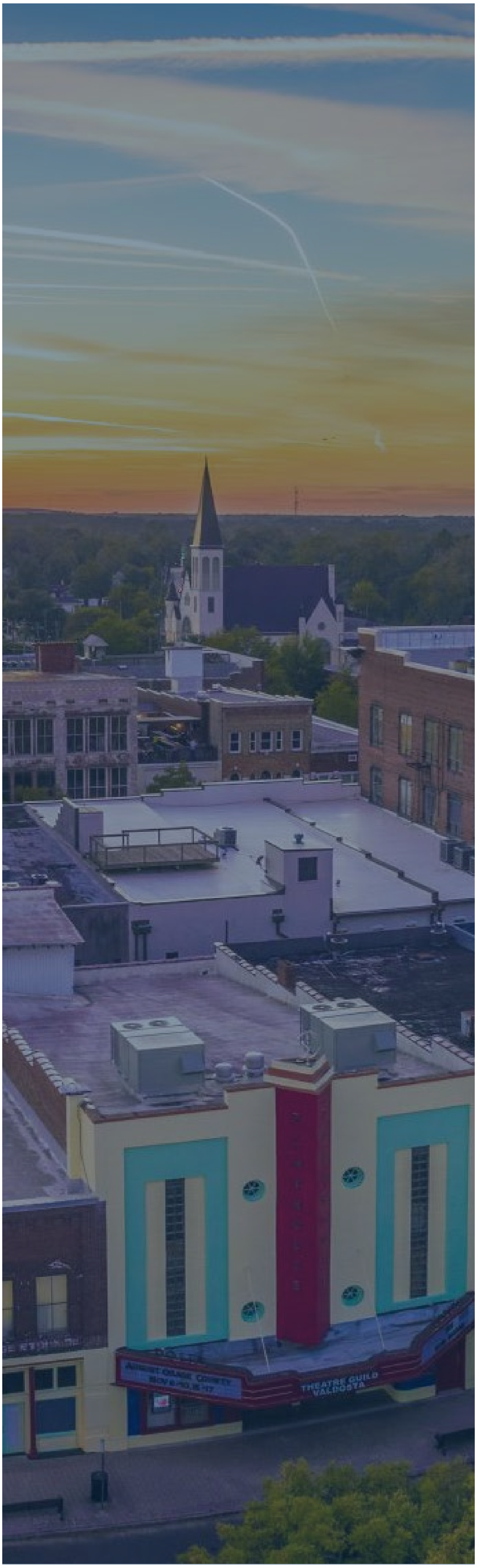
Four previous plans were reviewed to understand past planning efforts, community priorities, and housing-related strengths and challenges. These documents helped shape our understanding of the community and guided our approach to engagement and data collection.

2018 TRANSPORTATION PLAN & SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA STUDY

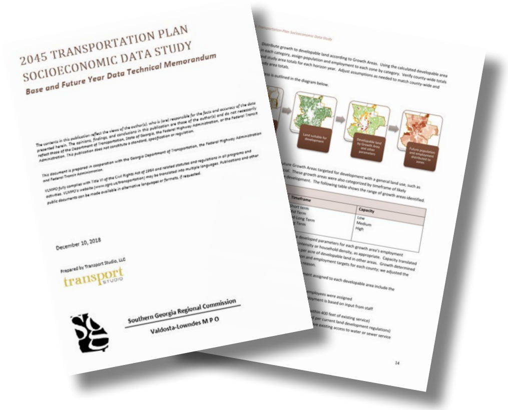
2020 VISION 2045 | METRO TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2021 VALDOSTA-LOWNDES COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2024 YOUNG GAMECHANGERS REPORT



2018



LOWNDES COUNTY 2045 SOCIOECONOMIC STUDY

Housing Trends & Projections

Single-family homes are projected to remain the majority, but will decrease from 67% in 2015 to 64% of total housing units by 2045.

Growth will be concentrated in designated residential growth areas, particularly north of Valdosta and along major corridors such as SR 125/Bemiss Road, US Highway 84, and US Highway 41.

Lowndes County's population is projected to reach 154,885 by 2045.

There will be an increased demand for housing, particularly near employment centers and transit corridors.

Land Use & Housing Development

Residential development will be prioritized in designated growth areas with access to water and sewer infrastructure.

Higher-density housing developments are planned to support transportation and employment growth.

Central Valdosta and southern Lowndes County contain parcels with potential for housing reinvestment.

Tax assessor data highlights areas with an aging housing stock in need of redevelopment.

Infrastructure & Policy Considerations

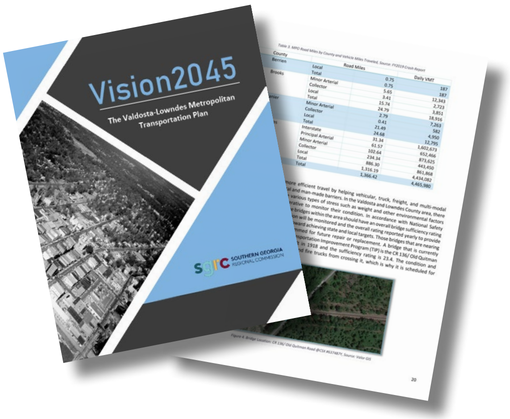
Expansion of water and sewer infrastructure will dictate housing growth patterns.

Policies encourage mixed-use development in urban centers to enhance walkability.

Affordable housing developments are needed to balance growth with workforce availability.

Local policies should support zoning flexibility to accommodate diverse housing types.

2020



VISION 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY (2020)

Projected Shift in Housing Composition

Increasing density in existing residential areas, especially north of Valdosta.

Residents prefer large-lot, single-family suburban homes.

Higher costs to extend infrastructure (utilities, roads, etc.) to suburban areas.

Suburban residents have longer travel times to access goods and services.

Housing & Transportation Integration

Residential growth areas will require expanded infrastructure, including bike lanes, sidewalks, and public transit.

More dense urban development is essential for a successful public transit system.

Rural road congestion expected due to population growth, requiring capacity improvements.

Environmental Justice (EJ) areas—low-income and minority communities—face mobility challenges requiring multi-modal solutions.

Land Use & Housing Development Strategies

Current land use[1]

- Agriculture/Forestry (69%)
- Residential (14%)
- Transportation (4%)
- Public/Institutional (3%)
- Undeveloped/Vacant (3%)
- Parks (3%)
- Commercial (2%)
- Industrial (2%)

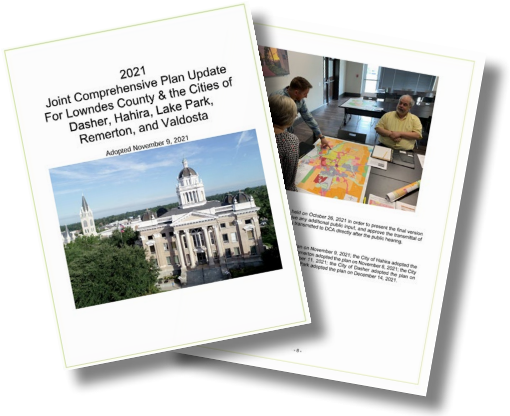
Opportunity for mixed-use and infill development in vacant lots.

Encouraging land use policies that integrate housing with multi-modal transportation systems.

Urban Redevelopment Areas identified as zones for revitalization, investment, and affordable housing.

1 A current land use map can be found on page page 35.

2021



VALDOSTA AND LOWNDES COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Housing Challenges

Low inventory of homes priced under $200,000.

High land costs limit affordable housing development.

Rising building material prices increase housing costs and slow construction.

Strict regulations may unintentionally raise building costs.

Housing Opportunities:

Undeveloped land could be used for additional housing options.

A mixture of housing types and costs could be explored.

Infill development potential due to vacant lots.

Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment Programs:

Owner-occupied housing rehabilitation loans and grants.

Emergency Home Repair Program.

Major and minor home repair program.

Demolition and lead paint abatement initiatives.

Policy Recommendations:

Align with Department of Community Affairs objectives for planning efficiency and quality of life.

Promote business expansion that supports housing affordability.

Encourage green practices and efficient resource management.

Funding Mechanisms:

City of Valdosta: General Fund, SPLOST, GICH, CDBG, HUD Funding, State/Federal Funds.

Lowndes County: Chamber of Commerce, SPLOST, Federal Aviation Administration, Local and Federal Funds.

Community Engagement:

Multiple workshops, public hearings, and a stakeholder meeting were held.

Engagement focused on needs assessment, policies, and land use.

2024

YOUNG GAMECHANGERS PLAN

Housing Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

High poverty rate (60.1%) and low median household income.

Deteriorating infrastructure, vacant properties, and blighted areas.

Economic disparities and historical disinvestment leading to community mistrust.

Lack of pedestrian and transportation infrastructure connecting Southside to Downtown.

Risk of displacement.

Opportunities

Vacant city-owned properties available for affordable housing and mixed-use development.

Proposed Southside Reformation Overlay to allow for mixed-use and multi-family housing.

Planned infrastructure improvements (Southside Spirit Trail, pedestrian corridors, parks).

Expansion of workforce training and mentorship programs to support economic mobility.

Existing Programs & Policy Recommendations

Existing Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment Programs:

Valdosta-Lowndes Housing Authority: provides affordable housing solutions.

Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) IET Program: workforce training in construction, manufacturing, and public works.

One Valdosta Lowndes – Facilitates economic development and housing support initiatives.

Policy Recommendations:

Southside Reformation OverlaY: introduces zoning flexibility for higher-density housing.

Conversion of city-owned properties into affordable and workforce housing.

Investment in parks and recreation infrastructure to improve livability in underserved neighborhoods.

Expansion of mentorship and workforce programs to enhance employment and housing stability.

Funding Mechanisms & Community Engagement

Funding Opportunities:

Local: Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), SPLOST, Valdosta Blight Tax Funds.

State: Georgia Cities Foundation Revolving Loan Fund, Georgia Economic Placemaking Collaborative.

Federal/National: New Market Tax Credits, Opportunity Zone Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grants.

Community Engagement & Results:

Engagement Methods: Stakeholder meetings, public workshops, and community events.

Formation of the TitleTown Teammates Mentorship Collective to support workforce and housing initiatives.

Strengthened public-private partnerships for redevelopment efforts.

Identification of priority areas for housing, infrastructure, and community revitalization.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The overarching theme across all four previous plans for Valdosta-Lowndes County illustrates an effort to address housing challenges by directing new development to areas with existing infrastructure and ensuring services like roads, utilities, and transit can support that growth. The plans emphasize the need for diverse housing options, especially affordable and workforce housing, to meet the needs of a growing population.

There is a strong desire for integrating land use, transportation, and utility planning to guide residential growth in targeted areas, especially near employment and transit corridors. These plans also emphasized the importance of revitalizing aging neighborhoods and vacant parcels through infill development, while promoting walkability and mixed-used zoning.

Lastly, community engagement is consistently presented as a critical tool for shaping policy. A common goal is wanting to balance growth with equity by supporting low-income residents, addressing transportation access, and ensuring environmental justice communities.

03

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Steering Committee Kickoff

The steering committee kickoff meeting, held on November 15th at Valdosta State University, included stakeholders from non-profits, education, and other partner organizations throughout the county and city. The project team introduced the project, reviewed goals and objectives, and initial data for the city and county. The meeting was primarily dedicated to attendees completing a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis and asset mapping activity, summarized below. Attendees were asked to share what redevelopment means to them. Stakeholders defined redevelopment as improving existing neighborhoods by supporting growth and investment that has community buy-in.

Additional thoughts included:

- Establishing a vision for future growth
- Reducing blight
- Maintaining affordability
- Supporting infill development
- Investing in historic neighborhoods
- Creating new opportunities for residents

Steering committee members were asked to share what they see as the biggest housing challenges in Valdosta-Lowndes. As shown in Figure 2, the biggest challenges for housing in Valdosta-Lowndes are the availability, affordability, and condition of housing. Other challenges included infrastructure needs, neighborhood safety, and absentee landlords. The last question for the steering committee asked about housing strengths in Valdosta-Lowndes. Feedback is shown in Figure 3. The top three strengths include growth, potential, and Valdosta State University. Other strengths include community leaders, historic neighborhoods, and redevelopment opportunities.

Figure 2: Biggest Housing Challenges - Steering Committee Response

Figure 3: Biggest Housing Strengths - Steering Committee Response

Additional feedback from the steering committee included concerns about crime, especially in certain areas of Valdosta, and the level of evictions in the county. Since these topics were raised as a concern, the CEDR team reviewed 2023 crime data for the City of Valdosta (county data was not available) and eviction rates for the county, and several comparable counties.

The 2023 crime data showed that most crime committed in the city was property related, followed by substance related crimes. Personal crime was the least common type of crime in the city. Maps and additional information regarding crime can be found in the Community Geographies section on page 34.

Data from Eviction Lab was pulled for Lowndes, Doughtery, Bibb, and Bulloch counties to compare Lowndes to similar communities. Overall, Lowndes County is in line with the eviction rate of the selected counties. Compared to other counties, Lowndes has the second lowest eviction filings per day but has the second highest filing rate. The filing rates for all these counties are higher than the U.S. average. It is also important to note that the most recent data available is from 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on the housing market.

	Lowndes County	Dougherty County	Bibb County	Bulloch County
Eviction Filings per Day	10	16.2	14.1	5.5
Filings Rate	17.6%	28.8%	17.2%	14.5%
Households Threatened	13.1%	18.9%	13.1%	12.5%

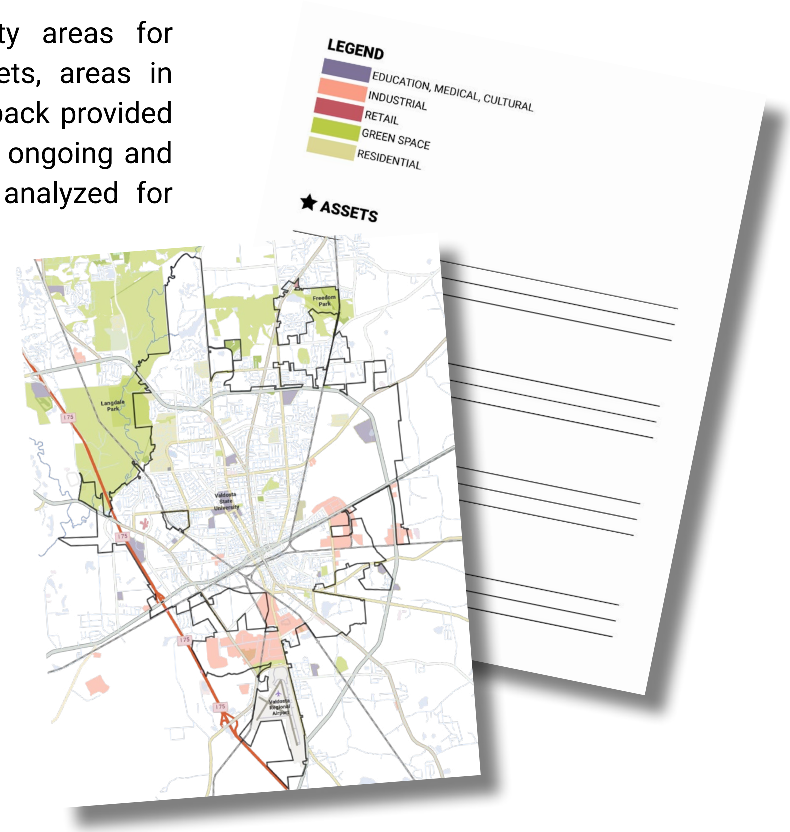
Filings Rate = Number of Filings per 100 Renters

Households Threatened = % of Unique Households that Received an Eviction

Source: Eviction Lab 2018

Asset Mapping

Stakeholders received maps to identify priority areas for Phase 2, focusing on existing community assets, areas in need, and sites for new development. Their feedback provided valuable context to align Phase 2 selections with ongoing and future initiatives. This input was digitized and analyzed for presentation at the next committee meeting.



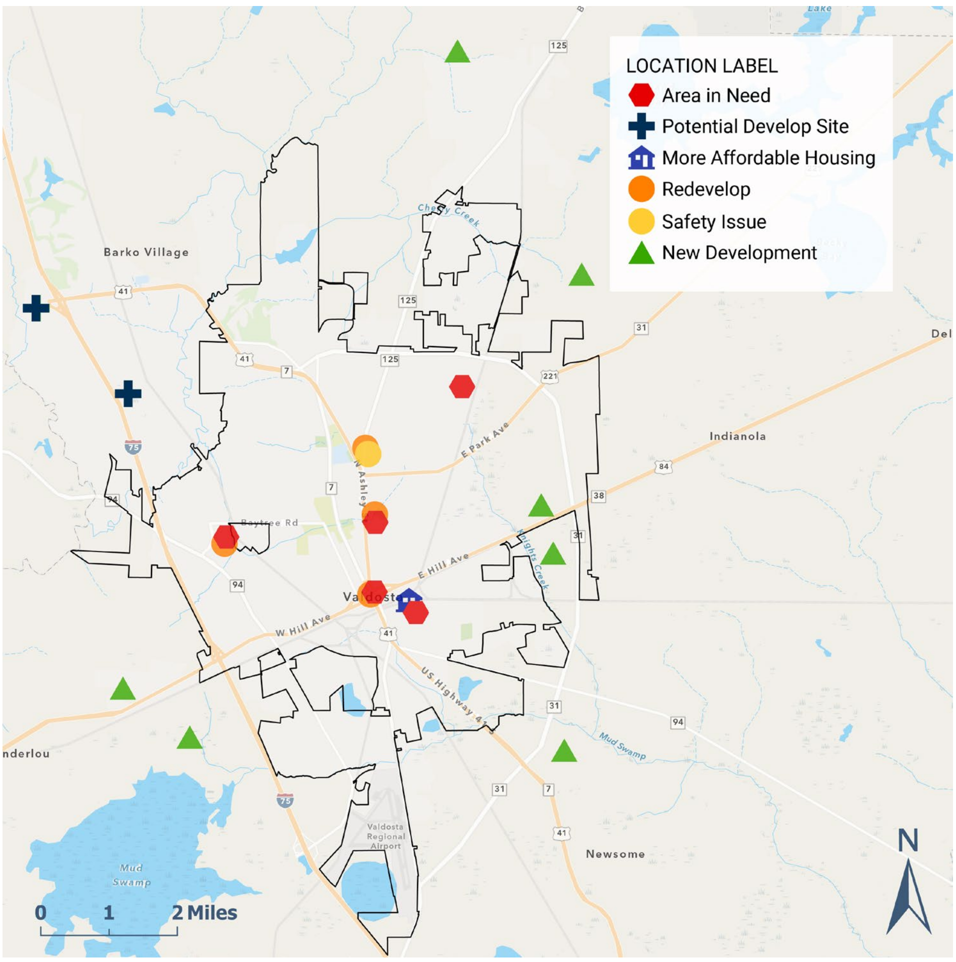
Much of the identified new development has occurred outside the city boundaries, as have respondents' suggestions for where future growth should take place.

Because many responses extended beyond the city limits, we repeated the exercise at a follow-up meeting using the county boundary as the focus area. These conversations prompted us to consider potential redevelopment areas outside the city limits.

Steering Committee Number Two

During the second steering committee meeting on January 28th, the project team reviewed feedback from the first meeting. The committee completed an asset mapping activity for Lowndes County and identified potential sites outside the city limits for the Phase 2 study.

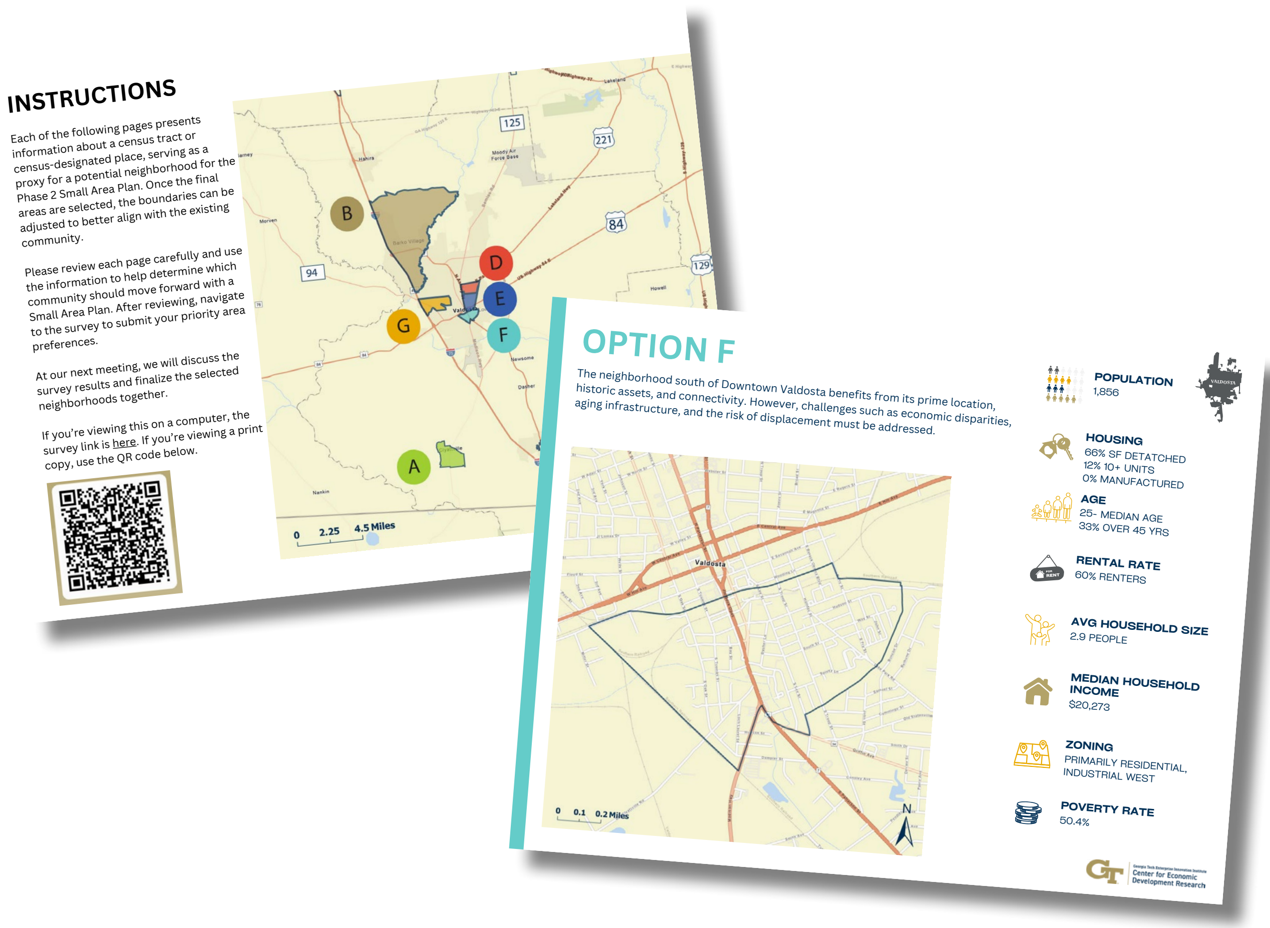
Figure 4: Digitized Output from Asset Mapping Activity



Neighborhood Prioritization

Fact sheets were developed to help steering committee participants make informed decisions in selecting the final neighborhood for Phase 2. Each fact sheet featured a map, a brief description, and key data on population, demographics, housing, income, and zoning. Fact sheets are included in the appendices on page 90.

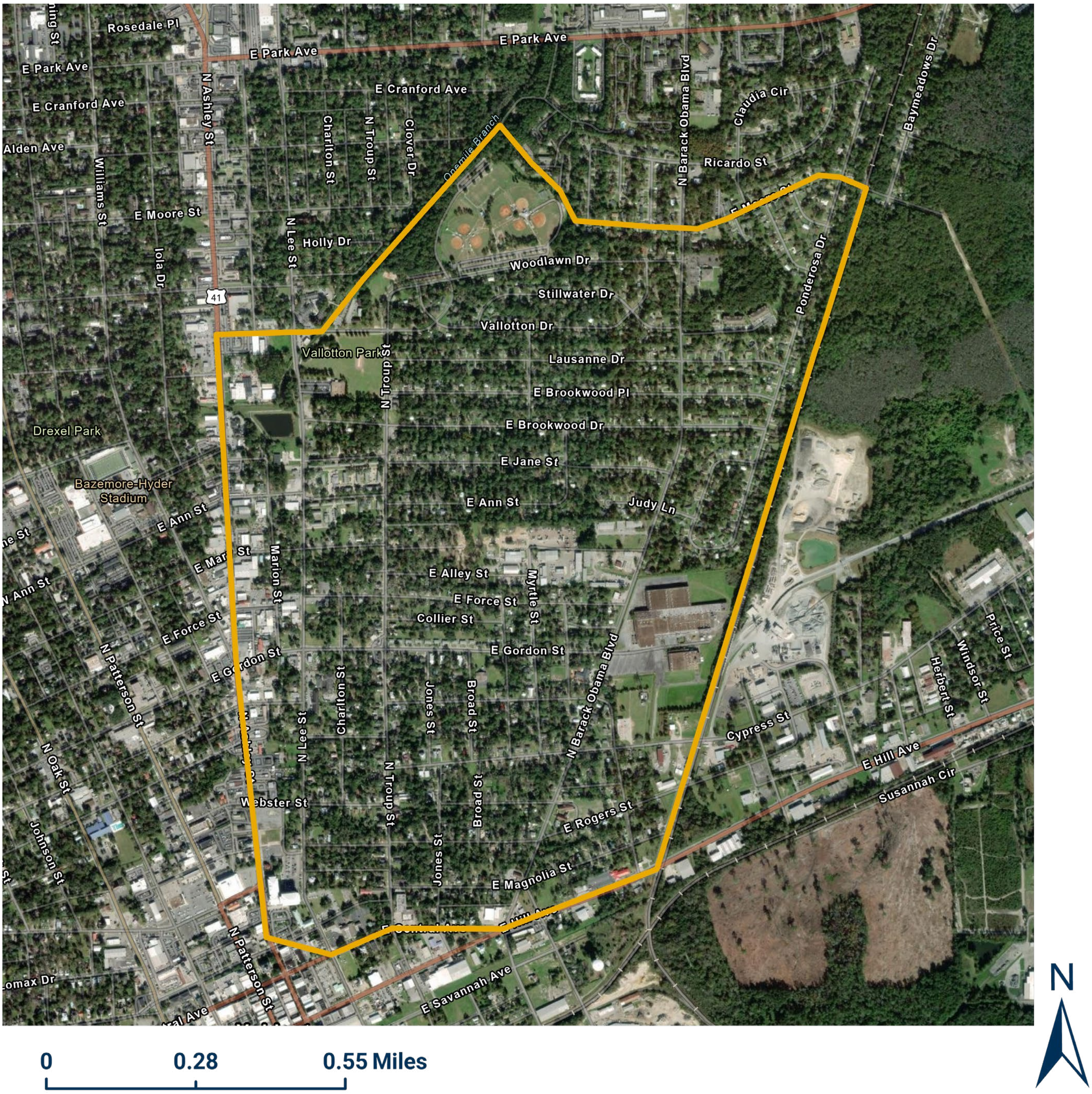
In addition to the fact sheets, the steering committee participated in a prioritization survey. Based on the provided information, they ranked communities from highest to lowest priority for a small area plan. These responses informed the final study area for Phase 2.



Steering Committee Number Three

The third Steering Committee meeting was held on May 15th at the City Hall Annex. The first half of this meeting was dedicated to sharing major takeaways from the Phase One report. During the second half of the meeting, we reviewed the fact sheets for each small area plan option. During this meeting, CEDR recommended that either areas D, E, or F be selected. These areas are in proximity to one another and their existing conditions (existing housing stock, proximity to downtown, exiting infrastructure) are appropriate for a small area plan. The steering committee finalized a general boundary during the meeting, which was further refined by the CDER team and One Valdosta Lowndes. Figure 5 shows the final small area plan geography.

Figure 5: Final Small Area Plan Boundary



The Phase 2 boundary runs along N Ashley St to the west, E Central and E Hill to the south, the rail lines to the east, and the road bordering Valloton Park to the north. This boundary was decided based on the existing housing stock, need for improved safety following park incidents, and the potential to revitalize commercial properties.

SURVEY

CEDR created a series of online surveys to capture the input and outlook of stakeholders in the study area. Individualized surveys for Real Estate Professionals, Builders/Developers, and a General Business Survey were distributed through local chambers of commerce and professional associations, such as the Board of Realtors and Homebuilders Association. One Valdosta Lowndes shared the survey with over 60 stakeholders, and it was shared on various social media sites.

The surveys were open for six weeks and had a total of 72 responses (3 Real Estate, 8 Builder/Developer, 61 General Business/Other). The detailed results from the survey questions are included on the following pages.

DEVELOPER SURVEY SUMMARY

Introduction Questions

- Single-family homes are the most common type of house built by developers who responded to the survey.
- The types of products these developers are building have not changed significantly over the last year.

Market Trends

- All respondents feel that the demand for new housing is high in Valdosta/Lowndes.
- Economic conditions were shared as the main driver of housing demand, followed by affordability and population growth.
- Open floor plans are still a popular layout with people purchasing homes.

Development Barriers

- Rising material costs were seen as the biggest barrier to developing affordable housing.
- The impact of zoning and permitting was seen as negligible.

Future Trends

- Developing smaller homes was shared as a potential new trend impacting the development sector over the next five years.
- Developers shared that they anticipate starting to build homes with garages in response to market preferences.

REALTOR SURVEY SUMMARY

Market Trends

- The current residential market in Valdosta/Lowndes is favoring buyers.
- Safety and schools are essential factors when potential home buyers are looking to buy.
- In Valdosta/Lowndes, there are more existing homes than new homes for sale, which explains the higher demand for existing homes.
- There have not been any significant changes in buyers' preferences over the last year.
- There is a need for more affordable housing.

Market Barriers

- Potential home buyers face three biggest barriers: high interest rates, mortgage availability, and high property prices.

Future Trends and Hopes

- Reduced sales due to a lack of affordability.
- Increased difficulty in qualifying for a mortgage.
- Need to reduce the minimum square footage for homes to allow for the development of smaller homes.
- Develop residential communities that are safe, healthy, and enjoyable.

GENERAL BUSINESS/OTHER SURVEY SUMMARY

Introduction Questions

The first question of the General Business/Other survey illustrates a diverse range of leadership roles across sectors. Among those in the General Business/Other group, many respondents indicated they were Executive Directors (4), CEOs (4), or business owners (including property owners and managers). The open-ended nature of the question also yielded job titles such as Region Director, Librarian, Program Coordinator, and Partner in a legal housing practice. These responses strongly represent management, executive, and organizational leadership positions within the region. Most survey participants identified their location as Lowndes County.

Figure 7 shares that most of the respondents work, or own, businesses with less than 200 employees (74%). About a quarter of respondents work for businesses with more than 200 employees.

The third question in this section asked what industry sector they represent, and is summarized in Figure 8. Most survey respondents work either in the Government & Public Services or Non-profit & Social Services sector. The legal and business sector accounted for 20% of respondents, and 16% came from the manufacturing sector. Other sectors represented in the survey include:

- Healthcare & Human Services.
- Arts, Design & Culture.

Having responses from a variety of industry sectors provides insight into housing issues that workers across job sectors in Valdosta and the county are experiencing.

Overall, 65% of respondents shared that the average tenure of employees is between 0-15 years, with the highest percentage (30%) being between 0-5 years. Respondents also shared the age range of their employees, with the highest number of employees being between 25-44, prime home-buying age.

The combination of low average tenure and a high proportion of younger workers indicates that these businesses likely employ workers early in their careers who require affordable rental housing and affordable entry-level homes for purchase.

Figure 6: What Is Your Position?

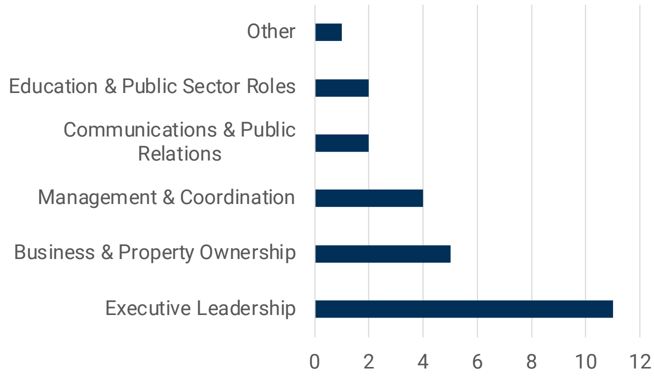


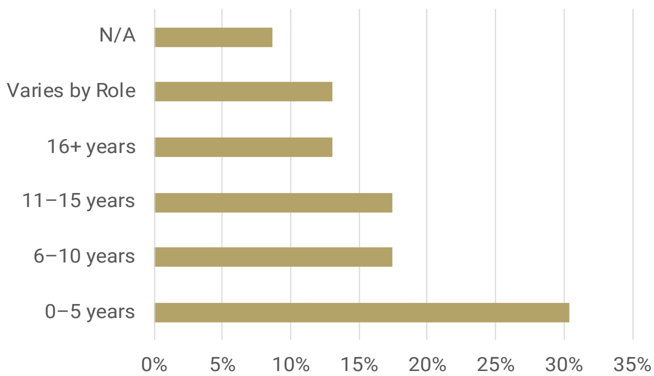
Figure 7: How Many Employees Are With The Organization?

<200	200+
74%	26%

Figure 8: What industry Sector Do You Represent?

NON-PROFIT	GOVERNMENT
24%	24%

Figure 9: Average Employee Tenure



Employee Housing Challenges and Preferences

The next set of questions focused on employee housing challenges and preferences.

The first question in this section asked human resource professionals if housing has been raised as a concern through employee surveys or other feedback. 63% of respondents shared that housing concerns had not been shared by their employees, while 25% said the topic had been raised. About 13% shared they were not sure if housing was a concern for their employees. While the percentage of respondents who said housing has come up is low, this may be due to the question not being explicitly asked on employee surveys.

Figure 11 shares feedback on the most common housing-related challenges for employees. The lack of affordable housing options was shared as the largest housing barrier in Valdosta. The high cost of living and limited housing stock availability tied were also seen as large housing challenges. Additional issues shared include:

- Long commute times.
- Poor existing housing stock.

These results highlight the lack of overall housing supply in the area for workers.

The final question in this section asked what are the most important factors for employee housing. The results are in Figure 12. Affordability and safety were the top two most important factors for employee housing, followed by community amenities and proximity to work. **These rankings showcase the importance of creating affordable, safe neighborhoods close to commercial and employment centers.** Additional factors to consider include:

- Proximity to commercial centers.
- Access to community amenities, such as recreation facilities.

Figure 10: Has Housing Been A Concern On Employee Surveys?

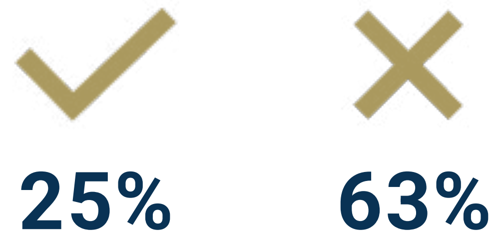


Figure 11: Most Common Housing Related Challenges For Employees

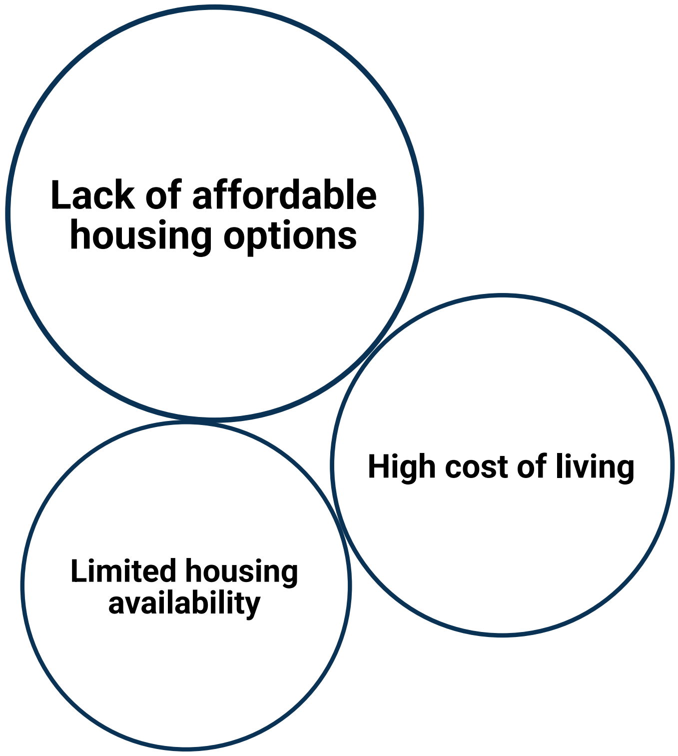
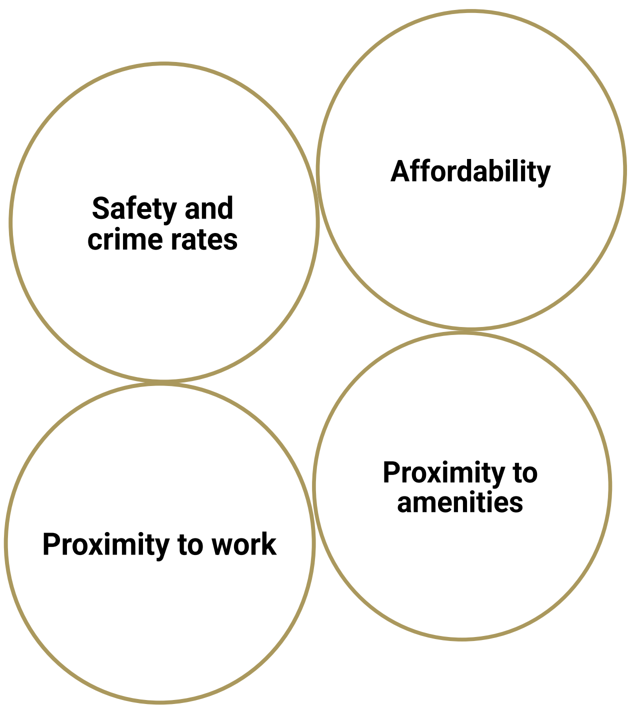


Figure 12: Important Factors for Employee Housing



Employee Housing Background

Respondents were asked what the current housing situation is of their employees. About 30% shared that most employees rent their homes, and 23% own. 20% of respondents believe employees live with family or share households with others to afford rent - highlighting the need for more affordable housing options. Finding affordable housing was seen as a challenge by 18% of respondents.

Employee Housing Assistance

Respondents were asked for their professional opinion on the potential impact of offering additional housing-related support to employees. A majority felt that such measures would positively affect employee satisfaction and retention. Several respondents selected a neutral response, indicating uncertainty or the belief that the impact may vary depending on implementation. Notably, no participants believed that additional support would have an adverse effect. These findings underscore **a general openness among employers to the idea that housing support could improve workforce outcomes, even if such programs are not widely in place today.**

The second question in this section aimed to better understand what types of housing assistance programs their company would consider implementing. The two most common responses were establishing partnerships with local housing organizations and implementing financial literacy programs focused on housing.

The final question in this section asked what challenges they foresee in trying to implement housing assistance programs. The results are in Figure 16. Overall, budget constraints were the top concern, followed by regulatory or legal issues and lack of awareness about employee needs. Identifying these barriers enable employers to collaborate with employees to better understand their housing needs and identify supportive programs that can enhance employee retention and satisfaction.

Figure 13: What Are The Household Arrangements Of Your Employees?

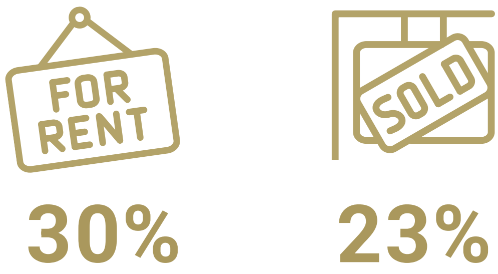


Figure 14: What Is The Potential Impact Of Providing Housing Assistance to Employees?

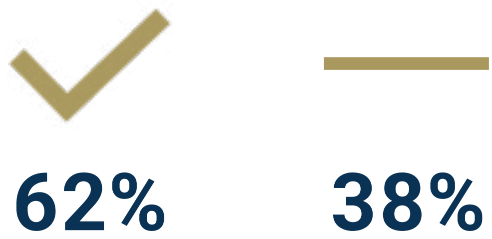


Figure 15: What Housing Support Initiatives Would Your Company Consider Implementing?

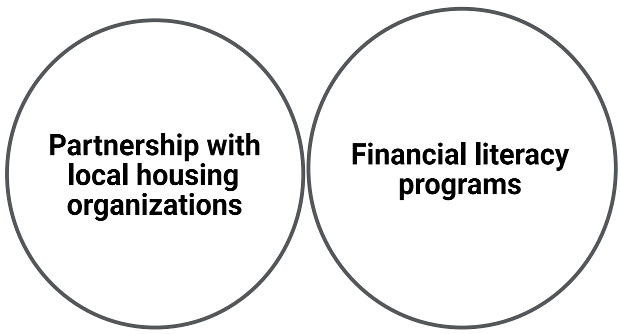
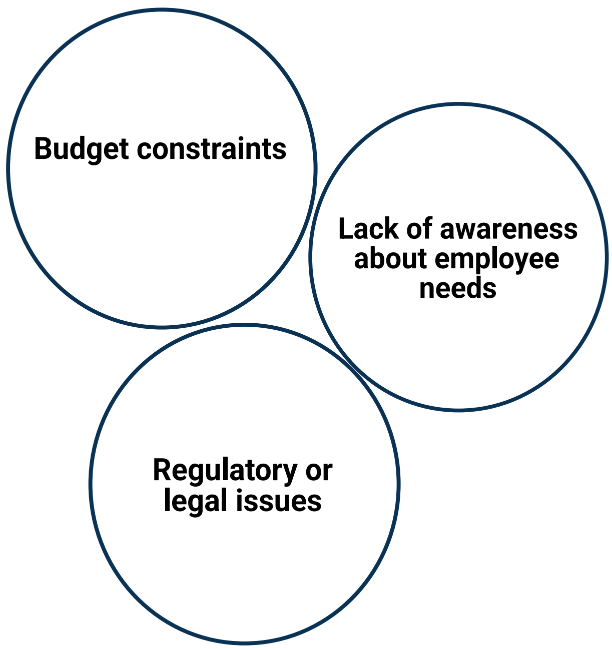


Figure 16: What Challenges Do You See Implementing These Initiatives?



04

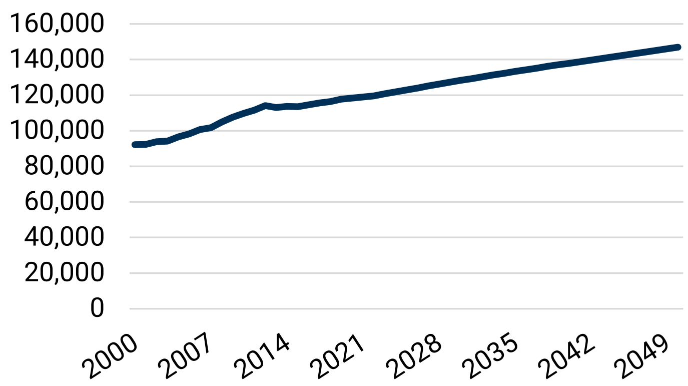
COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Figure 17 demonstrates Lowndes County population growth trends since 2000. As has been the case for the last two decades, the population of Lowndes County is expected to continue its trend upwards. Between 2023 and 2049, the county is expected to gain approximately 26,000 new residents - a 21.5% increase.

Figure 18 compares population age cohorts for Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta and highlights some key differences in age distribution. Lowndes County has a slightly higher proportion of children and adolescents. This could reflect suburban or rural family settlement patterns.

Figure 17: Lowndes County Population Growth



Source: Woods and Poole, 2025

Figure 18: Population by Age

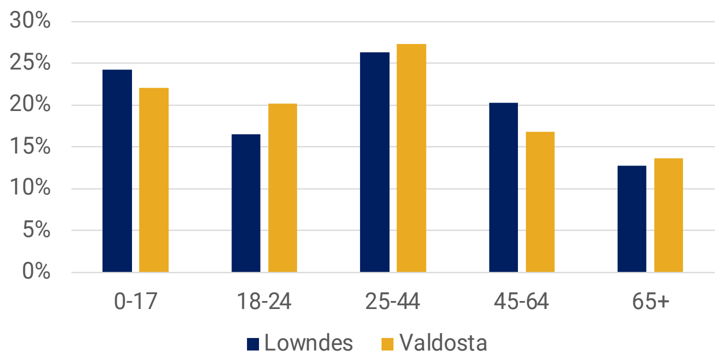
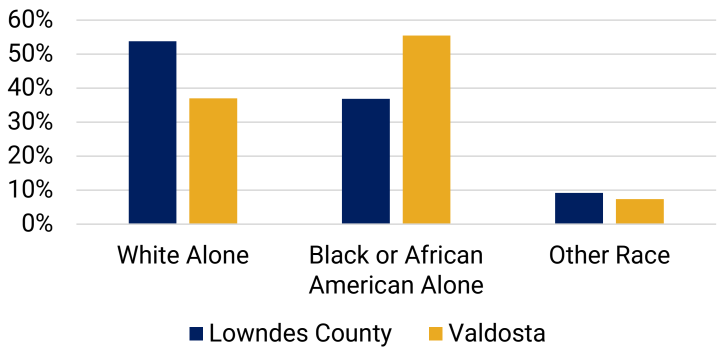


Figure 19: Population by Race



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Valdosta shows a significantly higher percentage of residents aged 18-24, likely due to the presence of Valdosta State University and other educational institutions.

Both areas have a similar share of individuals in their prime working years (25-44), while the county has a slightly higher population of mature working adults (45-64). Lowndes County also has a slightly higher population of seniors 65+.

Figure 19 illustrates the racial composition of the populations in Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta, divided into three broad categories: White Alone, Black or African American Alone, and Other Race.

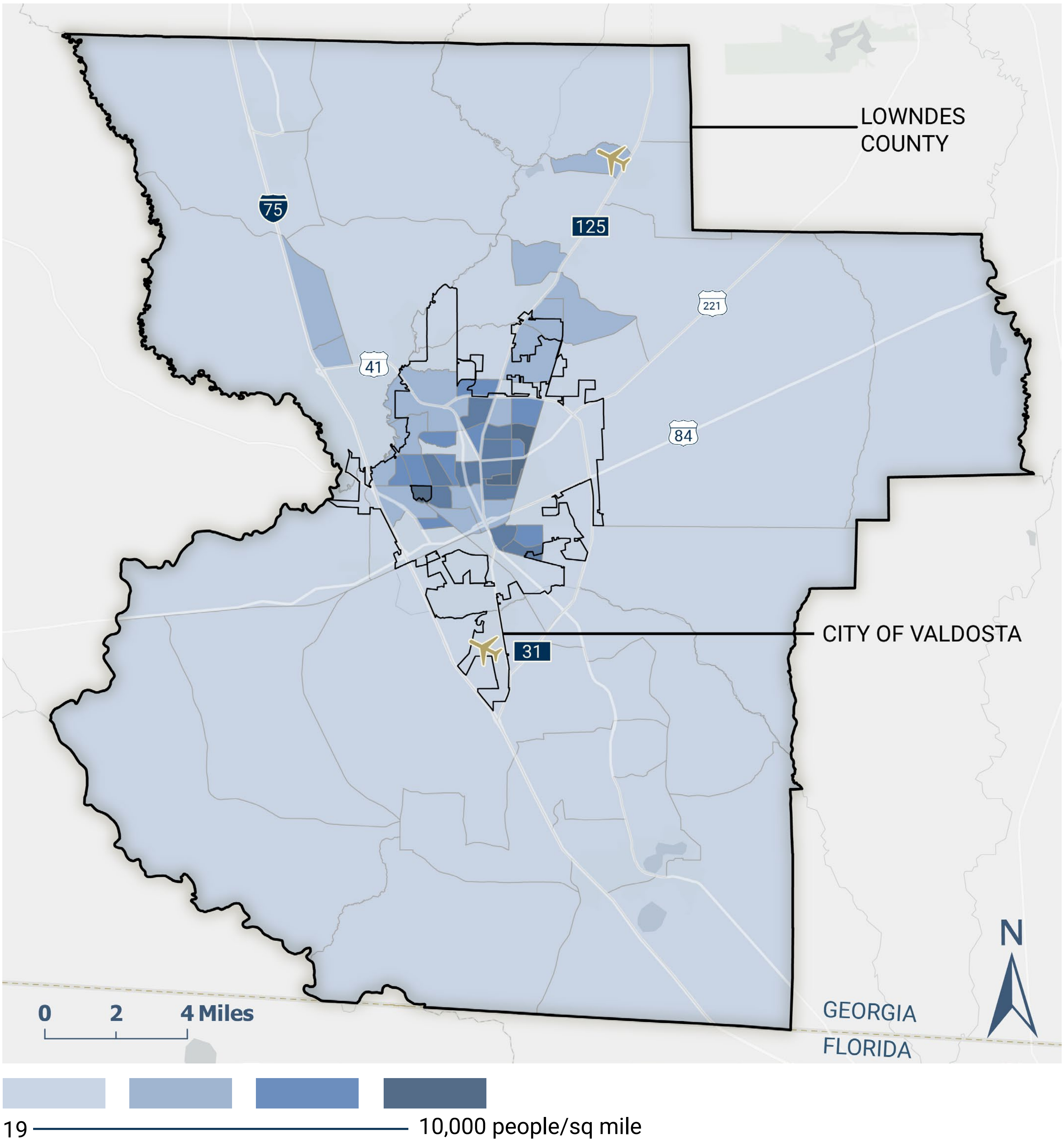
Lowndes County has a significantly higher proportion of residents identifying as White Alone compared to Valdosta. Valdosta has a higher percentage of Black or African American residents, making up about half of its population. Both areas have relatively small populations identifying as races other than White or Black.

As the population of the area grows, these differences will be important for community planning, public services, education, and cultural programming, as they reflect the unique demographic identities of each area.

Population Density

Population density is highest in Valdosta, with notable clusters around Moody Air Force Base, Bemiss, and along I-75 northwest of the city. Within Valdosta, the densest areas are the census tracts between North Ashley Street and the rail lines, as well as those surrounding Valdosta State University. Census Tracts range from 19 people per square mile to 10,000.

Figure 20: Population Density by Census Tract



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

$41,365	$52,821	$71,355
VALDOSTA	LOWNDES	GEORGIA

Sectors and Wages

The data in Table 1 compares average incomes across five major occupational categories in Valdosta, peer cities including Albany, Statesboro, Macon, Columbus, Carrollton, Dalton, and the Georgia state average. Valdosta shows competitive wages in the transportation sector, while lagging peers in food service, sales, and administrative support wages. Valdosta is among the top performers in the educational instruction and library occupations category, nearly matching Statesboro. This likely reflects the presence of Valdosta State University and a strong public education infrastructure. Targeted economic development in higher-paying sectors and workforce training could help close the income gap with the state average.

Table 1: Industry and Average Wage Comparison Table

Description	Valdosta	Georgia	Albany	Statesboro	Macon	Columbus	Dalton
Food Prep & Service	$24,156	$26,967	$24,965	$24,719	$25,866	$23,523	$25,855
Office & Admin Support	$34,882	$40,382	$35,870	$34,615	$39,166	$36,621	$37,736
Transportation & Material Moving	$37,582	$39,256	$36,401	$35,232	$36,472	$31,962	$36,402
Sales	$28,933	$34,339	$30,218	$28,080	$31,650	$29,494	$32,350
Educational Instruction and Library	$55,123	$58,979	$51,059	$61,992	$55,538	$52,518	$52,273

Source: Lightcast 2024

Commuting Patterns

Figure 21: County Job Inflow and Outflow

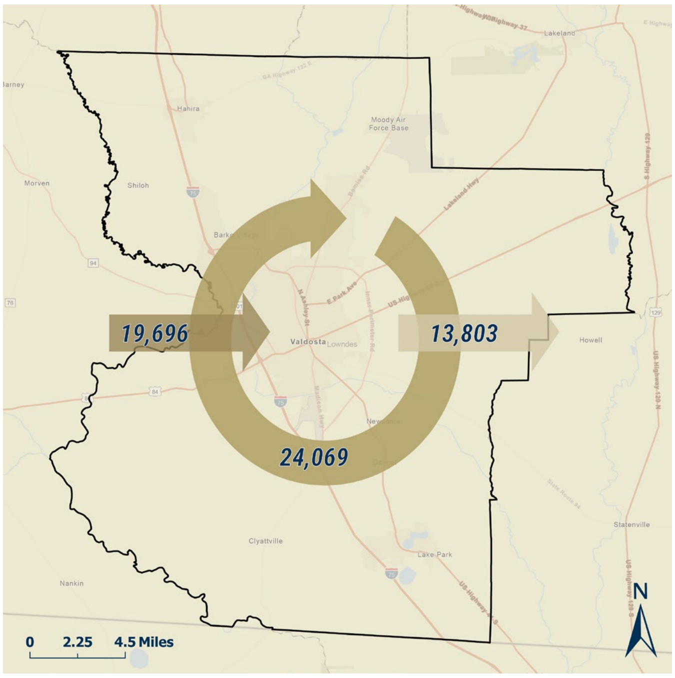
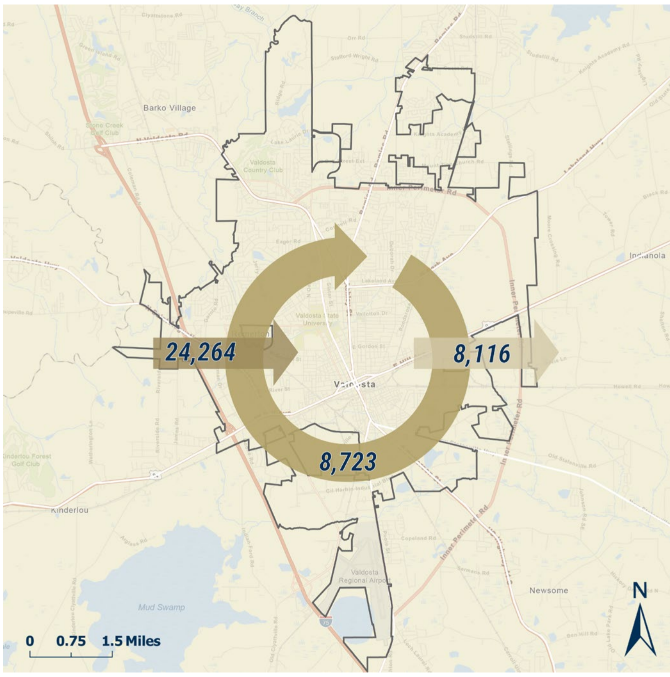


Figure 22: City Job Inflow and Outflow



Lowndes County experiences a net job inflow of 5,893 workers, with 64% of its residents also employed within the county. The city of Valdosta sees a significantly higher net inflow of 16,148 workers. Approximately half of Valdosta's residents work within the city, while the rest commute elsewhere.

Only 4% of residents in Lowndes County work from home. For the rest, 83.5% drove alone and 8.6% carpooled to work (ACS 2022 5-Year).

Source: Census on the Map, 2022

Geography of Income

As shown in Figure 23 median incomes are significantly higher for married-couple families in both Valdosta and Lowndes County, with incomes higher in the county versus the city. Nonfamily household income is significantly lower than family households. These differences in spending power will require varied housing solutions by household composition.

Figure 23: Median Household Income by Household Type

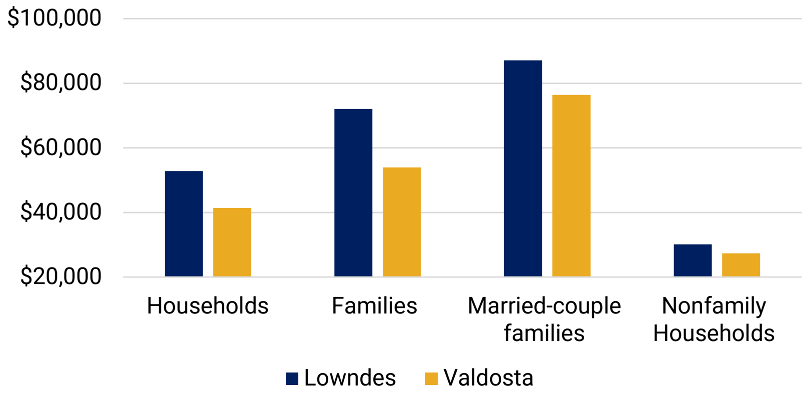
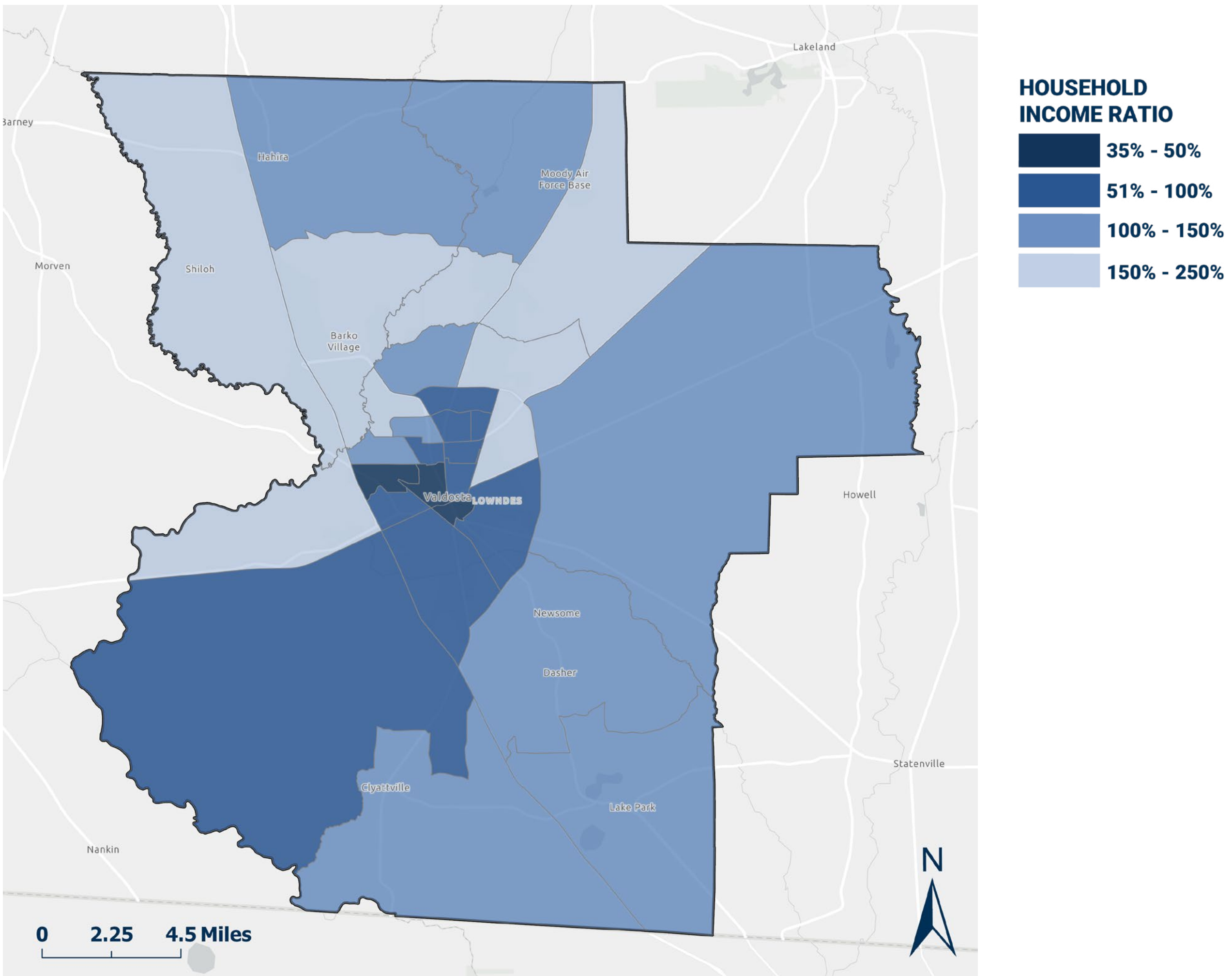


Figure 24 depicts the ratio of each census tract's income to the median household income of Lowndes County, with darker shades indicating lower-income areas. Income levels across tracts range from 36% to 242% of the county median, helping identify areas for resource allocation and targeted development efforts.

Figure 24: Census Tract Income Ratio to Median



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 25: Census Tract Income Ratio to Median

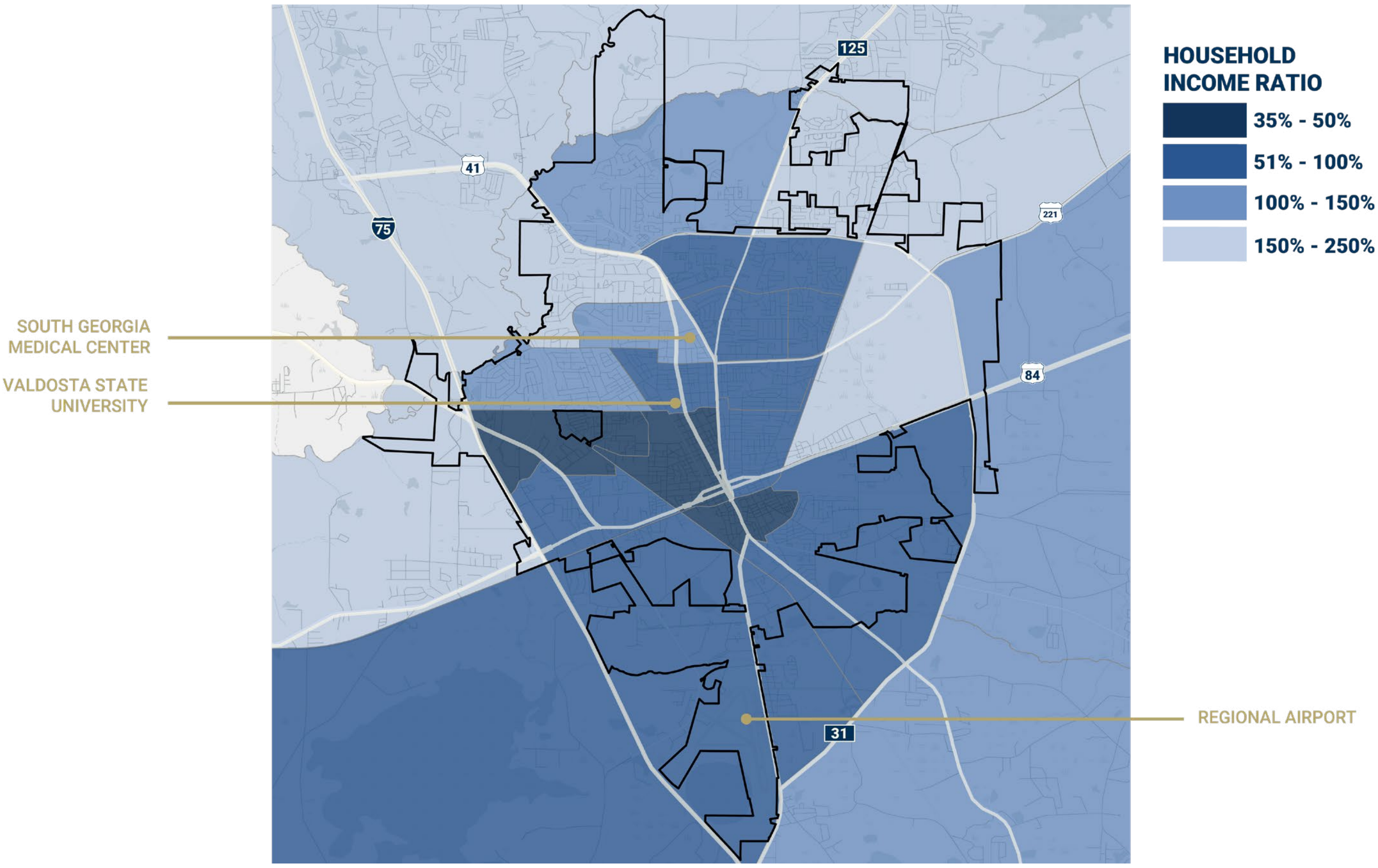


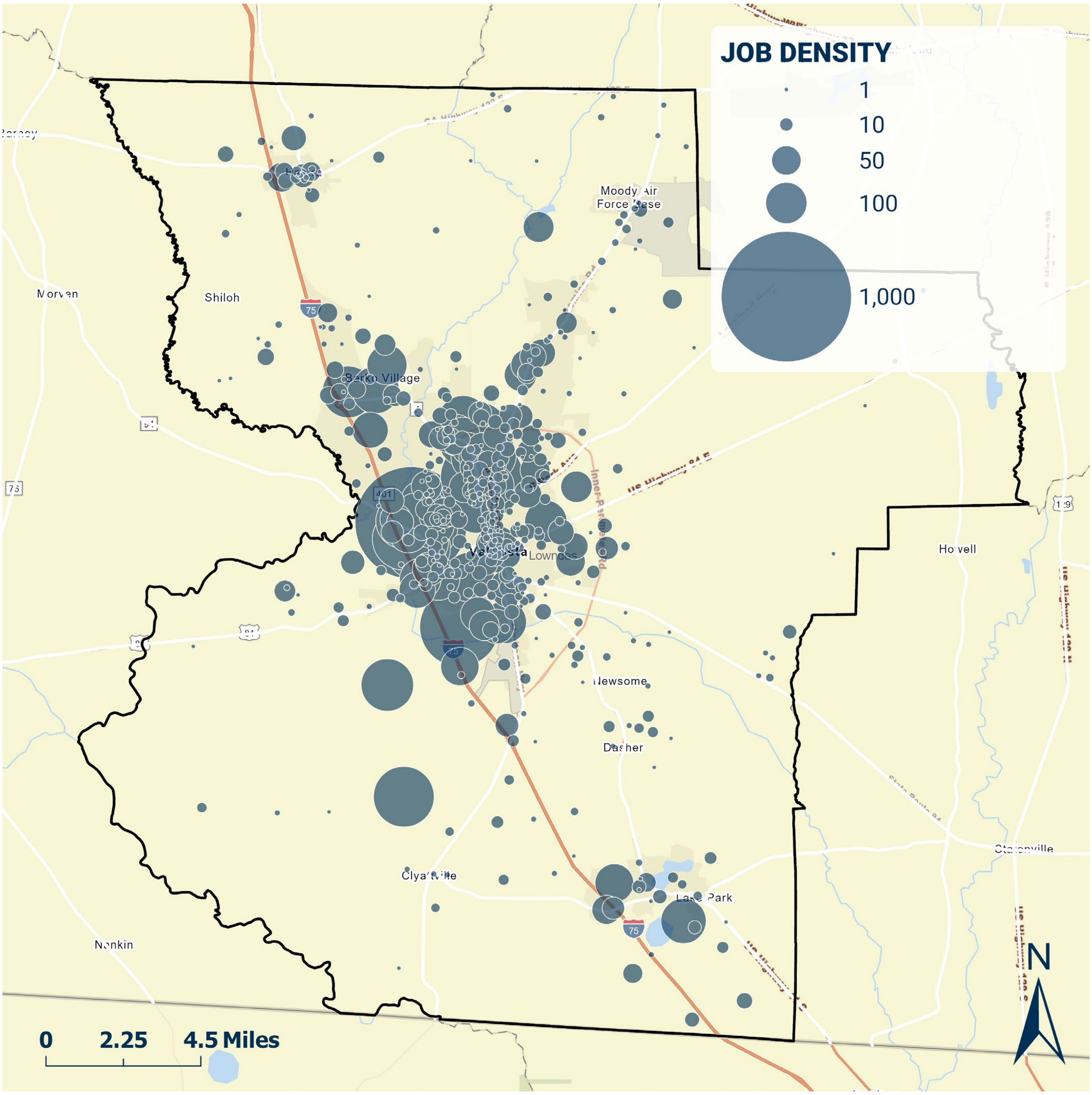
Figure 25 provides a closer look at Valdosta's income ratios, compared to the median household income of the county, and further illustrates how only using a county-wide or city-wide median can obscure the reality of many households within the community. A majority of census tracts within the city represent a relatively low percentage of the county-wide median household income.

Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Geography of Jobs

The highest job density is centered in Valdosta, particularly in the downtown area and along major transportation corridors, indicating Valdosta's role as the county's primary employment hub. Significant job clusters align with transportation routes, particularly along I-75 and U.S. Highway 41. These areas host commercial, retail, and industrial developments that benefit from high traffic volumes and accessibility. A notable job concentration is visible at Moody Air Force Base in the northeastern part of the county. Smaller job clusters appear in suburban areas like Bemiss, Lake Park, and Hahira. Outside of the main urban and transportation corridors, job density significantly decreases, reflecting the predominantly agricultural and low-density residential nature of these areas.

Figure 26: County Job Density



Source: Census On the Map, 2022

Figure 27: City Job Density

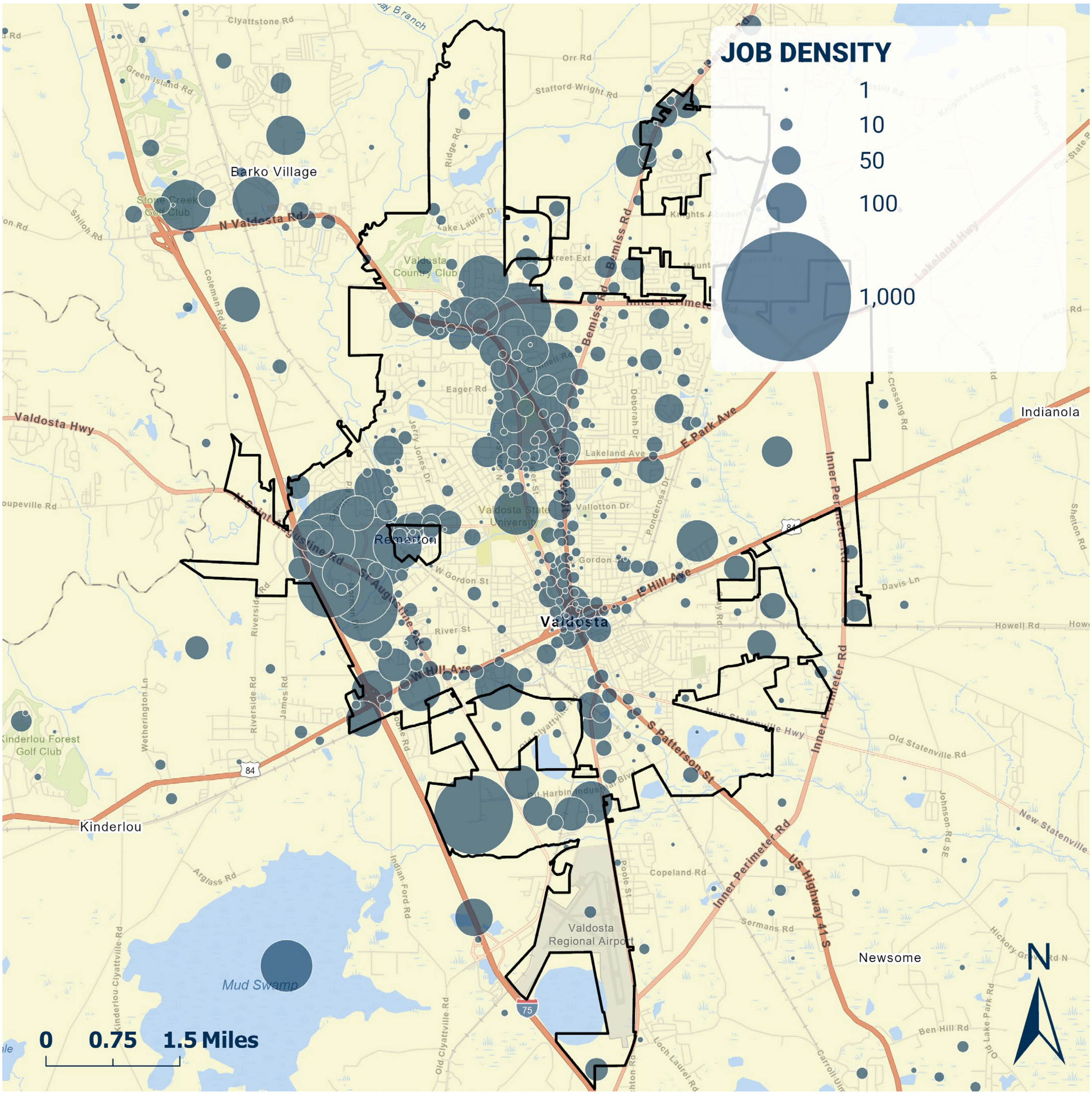


Figure 27 provides a closer view of job clusters in Valdosta and reveals large employment centers in Western Valdosta and along the central transportation routes.

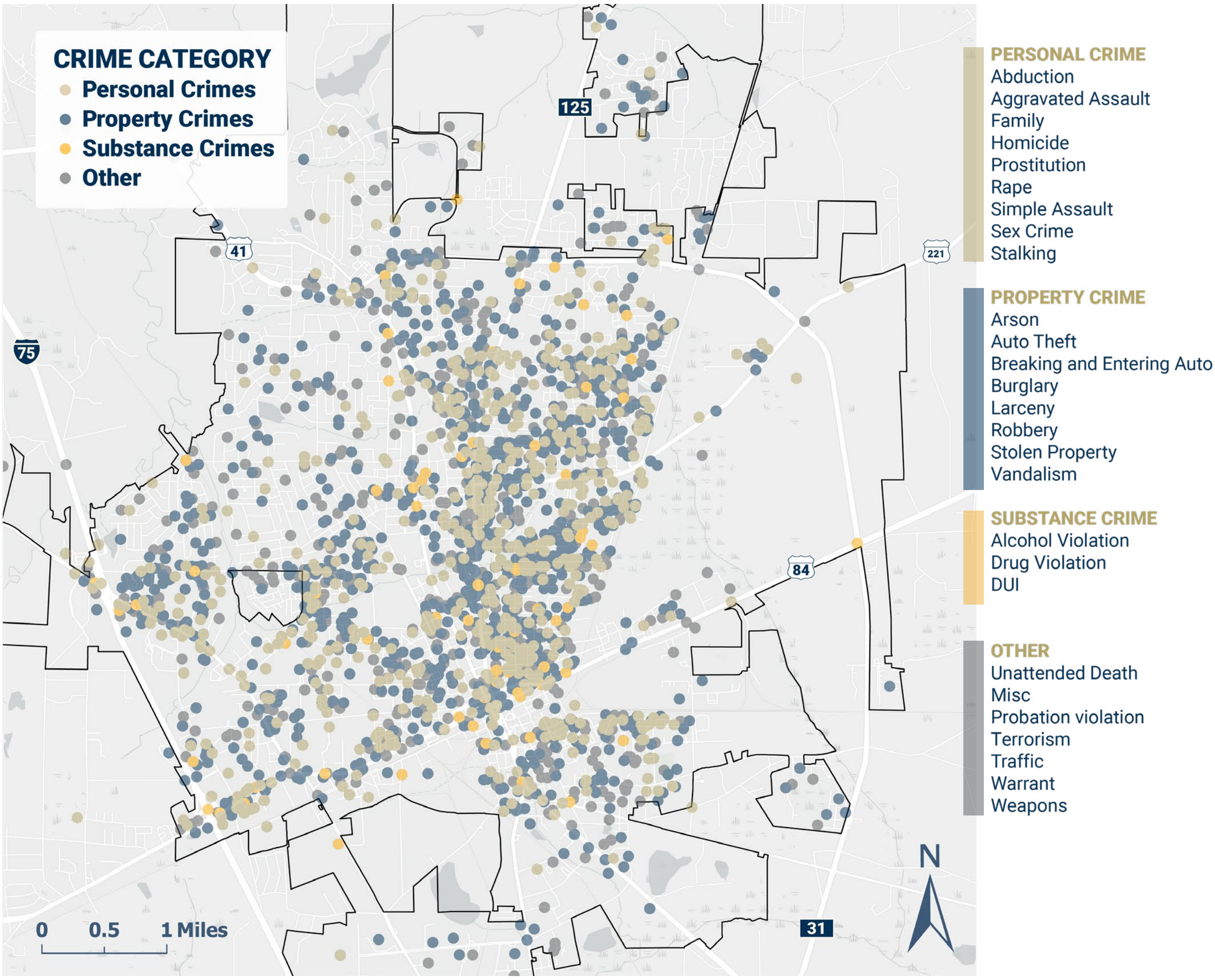
Source: ACS, 2023

Geography of Crime

Crime data for the city of Valdosta in 2023 shows incidents categorized into personal, property, and substance-related crimes. The majority of reported crimes were property-related, primarily clustering on the northern side of E Hill Ave between N Ashley St and the rail lines. Substance-related and personal crimes followed a similar spatial pattern.

2023 crime locations follow population density within the city. With the exception of some incidents west of downtown, there are no significant spatial outliers relative to population density.

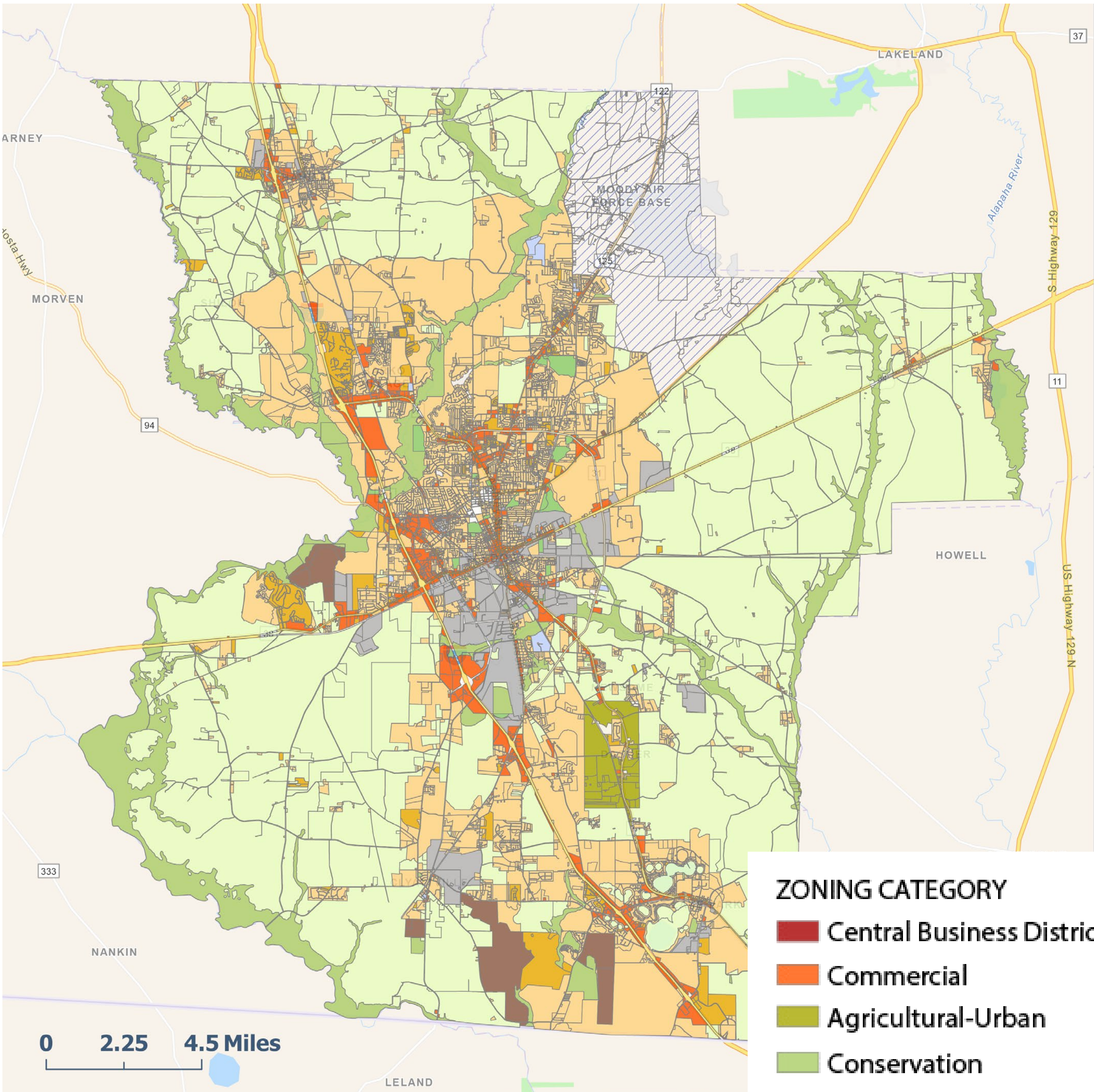
Figure 28: Crime Locations



Source: City of Valdosta, 2023

Geography of Character

Figure 29: County Zoning Map

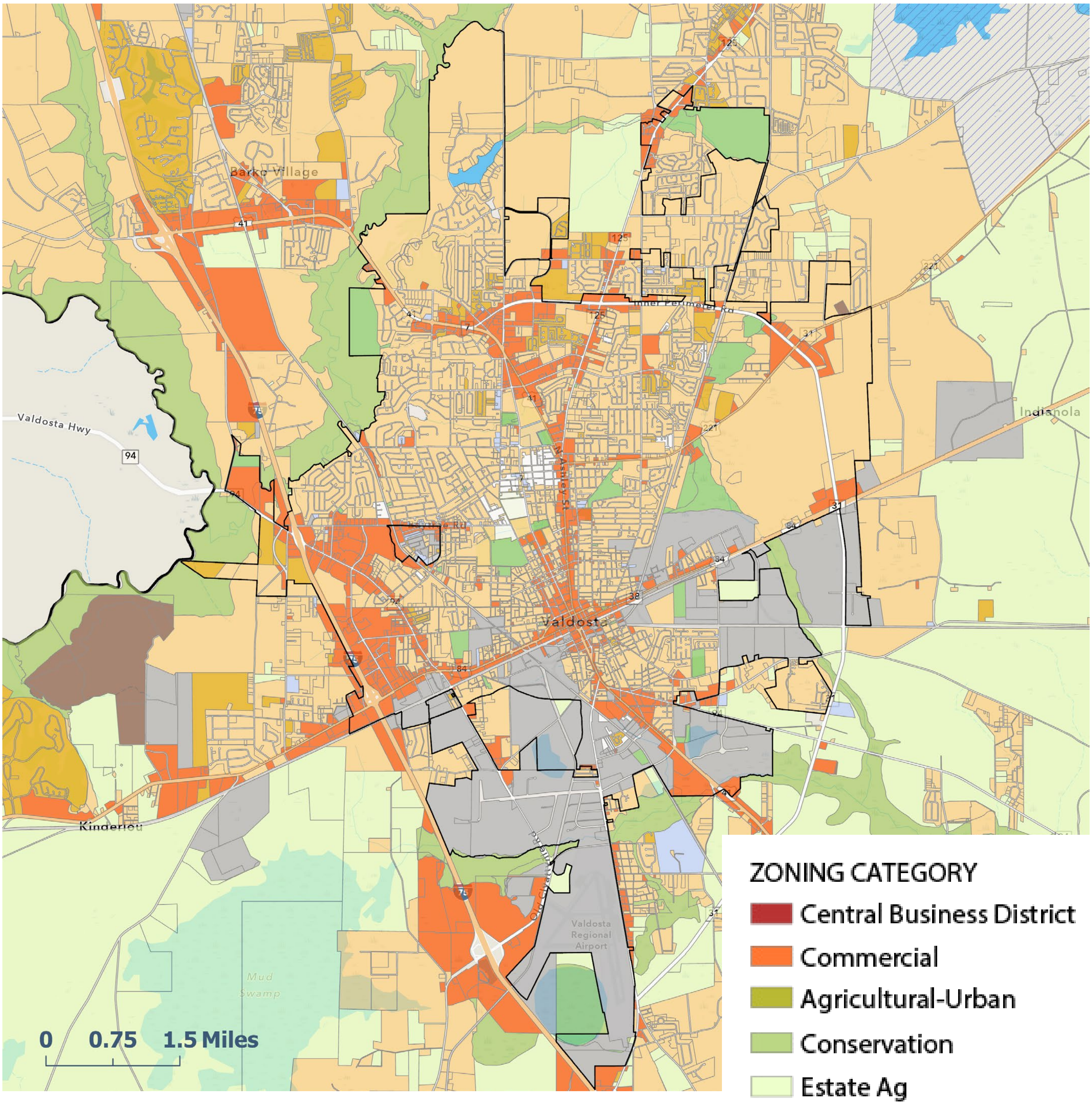


Land Use Planning

Figure 29 illustrates the zoning distribution in Lowndes County, where 52% of the land is designated as Estate Agricultural (light green), followed by Residential Agricultural at 10%. Both categories are primarily located outside the city of Valdosta. Within the city, zoning density increases, accompanied by a more diverse mix of land uses. A special zoning designation also applies to the area surrounding Moody Air Force Base.

Source: City of Valdosta, 2024

Figure 30: Valdosta Zoning Map



Zoning Category	Density
R-E	1 lot per acre
R-15	2.9 lots per acre
R-10	4.3 lots per acre
R-6	7.2 lots per acre

In Valdosta, commercial zoning is concentrated along primary arterial roads and around the mall, while industrial uses are primarily located in the southern part of the city, encompassing the airport. Residential zoning in Valdosta by acreage is R-15 (17%), R-10 (15%), and R-6 (10%).

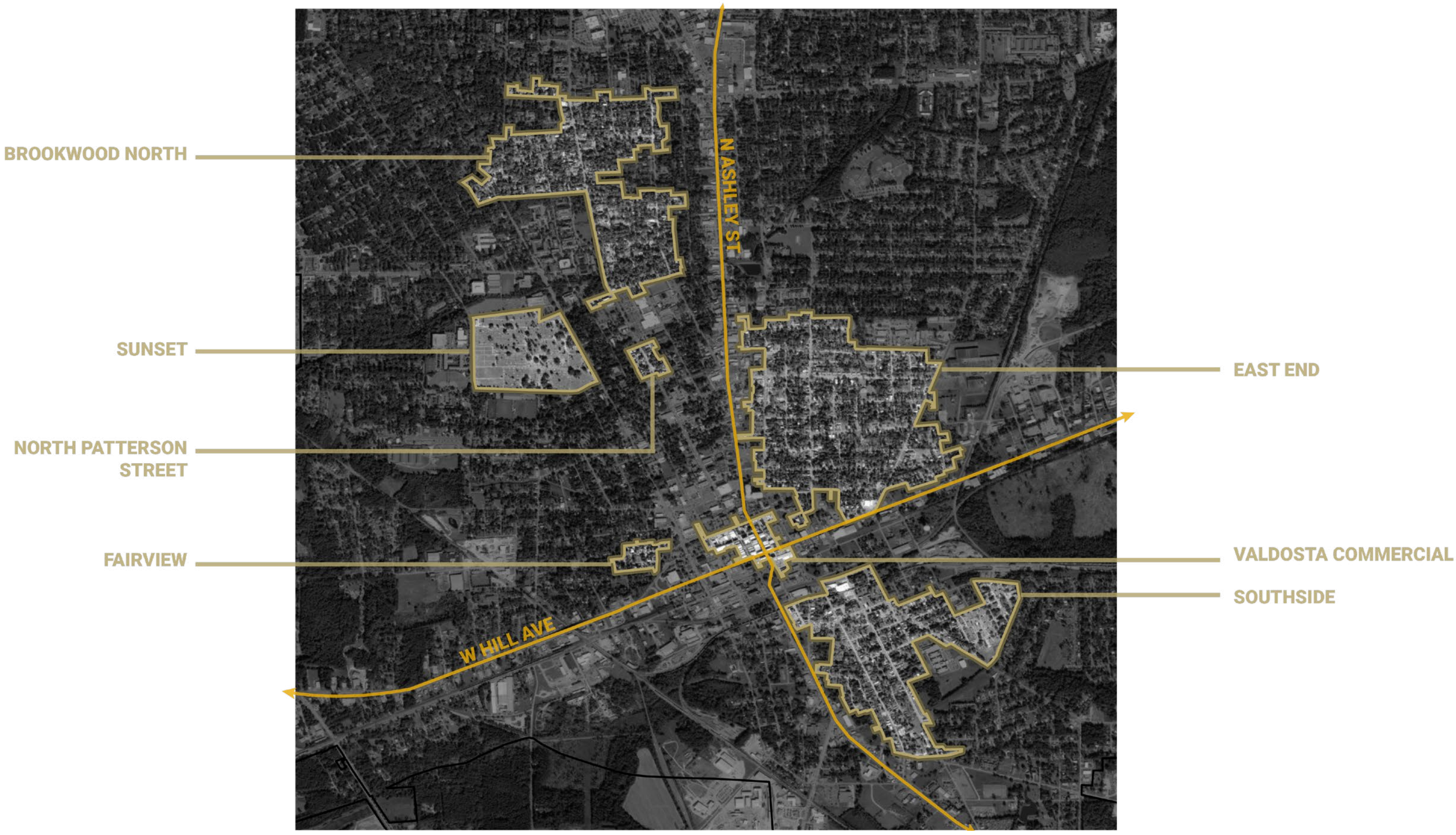
Source: City of Valdosta, 2024

Historic Districts

The City of Valdosta has one local historic district and six National Register historic districts, each serving distinct purposes in historic preservation. A National Register historic district identifies historically, architecturally, or archaeologically significant areas and provides access to preservation incentives and limited federal protection. The National Register recognizes historic resources without regulating their use. In contrast, a local historic district, designated by a local ordinance and overseen by a local historic preservation commission, protects the historic character of an area through design review rather than land use regulation. Local historic districts ensure that growth and development respect a community's architectural and historical integrity by requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for significant changes. While National Register and local historic districts function differently, they complement each other and can be used independently or together to support a community's preservation goals.

Community planning and housing in a historic district differs significantly from traditional residential development due to the additional layers of preservation regulations, design guidelines, and engagement required to maintain the district's historic character.

Figure 31: Historic Districts



Source: City of Valdosta, 2024

05

HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Housing Spectrum

As Figure 32 demonstrates, the spectrum of housing needs in a community ranges from supportive services for those with very low incomes, through affordable options such as low-income housing tax credits and non-profit supported housing, to workforce housing, and finally market rate housing, which is typically produced at the rate it can be absorbed. To understand affordability, we assess median household income related to housing costs. Housing is considered affordable if it costs no more than 30% of a household's gross income. Median household incomes for Valdosta & Lowndes County are $41,365 & $52,821 respectively. Figure 33 displays the household income that represents 30%, 80%, 100%, and 120% of each geography's median. Workforce housing typically refers to housing affordable for those making between 80% and 120% of the median household income. For the purposes of this study, we consider those seeking workforce housing in Lowndes County likely to earn between $42,000 and $63,000.

Figure 32: Area Median Income (AMI) & Housing Spectrum

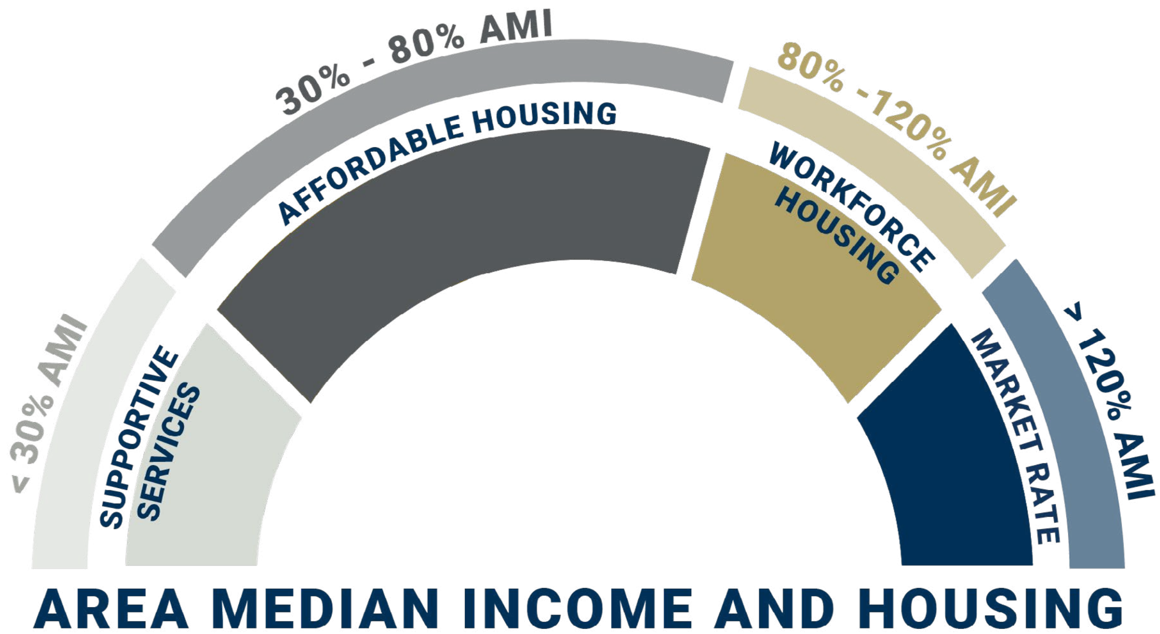
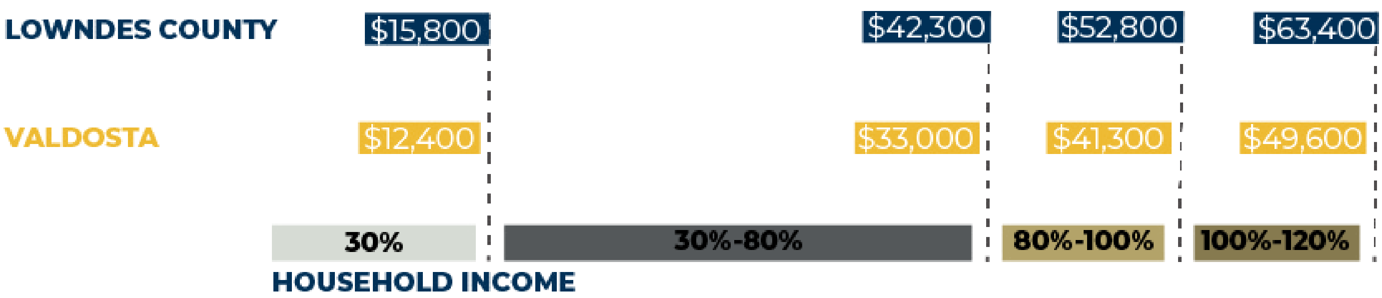


Figure 33: Lowndes County and Valdosta Household Income Thresholds

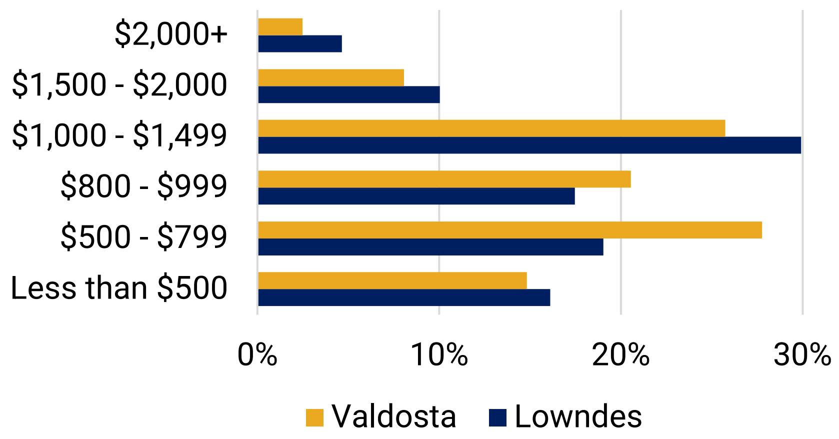


Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Rising Cost of Housing

Figure 34 contrasts monthly housing costs in Valdosta and Lowndes County. This data reveals that Valdosta has a higher concentration of lower-cost housing units, particularly in the $500–$999 per month range, while Lowndes County offers a wider range of options, including a greater share of housing units with monthly costs of $1,500 and above. The most common monthly housing cost in both areas falls within the $1,000–$1,499 range.

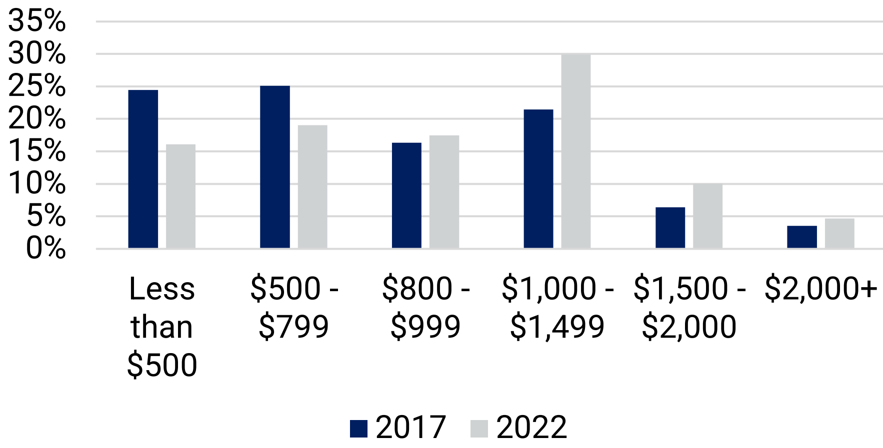
Figure 34: Monthly Housing Cost Comparison



The data presented in Figure 35 and Figure 36 illustrate rising monthly housing costs in both Valdosta and Lowndes County. There is a significant decrease in the percentage of households on the lower end of the housing cost spectrum. Specifically, between 2017 and 2022, the percentage of county households paying less than $500 decreased by 33% while those paying $500 - $799 fell 24%. City housing costs followed a similar trend, with decreases of 35% of those paying less than $500 and 12.5% of those paying $500-$799.

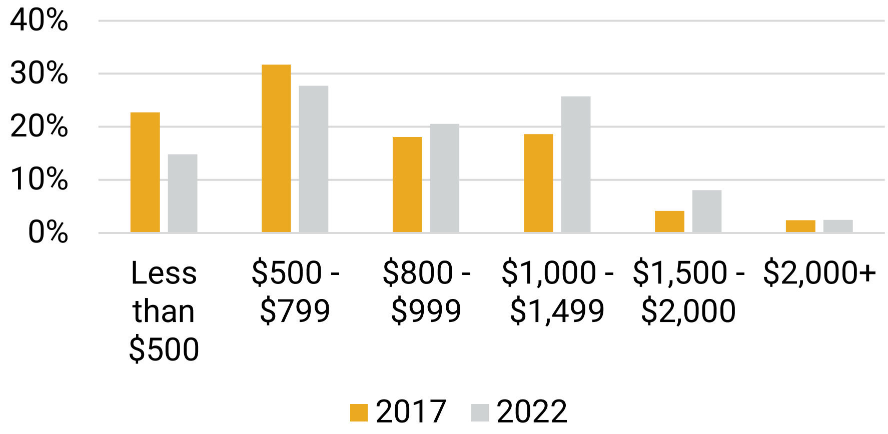
Meanwhile, households paying higher costs have increased, with a notable rise of 100% for city dwellers and 67% for county residents now spending between $1,500 and $2,000 on housing monthly.

Figure 35: Lowndes County Monthly Housing Costs



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 36: Valdosta Monthly Housing Costs



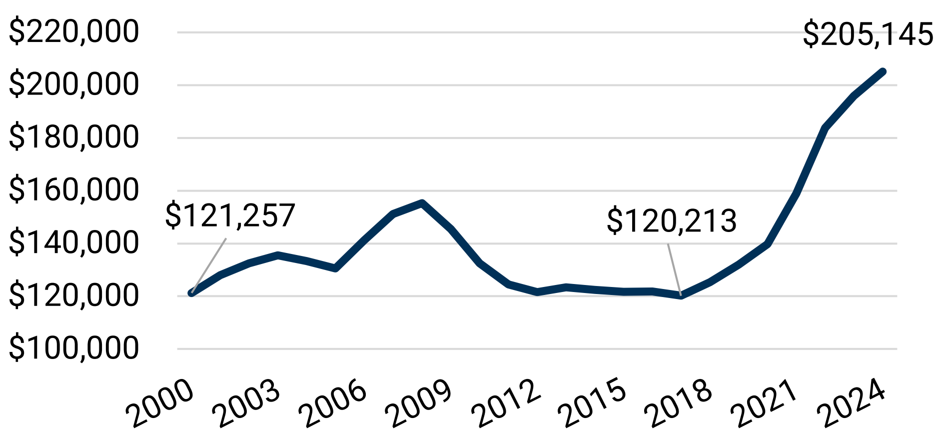
Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

The shift towards higher housing costs is further supported by Figure 37, which shows the annual average home values in Lowndes County from 2000 to 2024, highlighting significant appreciation in recent years. Notably, 64% of the total increase occurred between 2018 and 2024.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident, as home prices surged sharply during this period. In 2021 alone, **annual home values rose by 16%,** marking one of the most substantial year-over-year increases.

These trends are not unique to the Valdosta market and reflect overall inflation in housing costs nationwide. As housing costs rise, the overall cost of living increases, which can strain household budgets, especially for lower and middle-income families. Higher rent and mortgage payments leave less disposable income for other expenses, potentially reducing spending in local businesses and affecting the local economy.

Figure 37: Lowndes County Annual Average Home Values



Source: Zillow, 2024

Community Income Profile

Homeowner Profile

Figure 38 illustrates the incomes of homeowners in Valdosta & Lowndes County. Valdosta has a larger proportion of homeowners making under $50,000 a year, while Lowndes County has a greater concentration of higher-income homeowners. In both areas, nearly 20% of homeowners earn between $50,000 and $74,999. This cohort meets the definition of those for whom housing in the "workforce" tier is appropriate.

Figure 38: Owner-Occupied Household Income

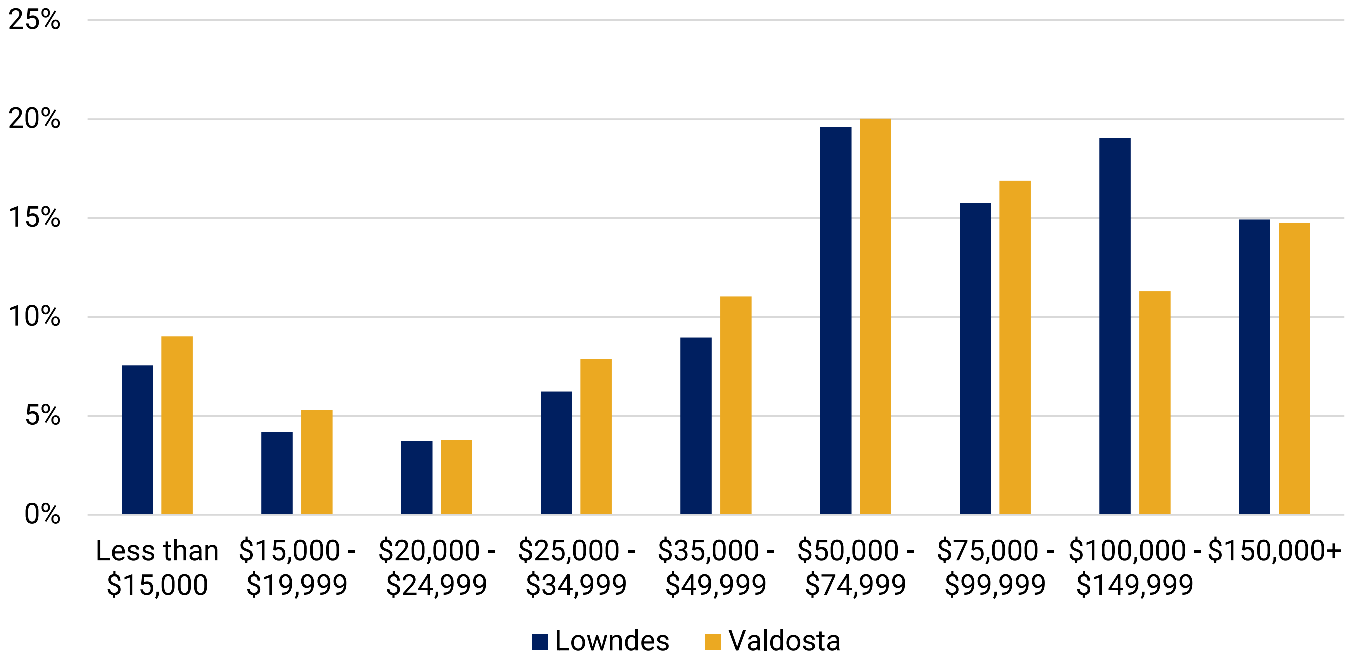
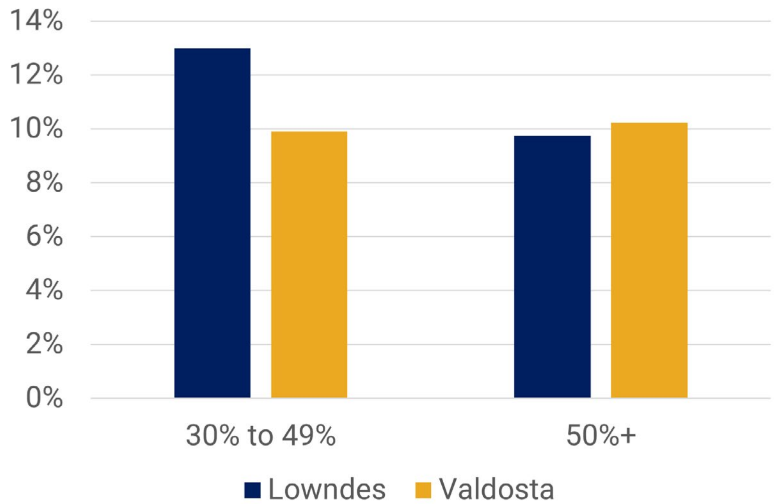


Figure 39 shows homeowners in both Valdosta & Lowndes County are likely to be cost-burdened, defined as spending more than 30% of household income on housing. 22% of homeowners in the county and 20% of homeowners in the city are cost-burdened.

Figure 39: Owner-Occupied Cost-Burden



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 40: Owner-Occupied Age of Householder

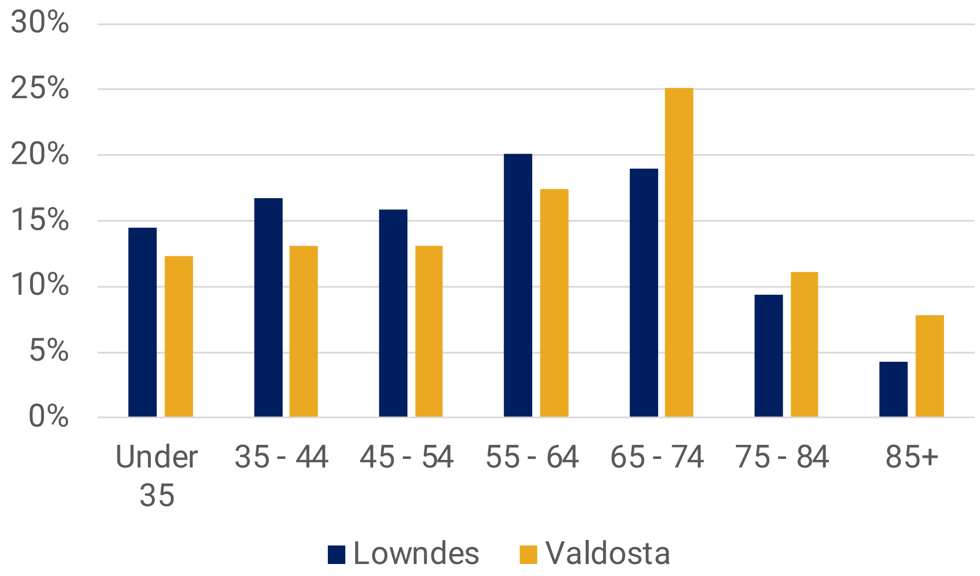


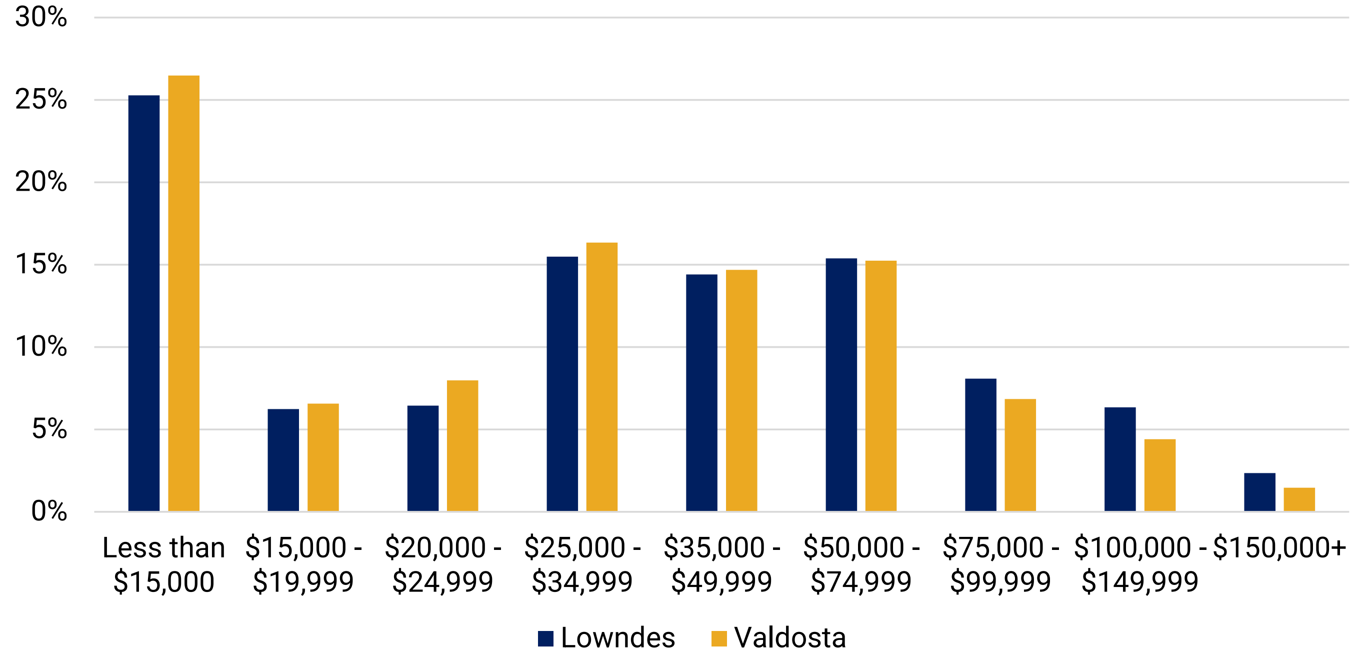
Figure 40 compares the distribution of homeownership by age group for Valdosta and Lowndes. Both the city and county have the highest concentration of homeowners between the ages of 55 to 74. Valdosta has a significantly higher percentage of homeowners aged 65 to 74, peaking at 25%. Valdosta also has more homeowners 75 and over (19%) than Lowndes County (14%), suggesting a larger population of elderly homeowners. In Valdosta, 26% of owner occupied units are owned by people between 35 and 54 years old, in Lowndes they account for 33%. This suggests that Valdosta may need to prioritize housing policies and services that support aging in place, while Lowndes County may benefit from strategies that support middle-aged homeowners and family housing needs.

Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Renter Profile

Figure 41 compares incomes of renter-occupied households in Valdosta and Lowndes County. In both cases, the lowest income bracket dominates. The largest share of renter households in both Lowndes and Valdosta earn less than $15,000 annually. Valdosta has a slightly higher concentration (~27%) compared to Lowndes County (~25%), making affordability a key housing concern.

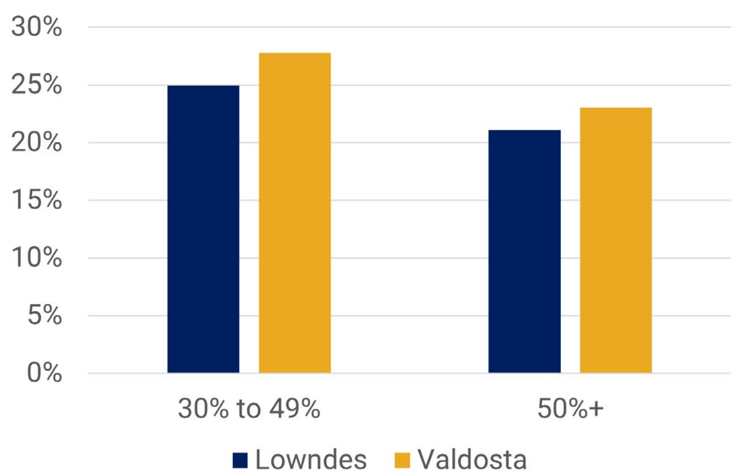
Figure 41: Renter-Occupied Household Income



Both areas show similar proportions in the $25,000–$34,999, $35,000–$49,999, and $50,000–$74,999 brackets. These three ranges together account for a significant portion of renters (~45%).

Figure 42 shows that renters in both Valdosta & Lowndes County are likely to be cost-burdened, and at higher rates than homeowners. 53% of renters in the county and 58% of renters in the city are cost-burdened, spending more than 30% of household income on housing.

Figure 42: Renter-Occupied Cost-Burden



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 43: Renter-Occupied Age of Householder

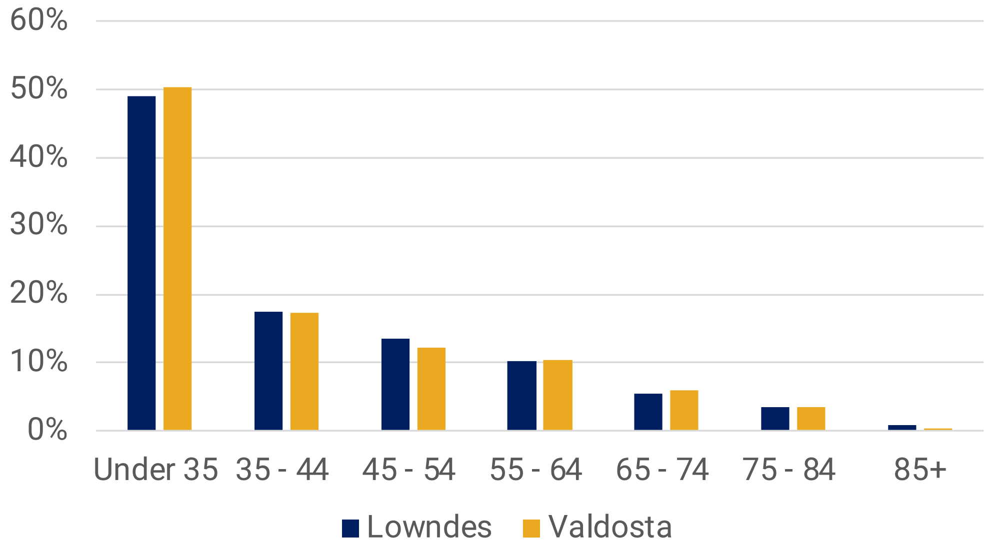


Figure 43 contrasts the distribution of renters by age group for Valdosta and Lowndes. In both the city and county, the highest percentage of people who rent are under 35. The percentage of renters decreases significantly as people age and is fairly even across the city and county. Housing strategies in both Valdosta and Lowndes County may benefit from focusing on affordable rental options for younger residents, while also considering pathways to homeownership as this group ages.

Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Community Income Overview and Implications

Table 2 shows the average wages for the highest five employment sectors in Valdosta. To determine levels of affordability generally, households should expend less than 30% of gross income on housing costs. For food service workers that is around $600 per month and for education and library staff that is around $1,375.

Table 2: Valdosta Top Industry Average Wages

Food Preparation and Service	Office and Admin Support	Transportation and Moving materials	Sales	Education and Library
$24,100	$34,900	$37,600	$28,900	$55,100

Source: Lightcast, 2025

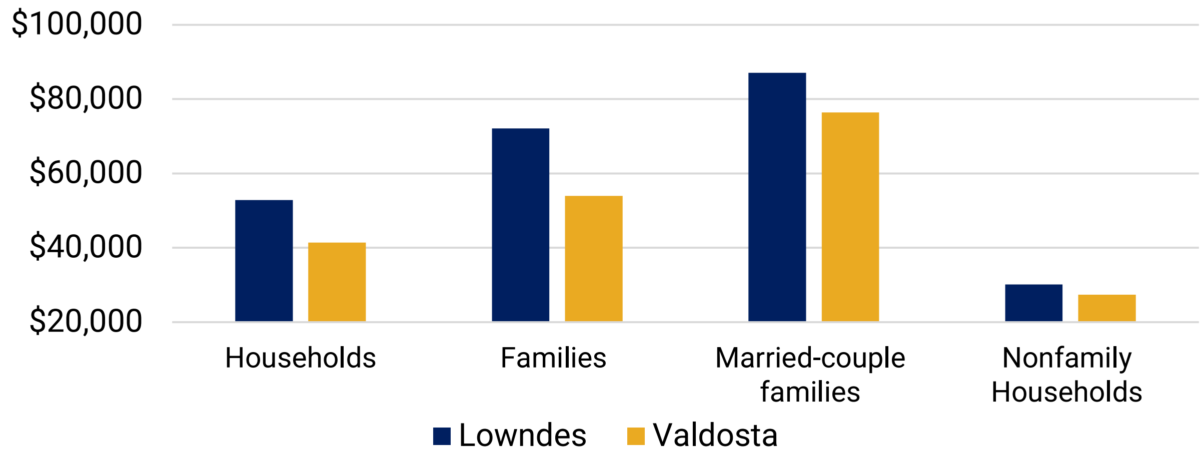
The table below illustrates affordable monthly costs and mortgages by income band. For example, a household making $55,000 annually can afford housing costs of $1,375 per month or a mortgage around $165,000. An affordable mortgage for the average office and administrative support worker in the community is under $100,000.

Table 3: Income and Housing Affordability

Income	30% of Gross Income	Affordable Monthly Costs	Affordable Mortgage*
$35,000	$10,500	$875	$95,000
$45,000	$13,500	$1,125	$130,000
$55,000	$16,500	$1,375	$165,000
$65,000	$19,500	$1,625	$200,000
$75,000	$22,500	$1,875	$235,000
$125,000	$37,500	$3,125	$415,000
$150,000	$45,000	$3,750	$500,000

*This is an approximate value and assumes a 30% housing budget, a 30- year mortgage at 7%, $0 down payment, 0.5% PMI, and taxes and insurance of $2,500 per year. Values are rounded to the nearest ten-thousand for simplicity.

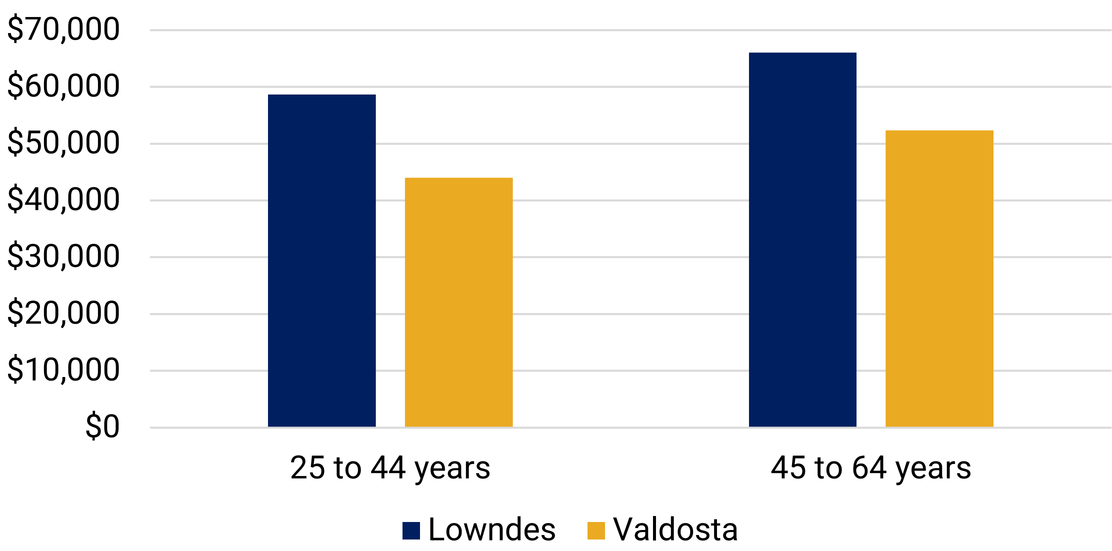
Figure 44: Median Income by Household Type



Lowndes County has higher median household incomes for each of the categories in Figure 44. For households overall, the difference is around $10,000 annually, while the largest disparity is in median family income, which is about $20,000 higher than in the city. These differences underscore how household composition influences income levels—particularly in the case of married-couple families, who tend to have higher dual incomes. In percentage terms, family incomes in the county are roughly 25% higher, highlighting structural differences in household types and earning capacity. These income gaps also reflect differing housing needs: higher county incomes may support more homeownership and demand for larger units, while lower city incomes could increase pressure on the rental market and attainable housing stock. The data suggest a need for localized housing and economic development policies tailored to the unique demographic and income characteristics of city and county residents.

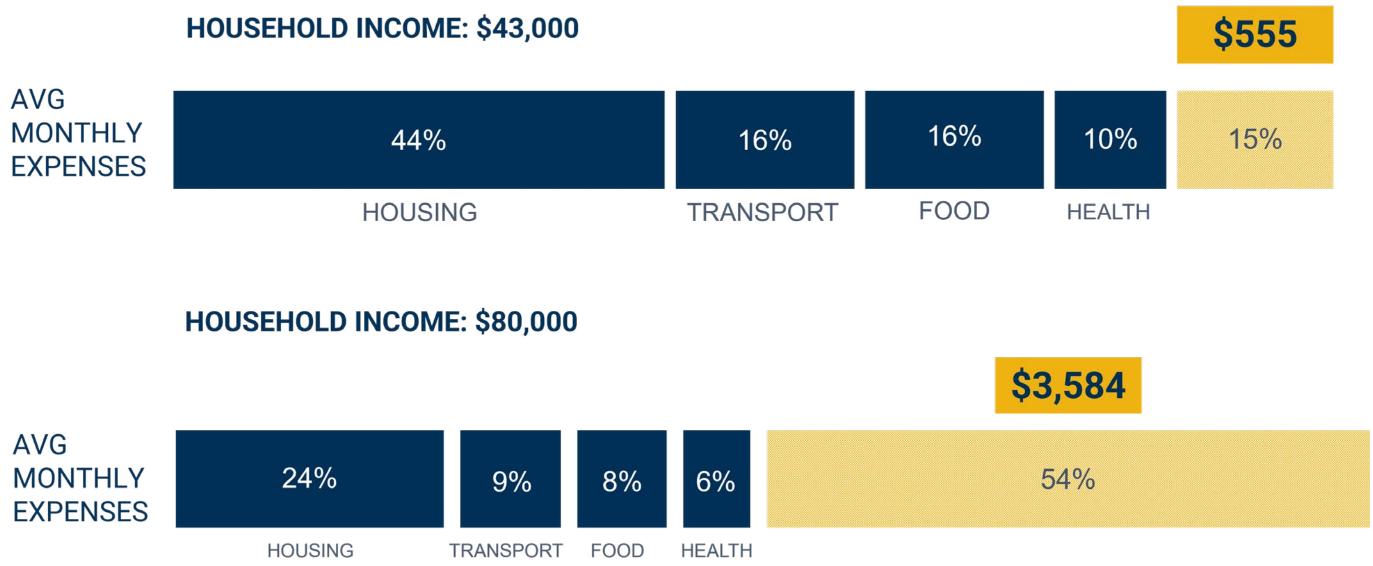
Figure 45 focuses on the median incomes of the primary working-age population (ages 25 to 64) in both the city and county to better assess income capacity and, by extension, housing affordability targets. For instance, in Lowndes County, a median household income of $58,000 would support a monthly housing cost of approximately $1,450, assuming the standard affordability threshold of 30% of income. By comparison, if the city's median household income for this age group is $43,000, the corresponding affordable housing cost would be closer to $1,000 per month—underscoring different affordability needs across geographies.

Figure 45: Median Income by Age of Householder



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 46: Average Household Expenditures



The graphic above (Figure 46) illustrates the average household expenditure patterns of Valdosta residents, highlighting key spending categories such as housing, transportation, food, and healthcare. These percentages reflect how local households allocate their income to cover essential costs. The shaded yellow region visually represents the portion of income that remains available each month after addressing these core expenses, which is intended to cover all other needs, including savings, education, childcare, and discretionary spending.

This data reveals the significant challenges faced by lower income residents: a household earning $43,000 annually is classified as housing cost-burdened, meaning that a disproportionately large share of their income is consumed by housing costs alone, leaving limited resources for other necessities. Considering that the median household income in Valdosta is $41,365—below the income level of the example household—the financial strain for many families in the community is even more pronounced. This underscores the urgent need for housing affordability solutions to alleviate the burden on residents and ensure economic stability for households across the city.

INTRODUCING ALICE

The United Way utilizes the data set known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) to tell the story of the mismatch between low-paying jobs and the cost of survival. ALICE represents the growing number of families who are above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but are unable to afford the basics of housing, childcare, food, transportation, health care, and technology. In 2025, the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four is $32,150.

While workforce housing addresses the needs of individuals and families earning 80-120% of the area median income (AMI), it is crucial to recognize that a significant portion of the population falls outside this range and still struggles to secure stable, affordable housing. Developing attainable housing solutions for this group is important for community stability. ALICE households frequently face precarious living situations, limited savings, and rising costs of basic necessities that leave them vulnerable to housing instability. By broadening the conversation to include the needs of ALICE households, the community can foster a more comprehensive approach to creating equitable housing opportunities for all community members.

Source: United Way

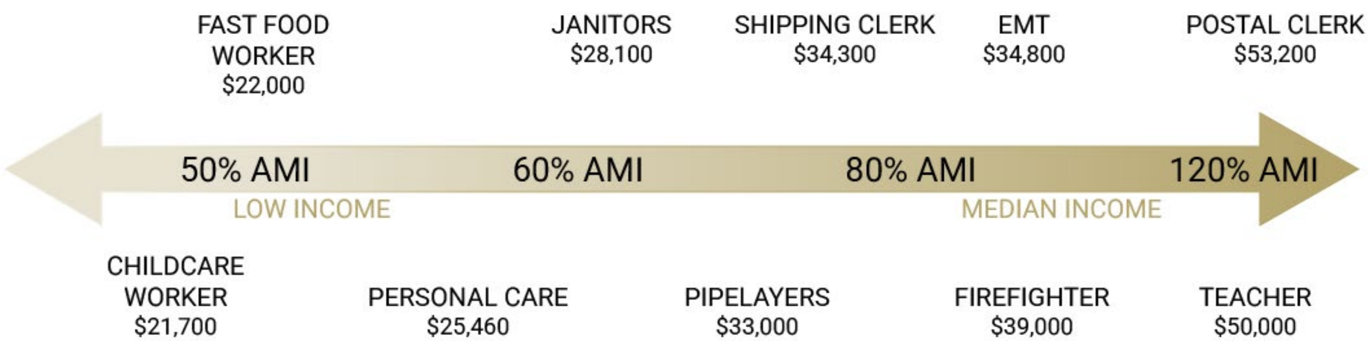
Table 4: Valdosta ALICE Data

	Single Adult	Two Adults Two Childcare	Two Seniors
Housing - Rent	$610	$698	$520
Housing - Utilities	$163	$310	$258
Child Care	$0	$1,094	$0
Food	$467	$1,273	$791
Transportation	$412	$1,062	$524
Health Care	$185	$796	$1,005
Technology	$86	$116	$116
Miscellaneous	$192	$535	$321
Tax Payments	$359	$1,162	$719
Tax Credits	$0	($463)	$0
Monthly Total	**$2,474**	**$6,583**	**$4,254**
ANNUAL TOTAL	**$29,688**	**$78,996**	**$51,048**
Hourly Wage	**$14.84**	**$39.50**	**$25.52**

Table 4 shows an itemized budget, along with monthly and annual totals and the hourly wage needed to support the budget for some of the most common household types. Comparing the incomes of common occupations with the ALICE. Annual Incomes highlights the financial strain faced by many employees who work in essential roles within the community. These workers, who often occupy positions such as teachers, retail associates, healthcare aides, and service industry professionals, play a crucial role in supporting the local economy and ensuring the well-being of residents. However, their earnings frequently fall below the ALICE threshold.

The disparity between their wages and the actual cost of living can lead to difficult trade-offs, such as foregoing necessary medical care, accumulating debt, or settling for substandard housing options. This financial instability not only affects the individuals and families directly impacted but also has broader implications for community resilience, workforce retention, and economic growth. Recognizing these challenges underscores the urgent need for targeted affordable housing solutions that accommodate the financial realities of ALICE households and support the sustainability of vital workforce roles in the community.

Figure 47: Incomes by Occupation



Source: Lightcast, 2025

Affordability Conclusions

Households that rent are generally younger with lower incomes compared to those that own homes. This trend highlights the importance of maintaining or expanding the supply of affordable rental housing, particularly for households earning below the median income. Providing affordable and "right-sized" rental units, particularly for younger households or individuals with limited financial resources, will be critical to supporting economic mobility and promoting long-term community resilience.

The community might prioritize strategies that incentivize the development of smaller apartments or duplexes that are more attainable for younger or lower-income renters. Additionally, preserving existing low-cost rental stock and offering rental assistance programs can help maintain housing stability for vulnerable populations

There is a clear shift toward higher housing costs in Valdosta and Lowndes County, with a declining share of lower-cost units and a growing concentration of cost-burdened households. While Valdosta continues to offer a greater proportion of lower-cost housing, both the city and county are experiencing rising monthly housing expenses and home values, trends that have accelerated in recent years—particularly during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, demographic patterns reveal opportunities to better align housing supply with demand. The presence of a large population of elderly homeowners in Valdosta suggests potential for downsizing initiatives, while the high concentration of younger renters points to a need for smaller, more affordable, and amenity-rich rental options.

These findings emphasize the importance of preserving existing affordable housing, encouraging diverse housing development, and ensuring that future growth supports a balanced and inclusive housing market that meets the needs of all residents.

Housing Stock Age

Valdosta's housing stock is generally older than that of Lowndes County, with recent residential growth concentrated in unincorporated areas—where 33% of homes were built between 2000 and 2022—compared to just 22% within the city limits. The distribution of older housing closely aligns with the city's historic districts, highlighting the importance of preservation. While some units may require repairs or redevelopment, maintaining the historic housing stock is a valuable asset to the community. Additionally, older housing stock can provide more attainable housing options for younger and lower-income residents.

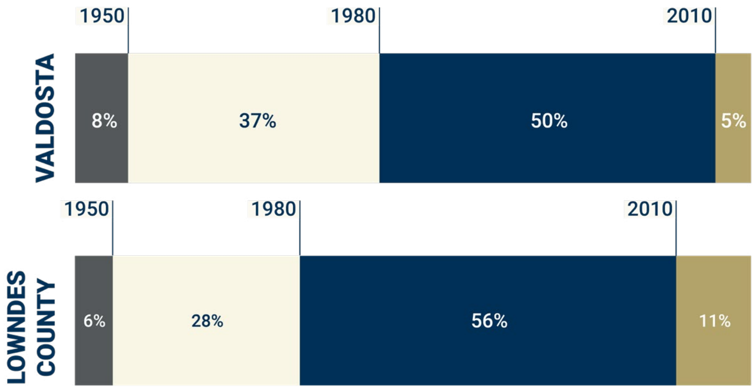
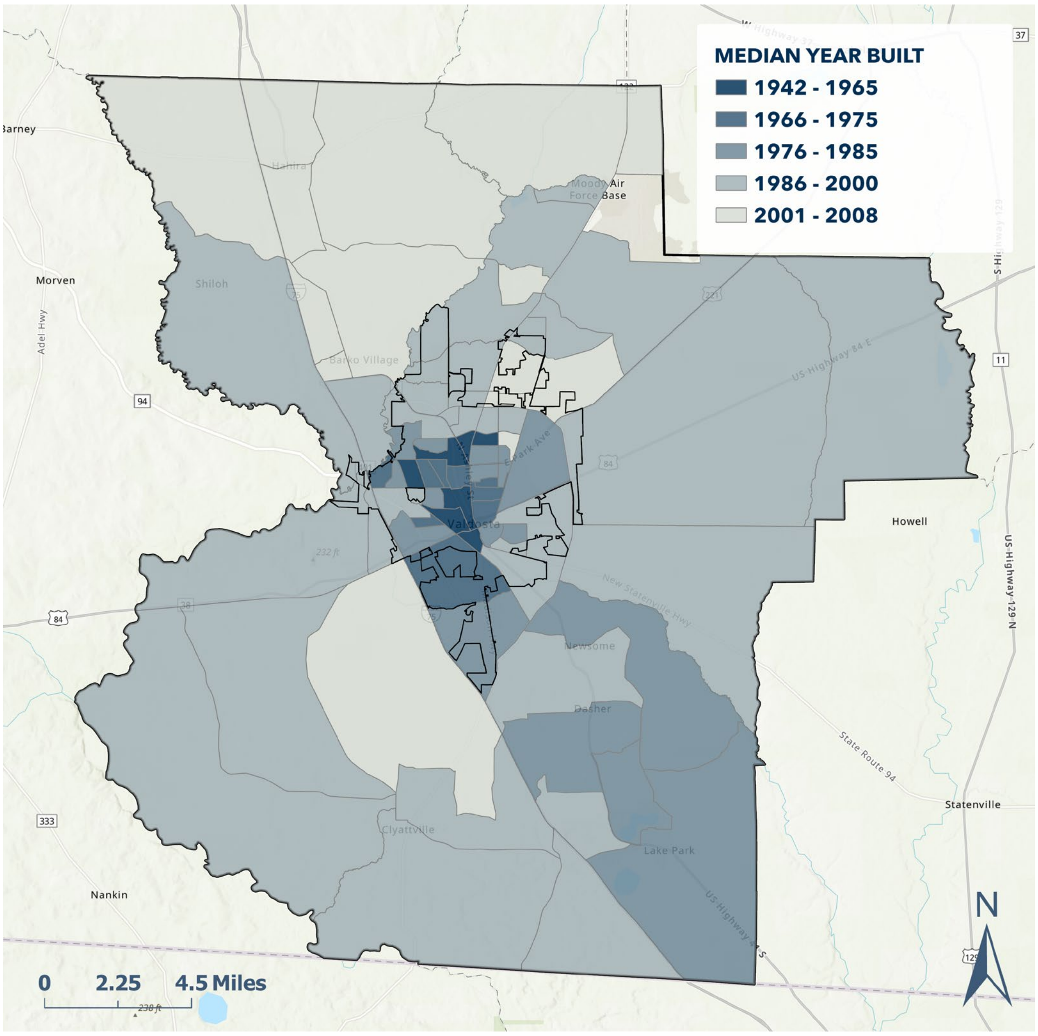
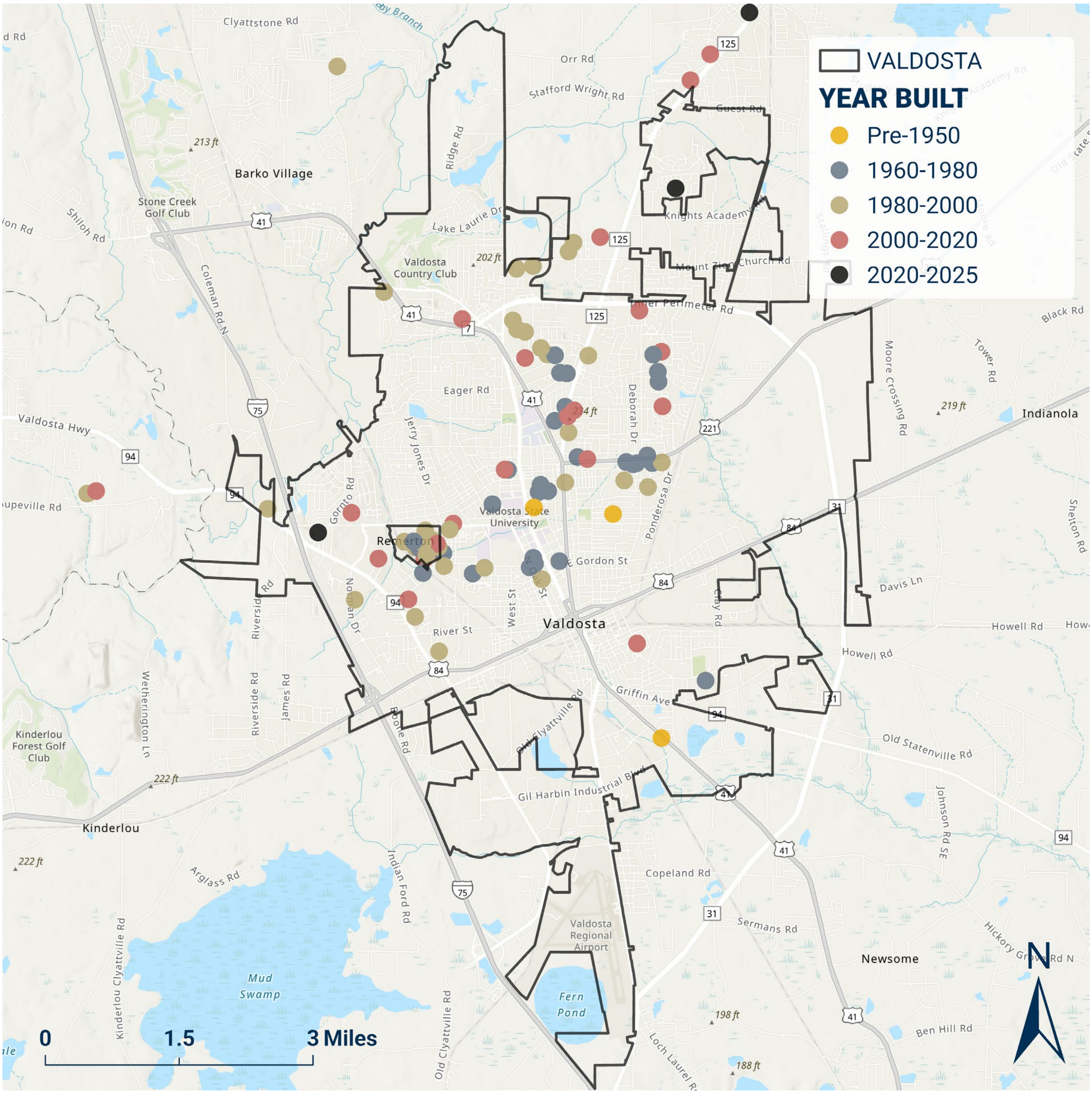


Figure 48: Median Year Built By Census Tract



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 49: Multifamily Property Age in Valdosta



Source: City of Valdosta, 2025

Building Permits

Figure 50 illustrates the distribution of building permits in unincorporated Lowndes County from July 2023 to November 2024. The number of new building permits issued rose significantly from 132 in 2023 to 292 in 2024. The distribution of building permits in unincorporated Lowndes County reveals distinct growth patterns, with new construction primarily clustered in Barko Village, Moody Air Force Base, Clyattville, and the southeastern region near Newsome and Lake Park.

Demolitions are scattered but concentrated around Moody Air Force Base and Clyattville, suggesting redevelopment opportunities.

New mobile and modular home permits are more prevalent in the county's southern and western areas, indicating rural or lower-density development.

The northwest and southeast regions exhibit a mix of permit types, reflecting ongoing transition and growth. Meanwhile, the northeast, particularly near Moody Air Force Base, shows a strong trend toward new construction rather than redevelopment, possibly driven by military-related expansion and targeted housing demand.

Figure 50: Building Permits

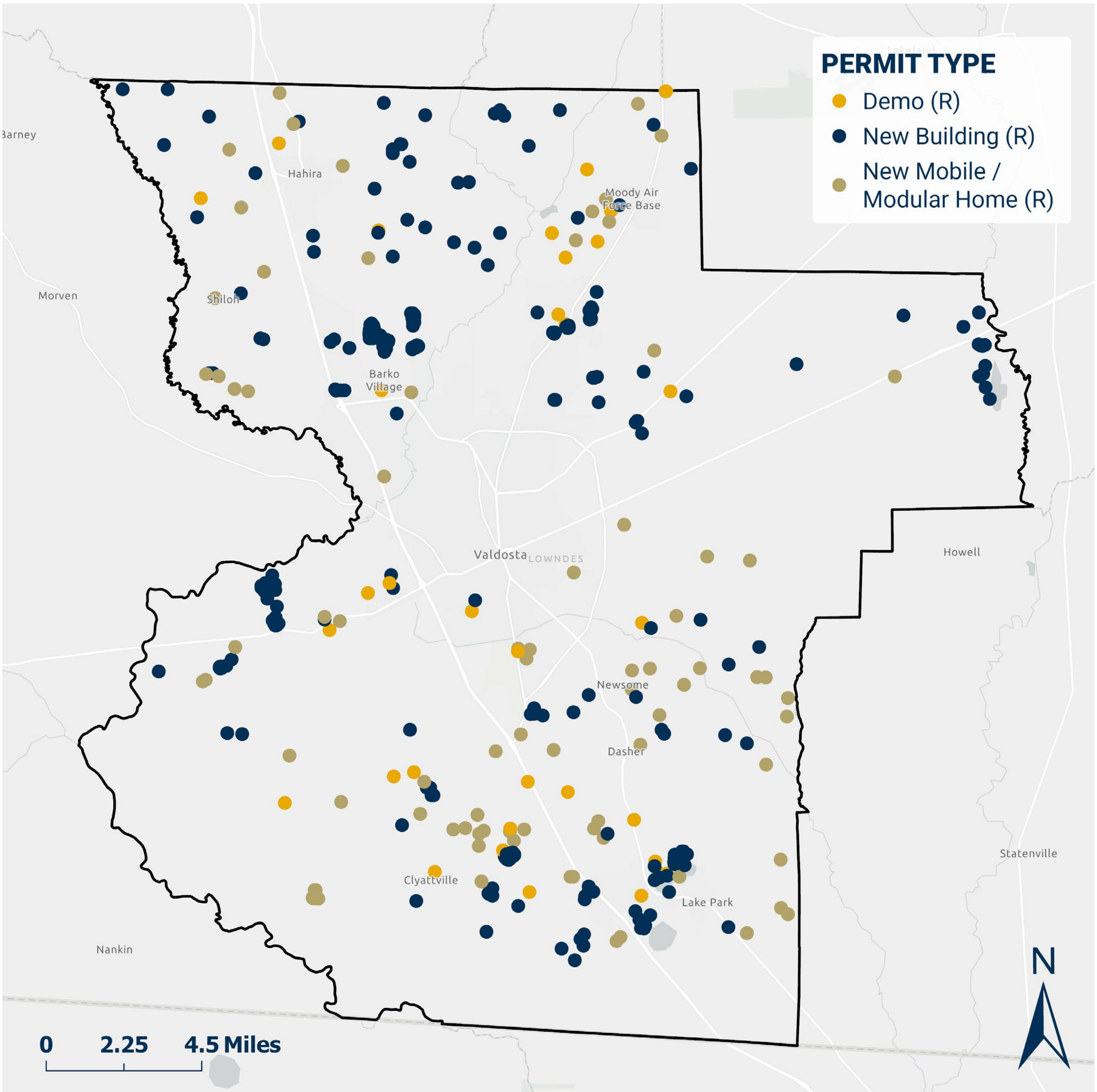


Figure 51: Valdosta Building Permits August 2023 - January 2025

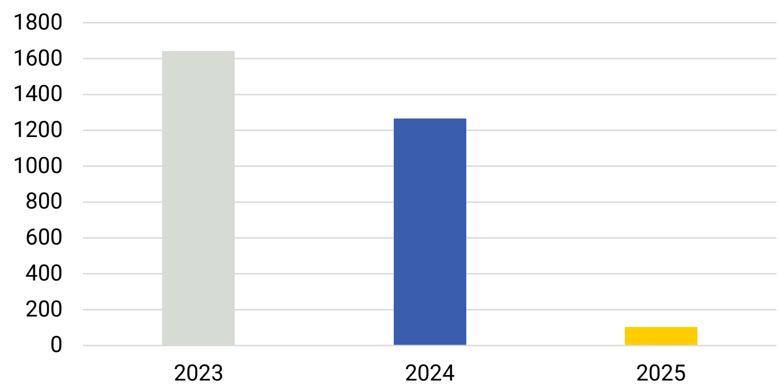
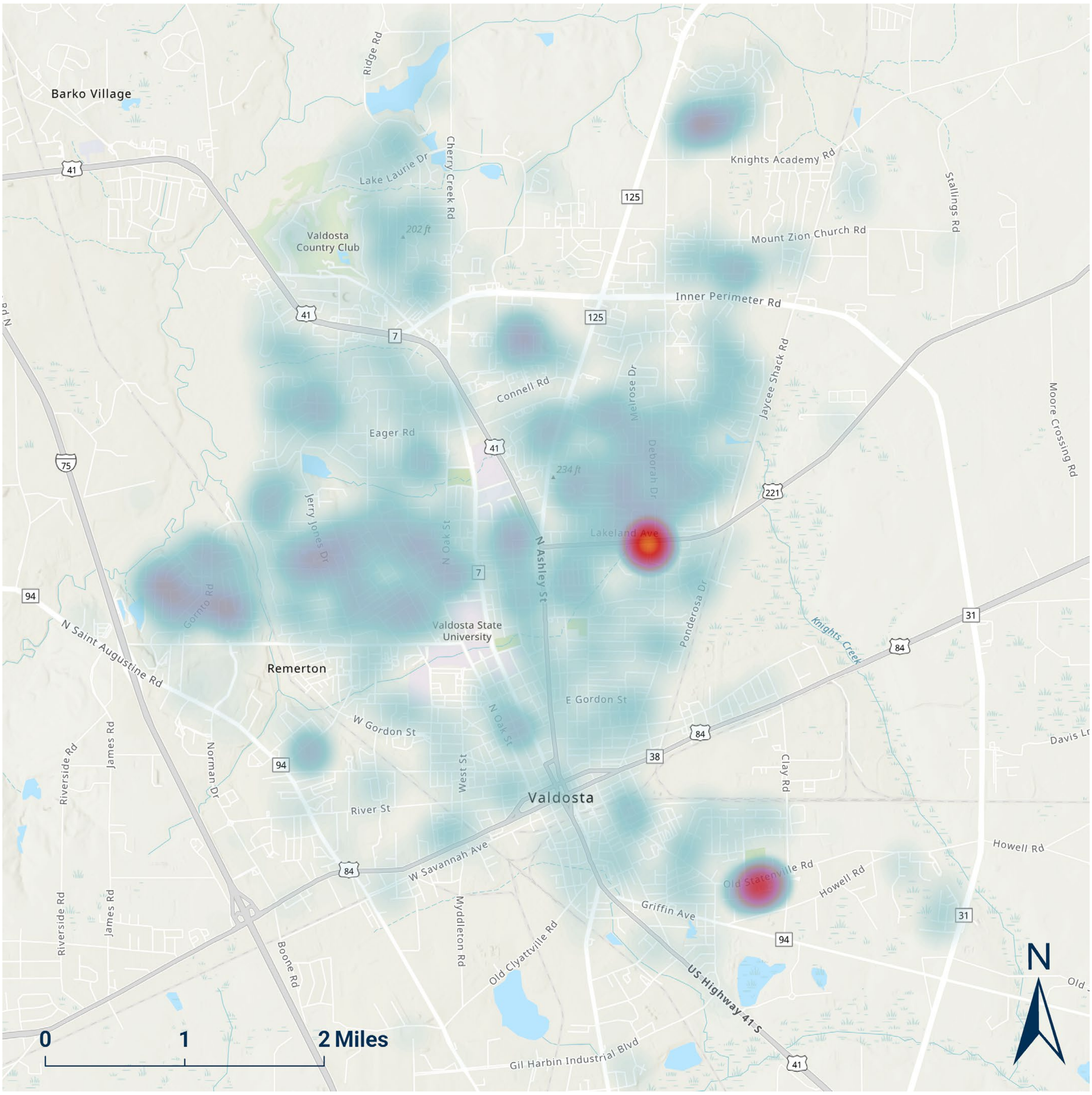


Figure 52: Valdosta Building Permit Heat Map

Building permits decreased between 2023 and 2024 (note the 2025 values are only for the month of January). Permits are primarily clustered in the center of the city with hot spots north of Remerton, along E Park Ave, and near Scott Park. Most permits occur west of the railroad tracks along Jaycee Shack Rd.

In both 2023 (Figure 54) and 2024 (Figure 55) permits followed a similar spatial pattern suggesting consistent development growth. Some peripheral growth has occured near J.L. Lomax Elementary School in southeast Valdosta and in the northern subdivisions.



Source: City of Valdosta, 2025

Figure 53: Valdosta Building Permits

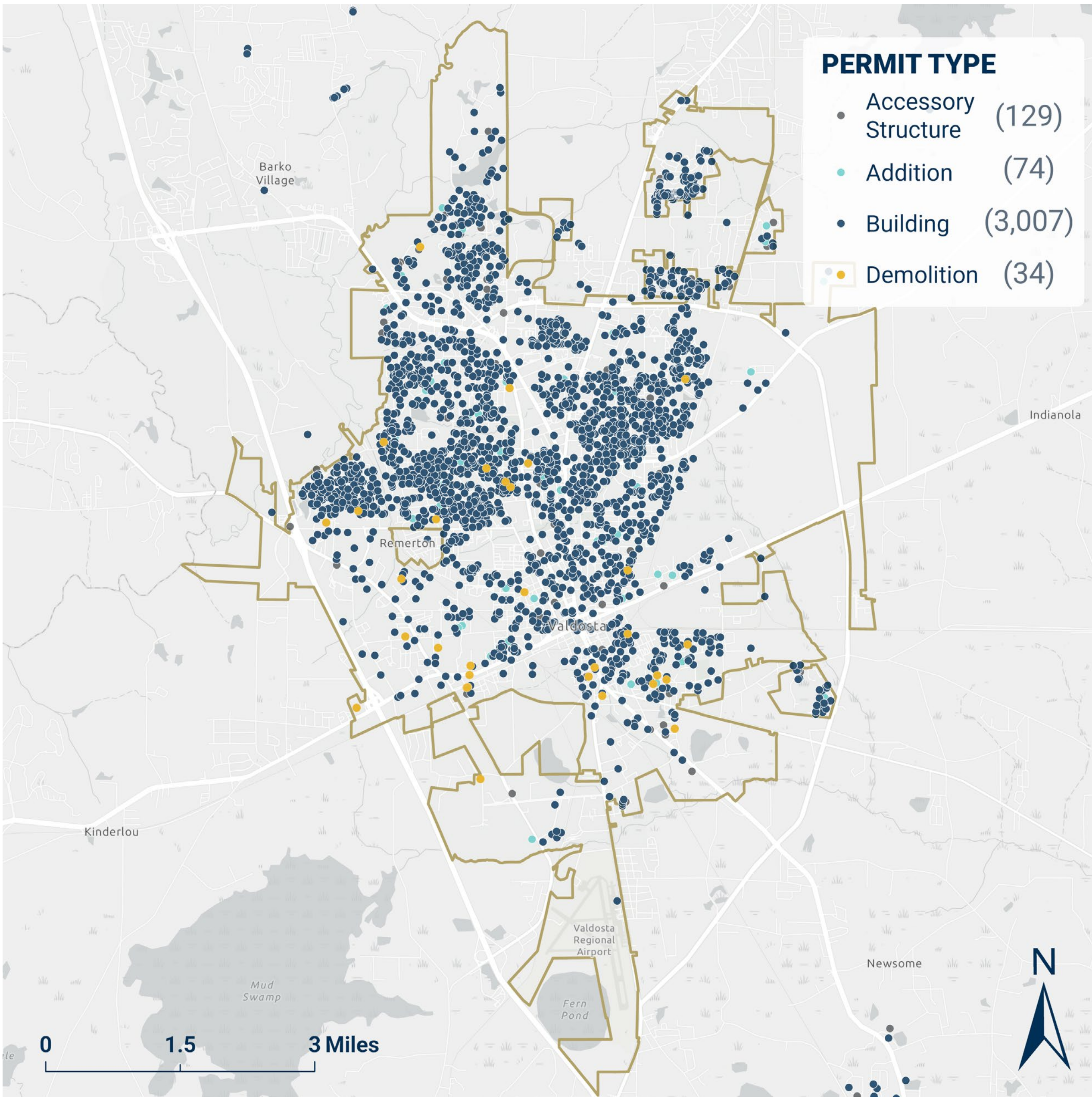


Figure 54: 2023 Valdosta Building Permits

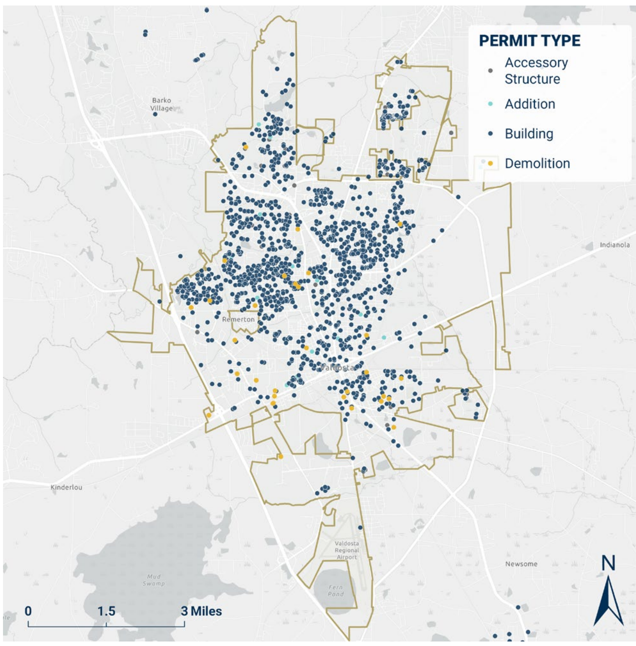
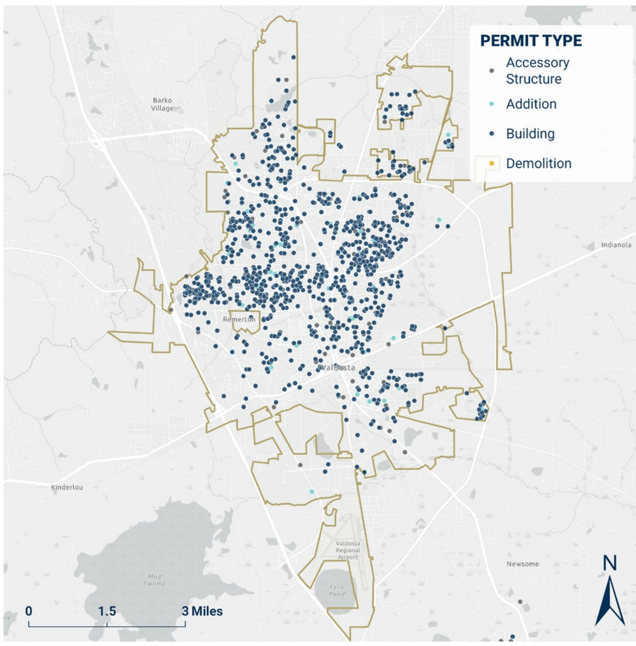


Figure 55: 2024 Valdosta Building Permits

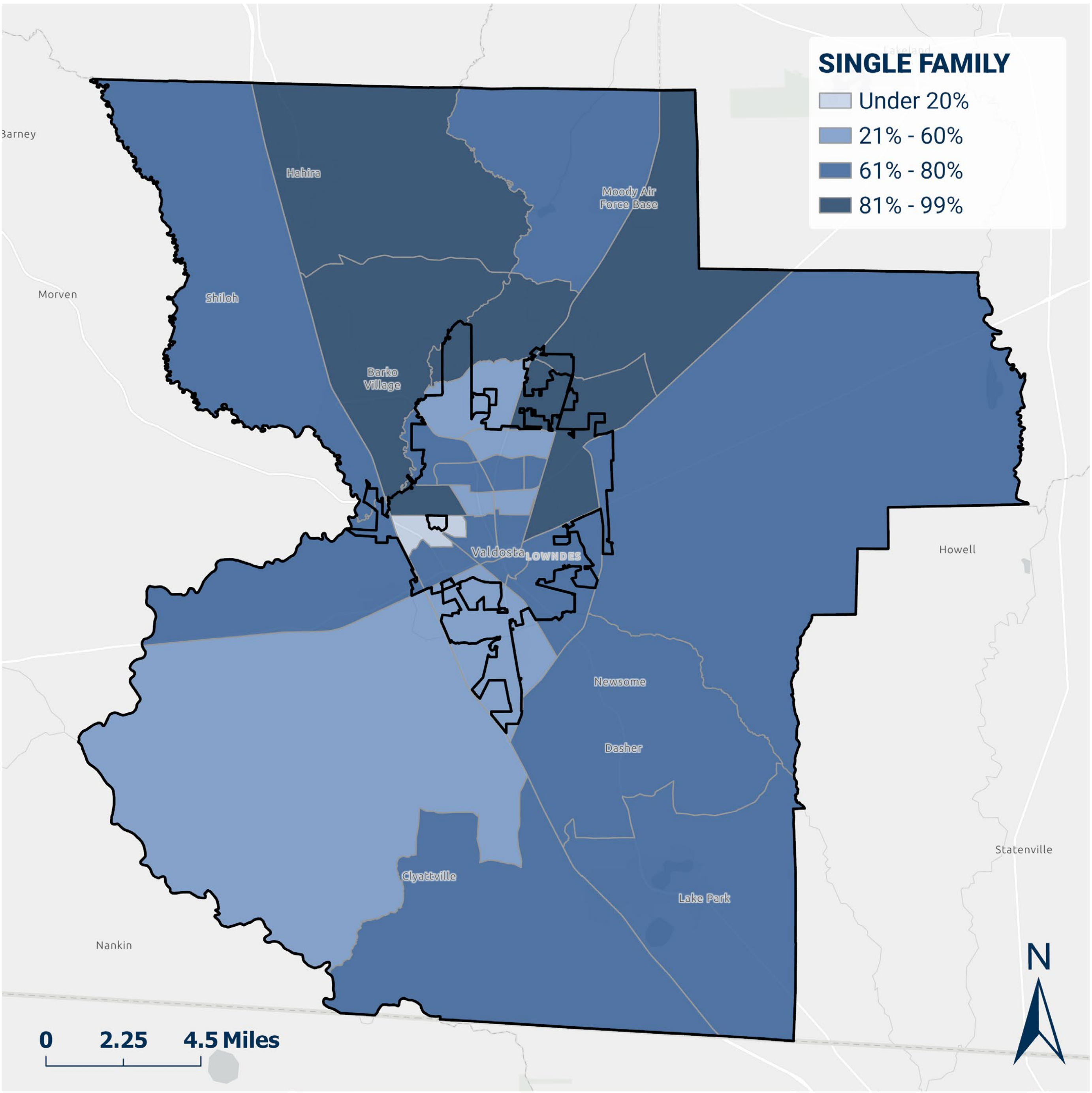


Source: City of Valdosta, 2025

Housing Types & Locations

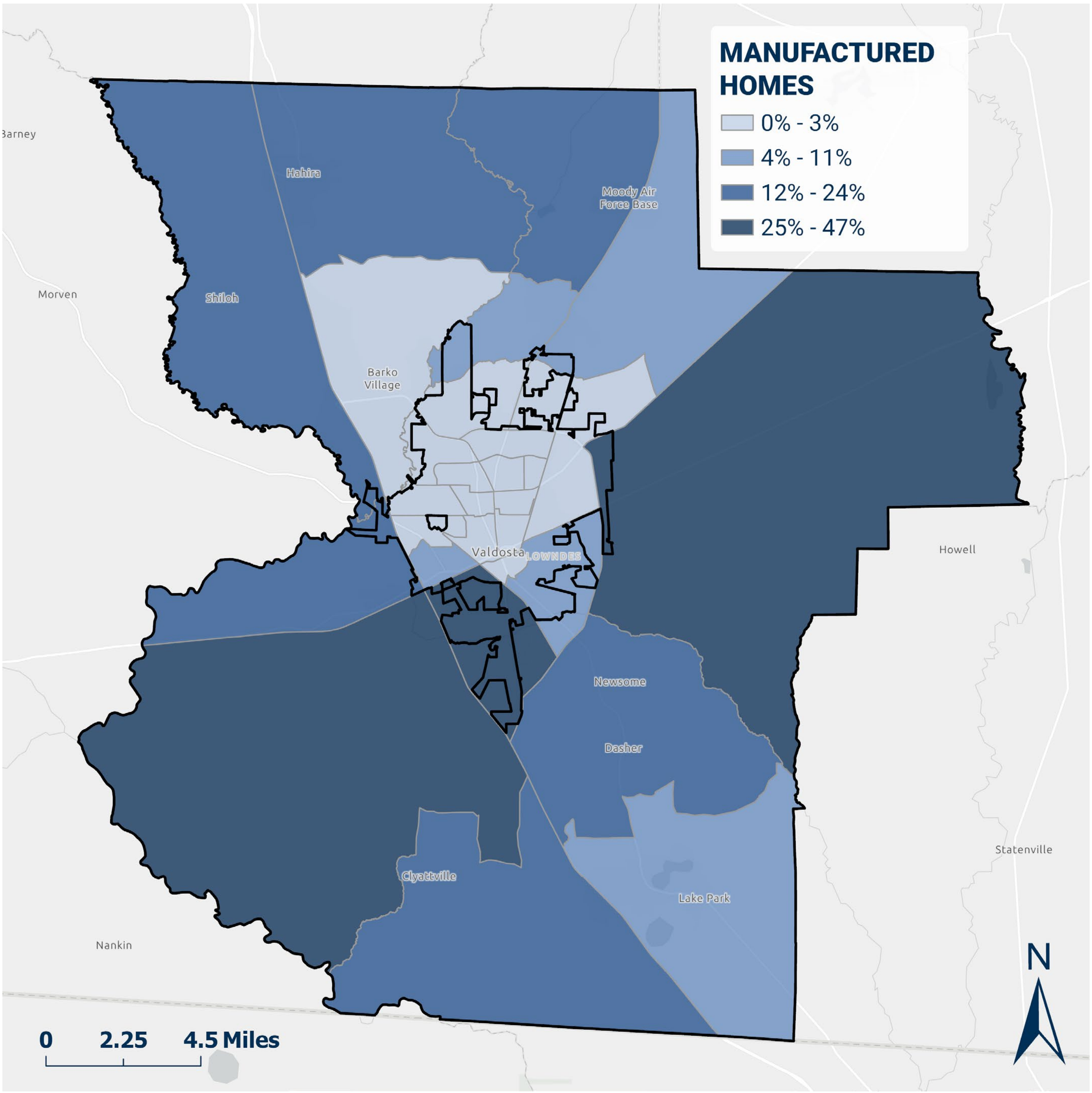
Housing in Lowndes County is predominantly single-family detached. The highest concentrations are found in the northern census tracts outside Valdosta, as shown in Figure 56. The share of single-family detached homes varies widely, ranging from 19.5% near Valdosta Mall to 99% in the census tract that includes Barko Village. However, as infrastructure and construction costs increase and household sizes shrink, communities may see a shift in the preferred typology.

Figure 56: Single Family Homes by Census Tract



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Figure 57: Manufactured Homes by Census Tract



In contrast, Figure 57 shows that manufactured housing comprises a significant portion of the housing stock in the county's southwestern census tract, accounting for 47% of homes. However, its prevalence declines in the northern areas of Valdosta, where it makes up less than 11% of the housing supply. These areas present redevelopment opportunities to create modern manufactured home communities, or other types of missing middle infill. Aging manufactured housing stock represents a significant redevelopment opportunity as these units, while low-cost to rent or purchase, are not energy-efficient and often lack amenities desired by the workforce. Local development regulations may support improving or redeveloping existing manufactured housing developments with higher quality products and amenities.

Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Existing patterns show a variety of housing typologies across the county. While certain typologies like single-family and manufactured homes are intuitive, others bear further explanation.

Missing Middle Housing Examples

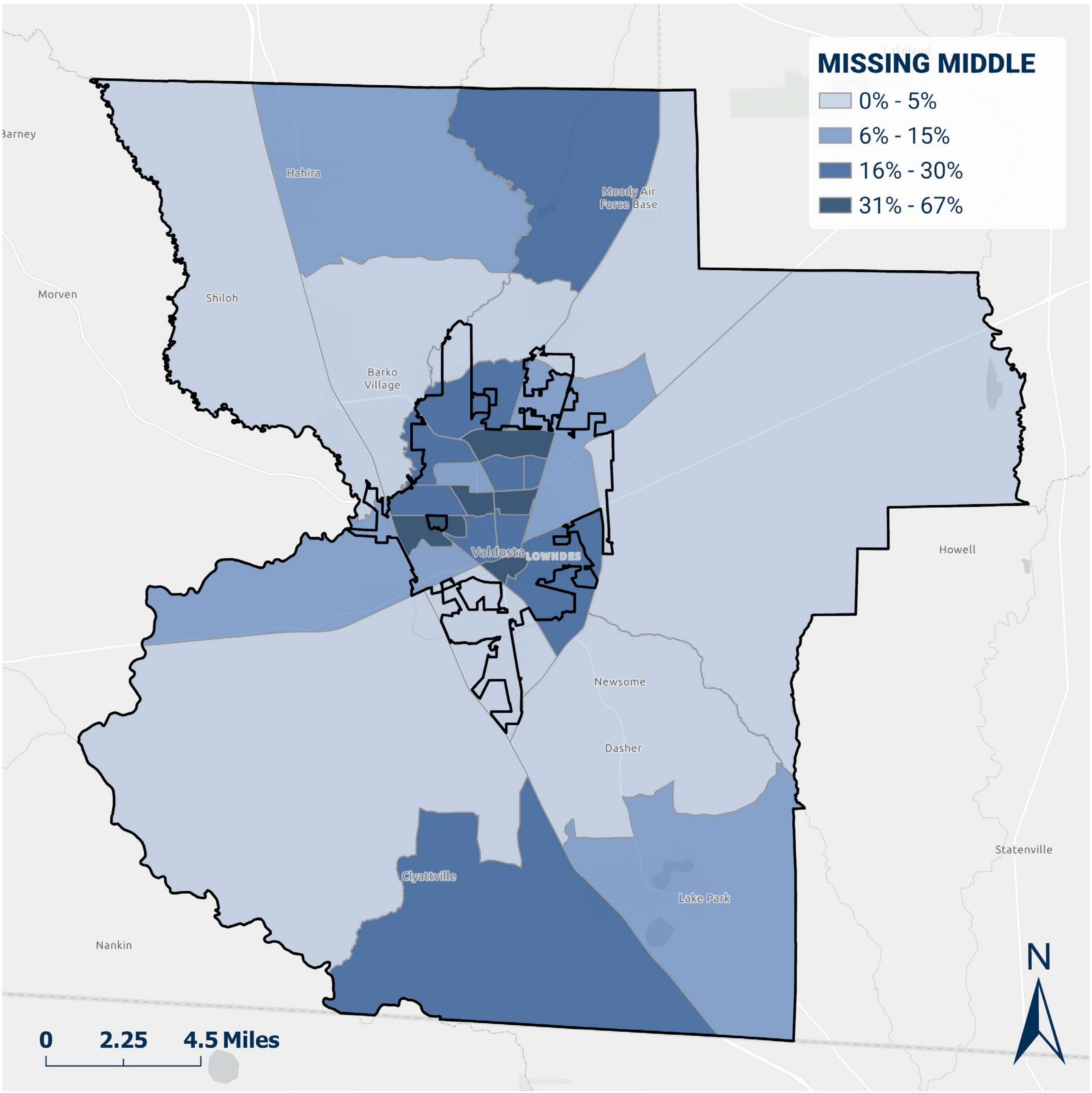
For the purposes of this report, we defined these property types as having under 19 units. Missing middle housing is a term used to describe housing types that fall between single-family homes and mid-rise apartment buildings. Examples of missing middle housing include duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, courtyard clusters, bungalows, and cottage courts. The term was coined by Daniel Parolek to describe the lack of medium-scale, gentle-density housing in many communities. The word “missing” refers to the fact that this type of housing has been prohibited from being built in many places since the 1940s due to zoning restrictions. Examples of this typology can be seen in Figure 58.

Figure 58: Missing Middle Examples in Georgia

1 | Savannah, Georgia
2 | Valdosta, Georgia
3 | Statesboro, Georgia
4 | Savannah, Georgia
5 | Valdosta, Georgia

Figure 59 highlights the distribution of missing middle housing, which includes townhomes and multifamily structures with up to 19 units. While this housing type represents a smaller share of the overall housing stock, it is primarily concentrated within Valdosta and in the county's northernmost and southernmost tracts. Many older buildings fall into this category, with the highest concentrations found near Valdosta Mall and Valdosta State University.

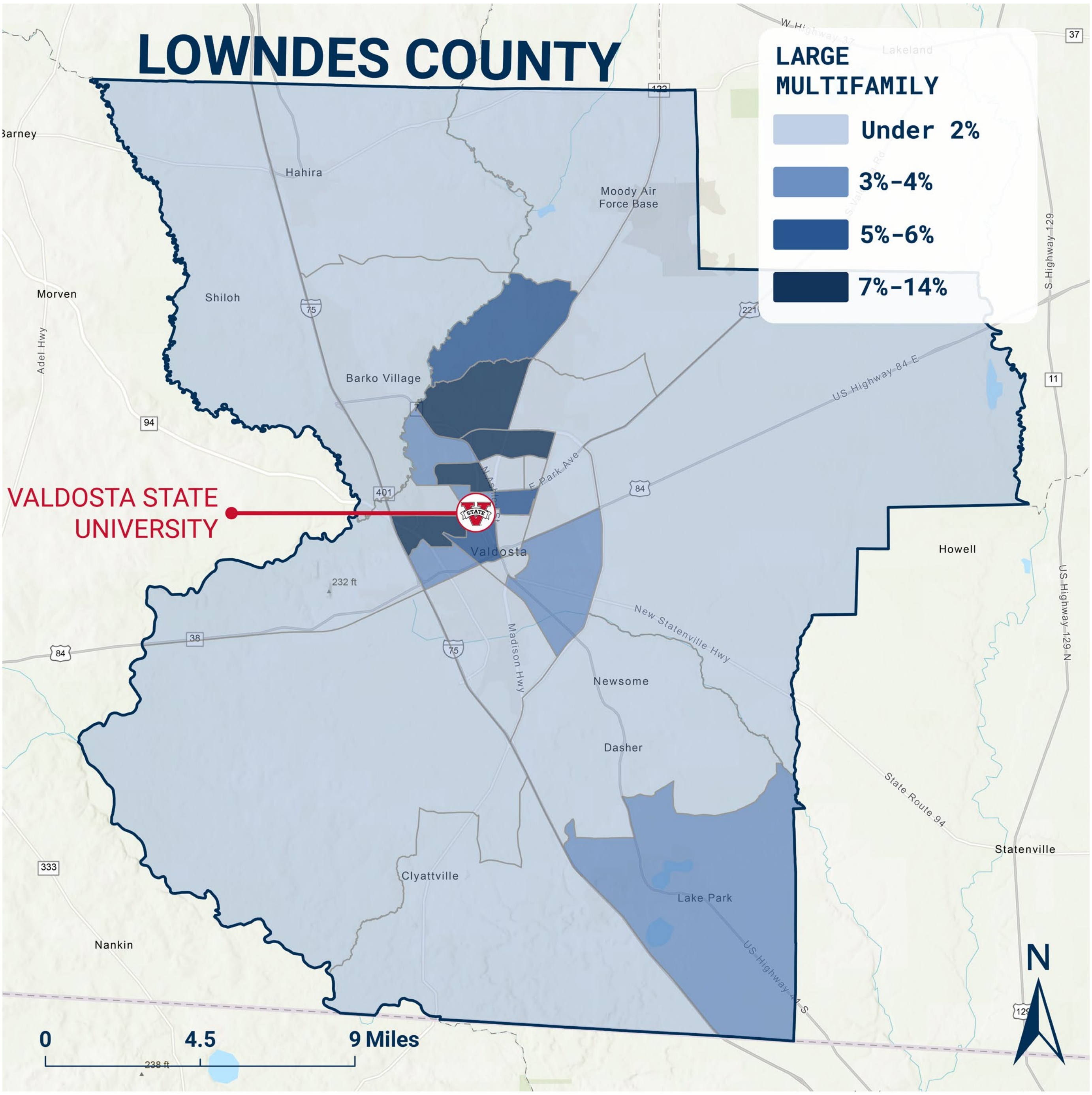
Figure 59: Missing Middle Housing by Census Tract



Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

A similar pattern emerges with larger multifamily developments, though they make up a relatively small portion of total housing units. Most large apartment complexes are located within the city, while unincorporated areas of the county have very few high-density multifamily properties.

Figure 60: Large Multifamily by Census Tract

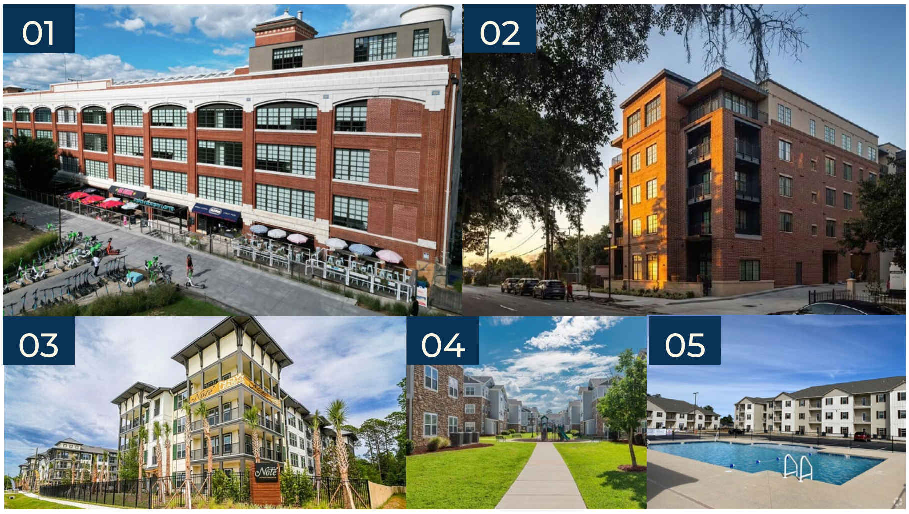


Source: ACS 5-Year, 2023

Large Multifamily Examples

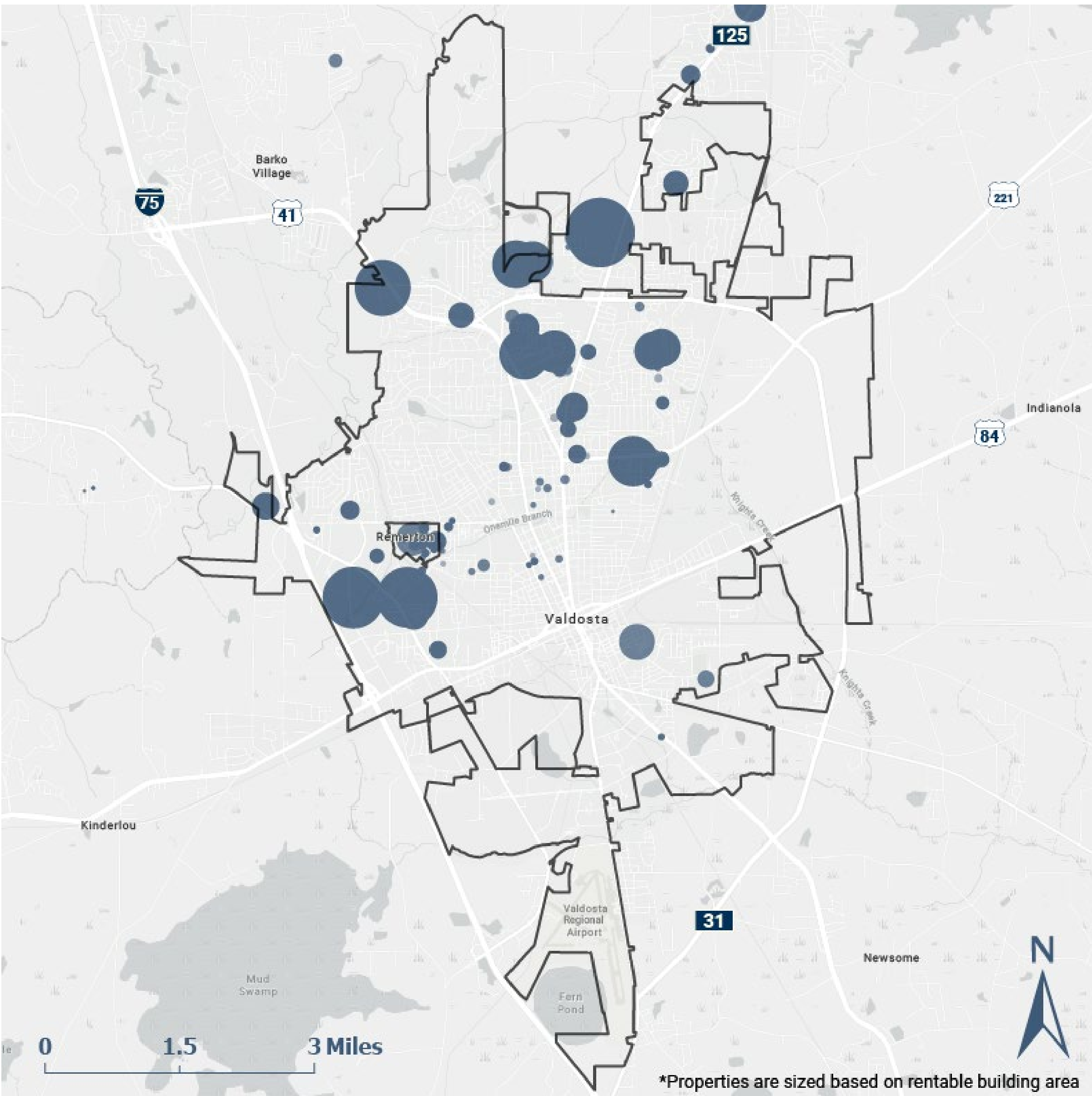
As the images show, there is a significant difference in the building scale, amenity offerings, and potential locations between small multifamily, missing middle units and large multifamily developments. These typologies serve different markets. Communities that lack any one type may miss an opportunity to add right-sized, affordable housing for their workforce close to places of employment and other amenities.

Figure 62: Large Multifamily Examples in the Region



1 | Atlanta, Georgia
2 | Savannah, Georgia
3 | Jacksonville, Florida
4 | Valdosta, Georgia
5 | Valdosta, Georgia

Figure 61: Large Apartment Complex Locations



Source: CoStar, 2025

Housing Size Mismatch

Figure 63 and Figure 64 show household sizes compared to number of bedrooms in both Valdosta and Lowndes County. Both areas have a similar distribution of household sizes, with the majority having 2 or 3 members. Lowndes County has a higher percentage of 3-bedroom homes (50%), while Valdosta has a higher percentage of 2-bedroom homes (35%). These differences might reflect varying housing needs and preferences in the two areas and support the need for smaller units within the city.

Figure 63: Lowndes County Household and Housing Size Comparison

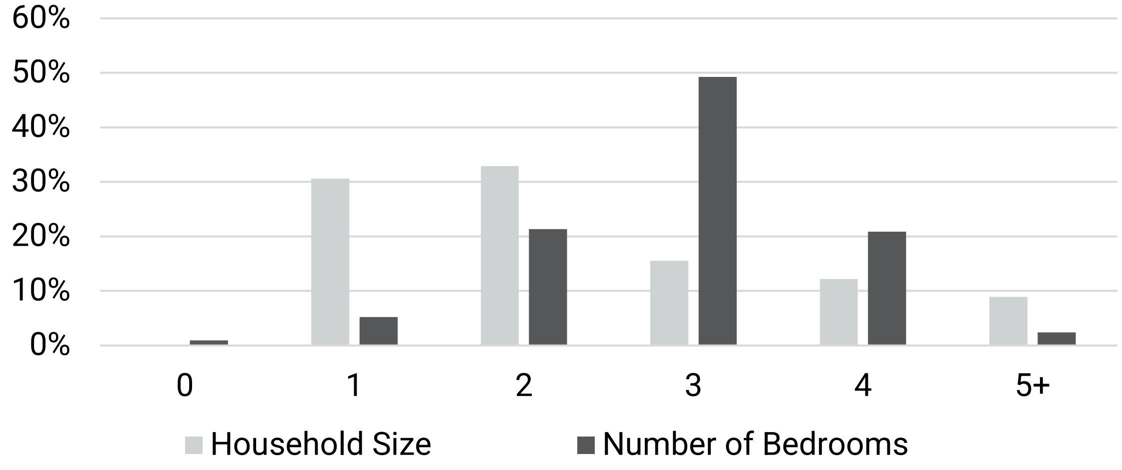
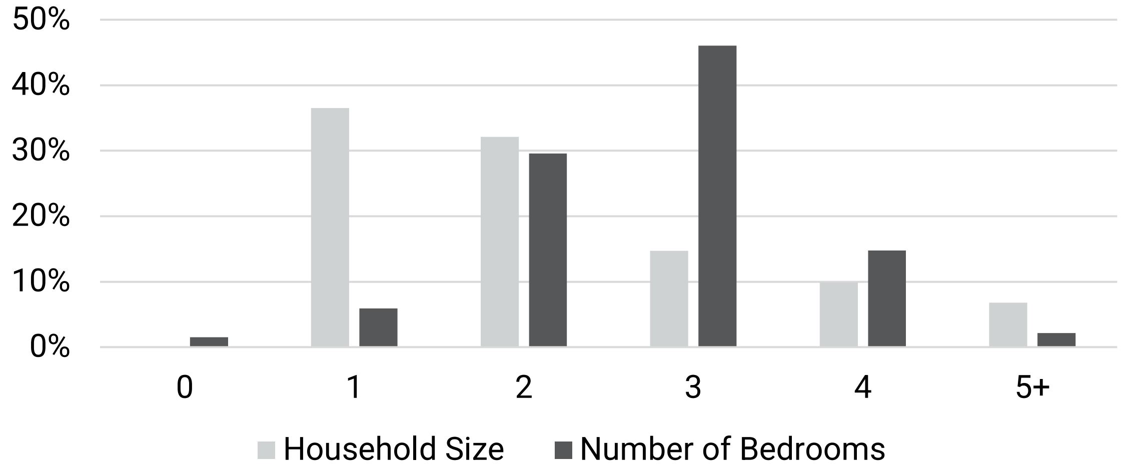


Figure 64: Valdosta Household and Housing Size Comparison



Vacancy and Quality

The national average vacancy rate in the US is 6.9% and is slightly higher for Georgia at 8.5%. Overall vacancy rates in Valdosta (13%) and Lowndes County (11%) are higher in comparison.

All vacancies are not the same, however. According to the ACS technical documentation, vacant units fall into several categories. Some are available for rent, while others are rented but not yet occupied. Similarly, homes that are for sale or sold but not yet occupied are also tracked. Other categories include units designated for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, such as vacation homes, as well as housing specifically set aside for migrant workers. The final category, "other vacant," includes units that do not fit into the previous classifications, such as those under repair, abandoned, or otherwise not on the market.

Figure 65 maps the 'other vacant' units by Census Tract across the county. The percentage represents the type of vacancy as a proportion of all housing units. It is predominately clustered in South Valdosta and the eastern tracts in Lowndes County.

Seasonal vacancy rates are depicted in Figure 66. The southeastern tract has the highest percentage of seasonal units (12%), but otherwise, seasonal use is not a common housing type across the county.

Figure 65: Vacancy Rates by Census Tract

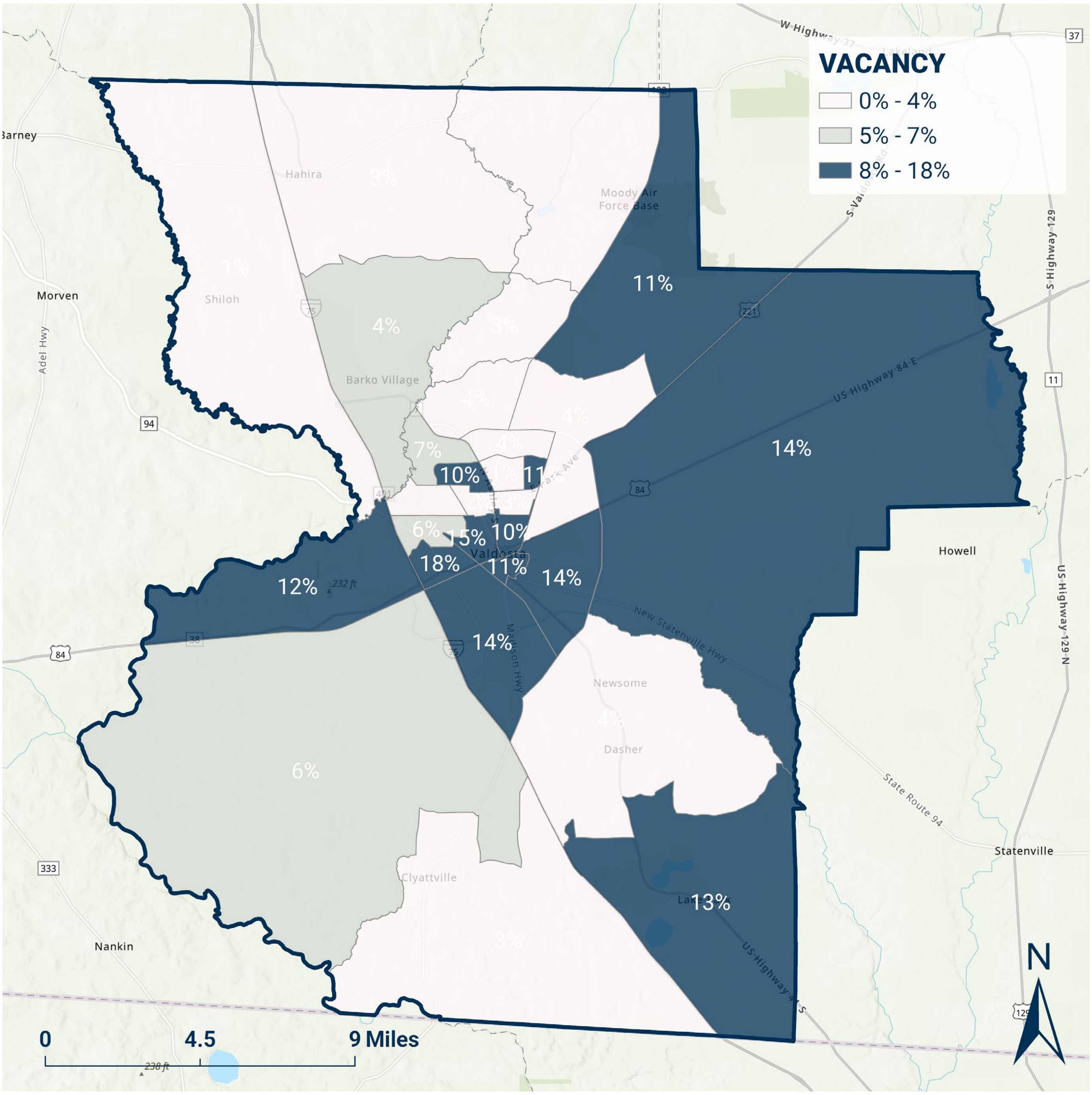


Figure 66: Seasonal Vacancy by Census Tract

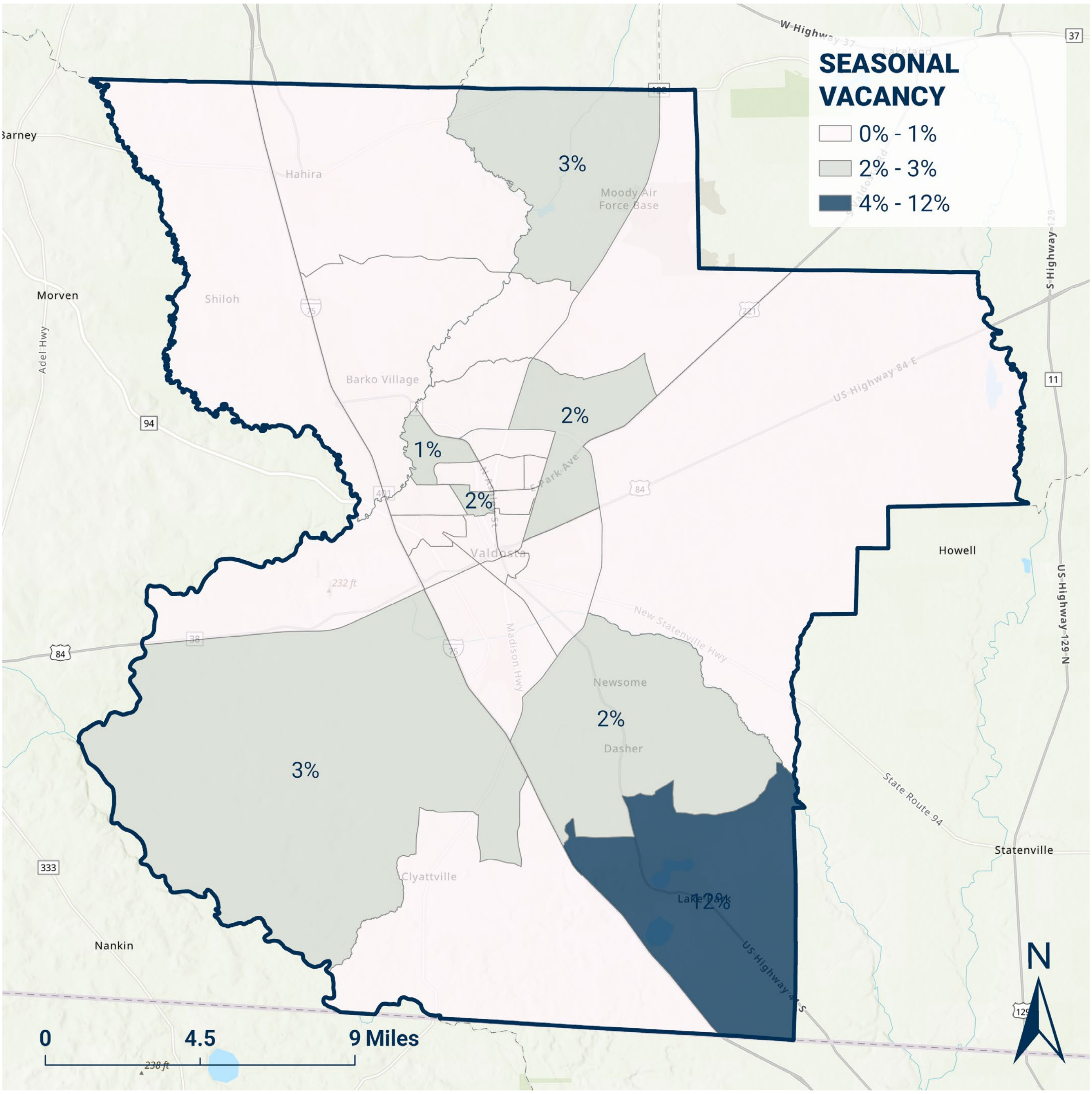
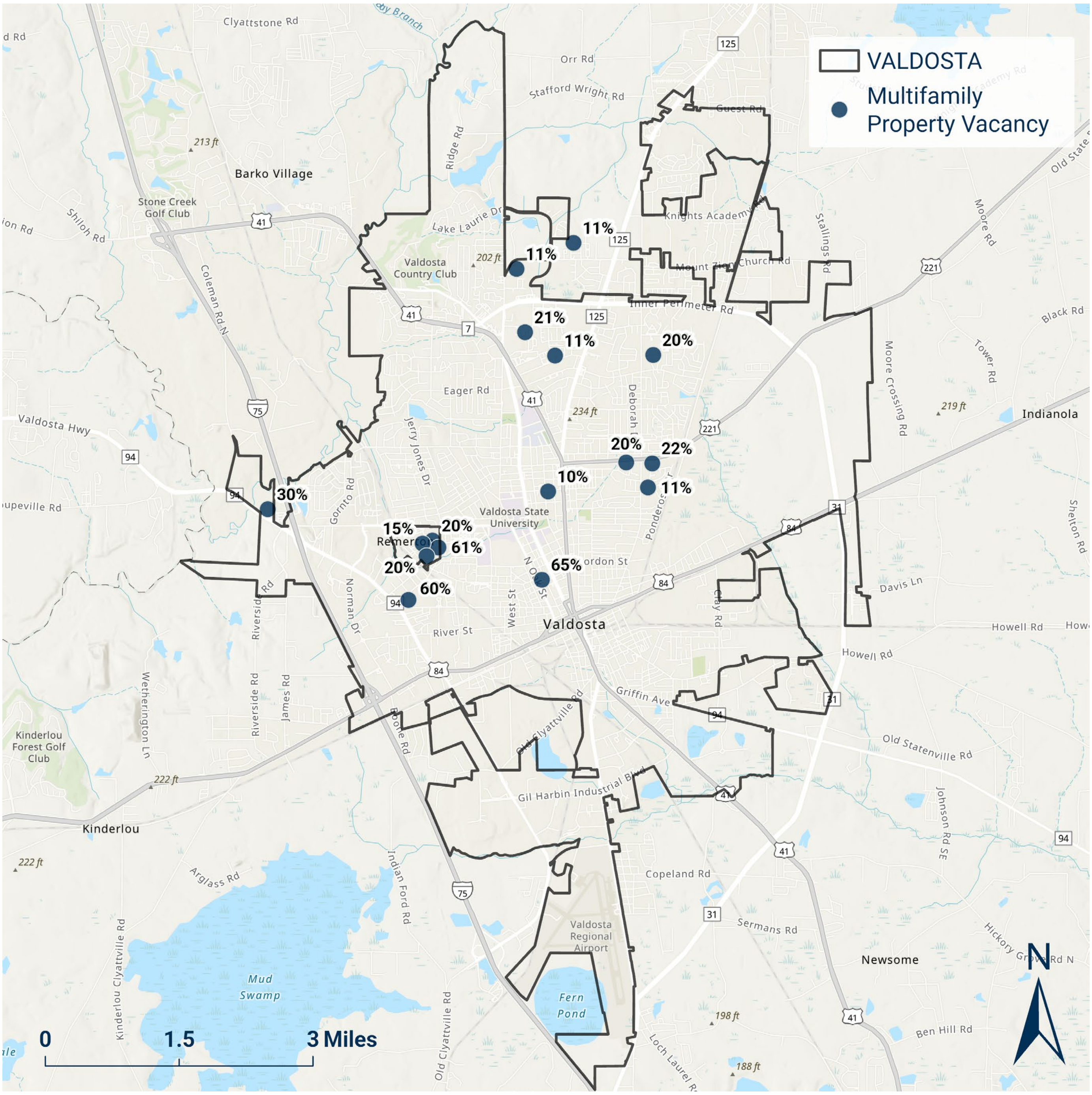


Figure 67 highlights multifamily properties in Valdosta with the highest vacancy rates, further identifying properties with greater potential for investment to help improve occupancy. A full list of property information can be found on page 97.

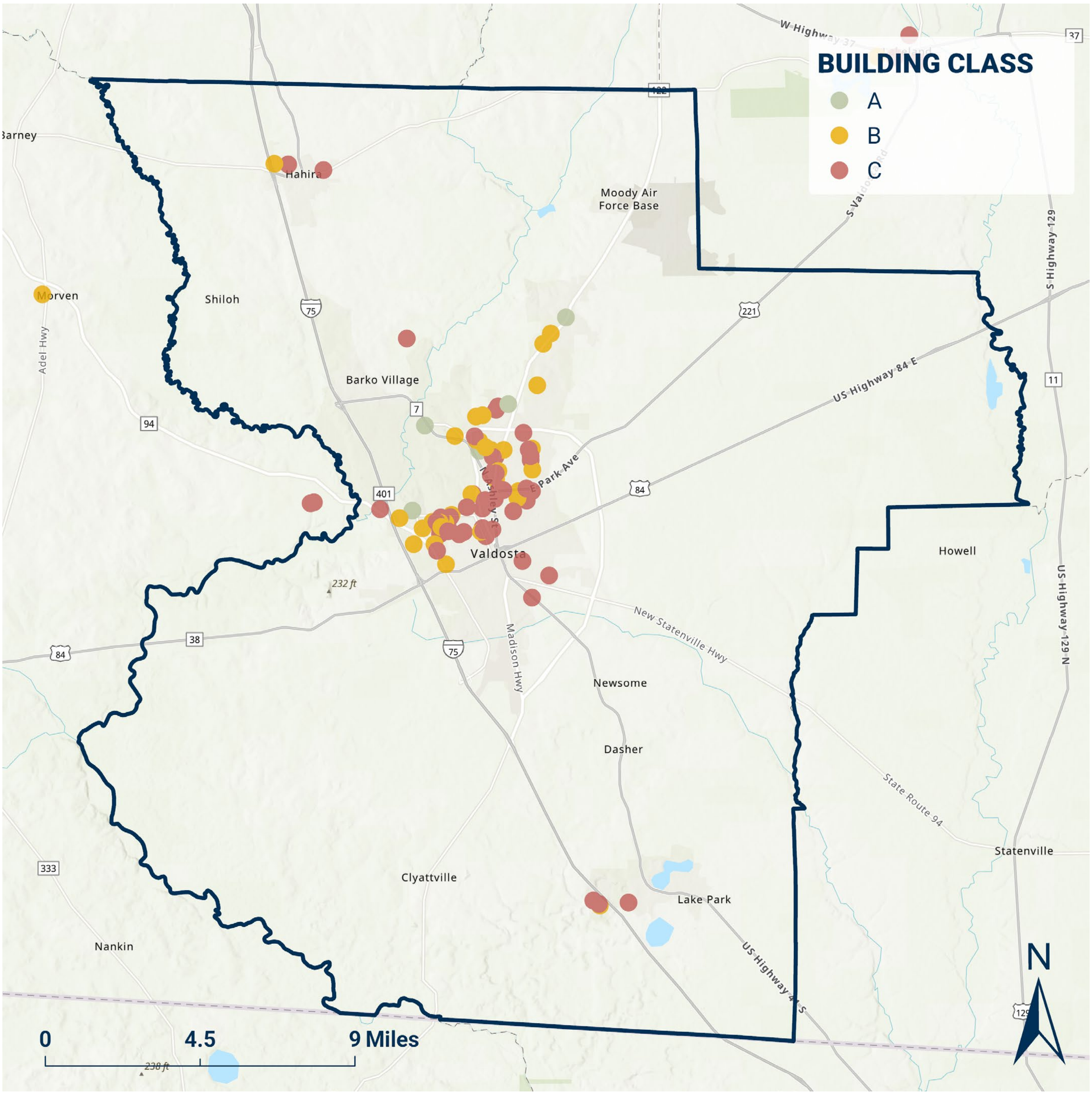
Figure 67: Multifamily High-Vacancy Properties



Source: CoStar, 2025

Property Status

Figure 68: Multifamily Classes

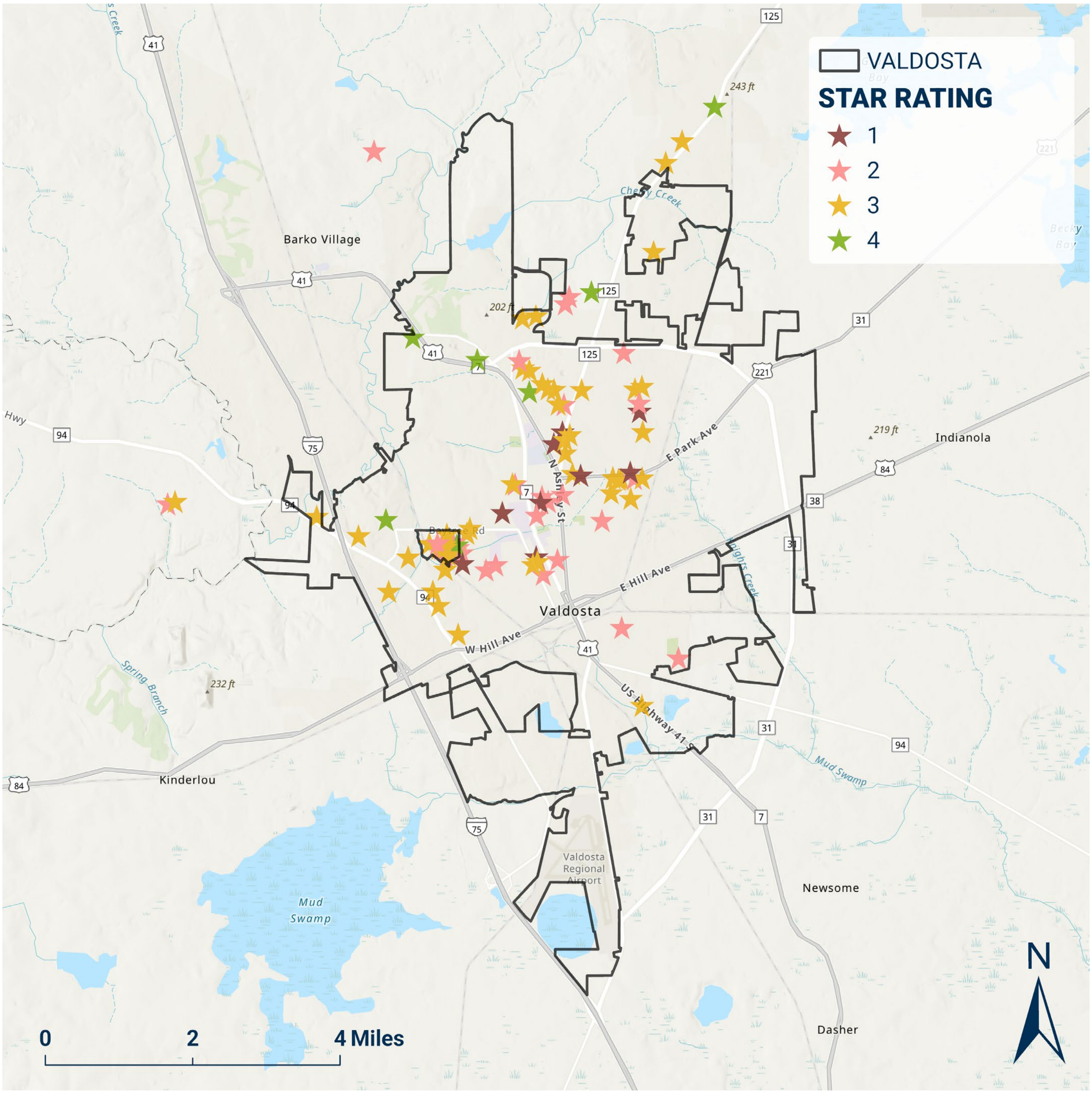


Properties are commonly classified into three primary segments: Class A, Class B, and Class C. Class A properties are newer, high-end buildings featuring top-tier amenities, high-income tenants, professional management, and the highest rents, with little to no maintenance issues. Class B properties are older but well-maintained assets with moderate-income tenants and some deferred maintenance, often offering value-add investment potential through upgrades. Class C properties are aging buildings in less desirable locations that typically require major renovations and offer the lowest rents in the market. These classifications are context-sensitive and reflect the range of options available within a market area.

Of the mapped properties in the market area, only 5 are Class A. 39 properties are class B and 63 are class C. 17% of the Class C properties are either affordable or rent subsidized units. While not all Class B and C properties are in need of major redevelopment, the volume of properties in these classes presents an opportunity for a deeper dive into rehabilitation or rennovation potential. These data will be used to support reccomendations for Phase 2 of the project.

Source: CoStar, 2025

Figure 69: Valdosta Multifamily Property Star Rating

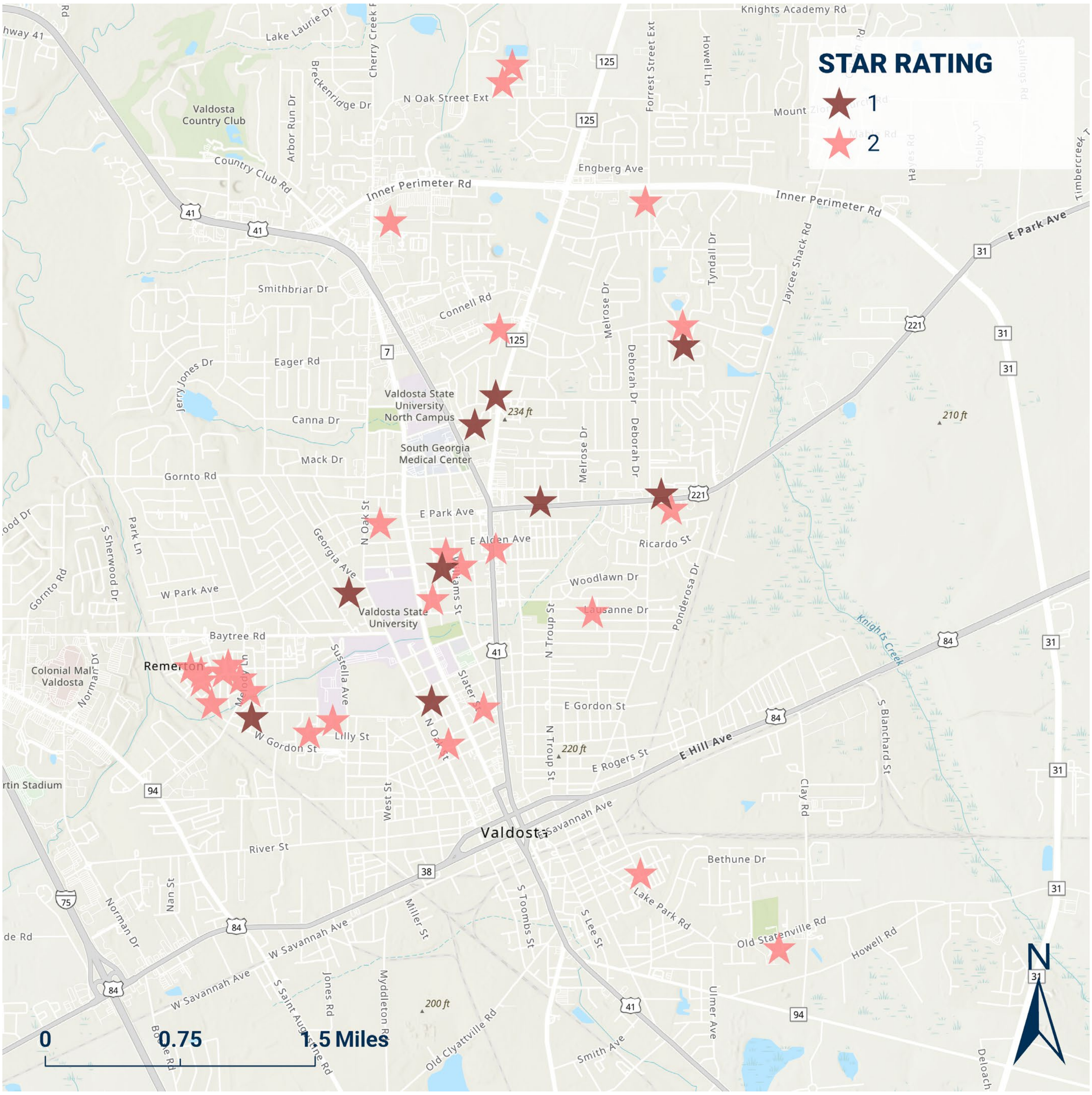


The CoStar multifamily rating system classifies properties on a scale from 1-Star to 5-Star based on their finishes, amenities, architectural design, building systems, and site features. A 5-Star building represents the luxury end of the market, featuring premium materials, top-tier amenities, high-end finishes, modern, energy-efficient systems, and often green building certifications. 4-Star properties are also high-quality, offering desirable amenities and contemporary designs, though they may show minor signs of age or belong to an earlier generation of construction. 3-Star properties are considered average, with functional layouts, standard finishes, and a modest set of amenities appropriate for typical market expectations. In contrast, 2-Star and 1-Star buildings are older, minimally maintained properties that require significant renovations to become competitive with higher-rated assets.

Source: CoStar, 2025

This rating system provides additional nuance across market segments. In the Lowndes County market, 8% of large multifamily units fall into the one-star category, 35% into two-star, 50% into three-star, and 7% into four-star. Figure 69 highlights selected locations in Valdosta where these properties are found, while Figure 70 isolates one- and two-star properties in central Valdosta to identify and visualize potential reinvestment opportunities.

Figure 70: Low Star Rating Valdosta Multifamily Properties



Source: CoStar, 2025

Lowndes County Multifamily Market Summary

CoStar data was filtered to show multifamily developments with at least 20 units in Lowndes County. We further refined the data to separate market-rate developments from affordable ones. There are 65 market-rate developments in the county with 6,091 units. Most units (97%) are located in the incorporated areas of the county, with Valdosta accounting for 93% of these units, or 5,688. Lake Park has 70 units, and Hahira has 133.

There are a limited number of units reserved for seniors and military, as shown in Table 5. Two-bedroom units are the most prevalent unit type, and studios are the least common unit type.

Average rents in these developments vary widely, based on bedroom size. The studio rent average is $641, and the average rent of a four bedroom unit is $1,784.

Comparing the average wages of the top industries in Valdosta (Table 2) to these rents highlights an affordability gap. Of the top five current sectors, only two (Transportation/Moving Materials, Education/Library) can afford more than a studio apartment. Only the Education/Library average wage of $55,100 can afford the rent for a three-bedroom, and none of the average wages for these industries can afford the rent for a four-bedroom unit. The average rent for a multifamily unit is only affordable for the average wage of those in the education and library sector.

The current gap between wages and rental prices also means that workers in these sectors are unable to afford larger units, which they might need, depending on their household size.

Table 7 provides information on rent-restricted multifamily developments in Lowndes County. There are a total of 1,534 units across 18 developments. Rents range from $433 to $1,058. While providing more affordable options, the average rent at some of these developments is still beyond what is affordable to workers in the top job sectors in Valdosta.

Source: CoStar, May 2025

Table 5: Market Rate Multifamily Summary

Market Rate Multifamily Overview	
Total Developments	65
Total Units	6,091
Senior Units	76
Military Units	200
Average Year Built	1990
Studio Units	57
One Bedroom Units	1,238
Two Bedroom Units	3,020
Three Bedroom Units	1,616
Four Bedroom Units	92

Table 6: Market Rate Multifamily Rents

Market Rate Average Multifamily Rents	
Studio Rent	$641
One Bedroom Rent	$949
Two Bedroom Rent	$1,070
Three Bedroom Rent	$1,332
Four Bedroom Rent	$1,784
Lowest Average Rent	$544
Highest Average Rent	$2,024
Average Rent	**$1,093**

Table 7: Rent Restricted Multifamily Summary

Rent Restricted Multifamily Rents	
Total Developments	18
Total Units	1,534
Average Year Built	1996
Studio Units	17
One Bedroom Units	638
Two Bedroom Units	542
Three Bedroom Units	208
Four Bedroom Units	0
Lowest Average Rent	$433
Highest Average Rent	$1,058

Valdosta Multifamily Market Summary

Valdosta multifamily data highlights are presented in Table 8 and Table 9. All the studio and senior units in the county are located in Valdosta.

Two-bedroom units account for 51% of all the units in Valdosta, by far the most common unit type in the city. Three-bedroom units comprise 25% of the total, while one-bedroom units account for 22%. Studio and four-bedroom units account for 1% or less of the total.

Rents in Valdosta are similar to those in Lowndes County, with rents for studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units only slightly elevated above the county average. Part of this difference can be attributed to student rental pressure and Valdosta having all four of the county's four-star developments. According to CoStar, four-star developments are high-quality properties that offer desirable amenities. The rents being the same between the county and Valdosta is due to Valdosta accounting for such a large share of the three and four-bedroom units.

The same gap between top industry average wages and average rents also exists in Valdosta, and it is slightly higher than the gap between rents at properties outside the city.

Table 8: Valdosta Market Rate Multifamily Summary

Valdosta Market Rate Multifamily Overview	
Total Developments	60
Total Units	5,688
Senior Units	76
Average Year Built	1989
Studio Units	57
One Bedroom Units	1,224
Two Bedroom Units	2,922
Three Bedroom Units	1,432
Four Bedroom Units	48

Table 9: Valdosta Market Rate Multifamily Rents

Valdosta Market Rate Multifamily Rents	
Studio Average Rent	$641
One Bedroom Rent	$950
Two Bedroom Rent	$1,072
Three Bedroom Rent	$1,341
Four Bedroom Rent	$1,784
Lowest Average Rent	$544
Highest Average Rent	$2,024
Average Rent	**$1,095**

Source: CoStar, May 2025

Market Trends

According to March 2024 data provided by the Georgia MLS, the average sales price for a home in Lowndes County (inclusive of Valdosta) is currently $260,830 and typically sells for 2% less than its list price. In 2024, homes in this market spend an average of 132 days on the market. However, all homes on the market for less than 30 days were below $200,000, indicating a strong interest in homes at that price point.

GMLS (April, 2025) lists 30 homes for sale in Lowndes County priced under $500,000. These homes range from $94,950 to $479, 900.

The median sales price of all three-bedroom, two-bathroom homes sold in Lowndes County in in the past 90 days is $234,900. These homes have a median square footage of 1,726.

Data from the Georgia Multiple Listing Service (GMLS) shows distinct trends in pricing, demand, and time on market for Lowndes County—including the city of Valdosta.

Average Sales Price and Market Behavior

As of March 2024, the average sales price for a home in Lowndes County was $260,830. Homes in this area typically sell for about 2% below their list price, suggesting that buyers still have some negotiating power, though the market remains relatively stable.

Time on Market

Homes in this area spend an average of 132 days on the market before being sold. However, there is a notable exception: homes priced under $200,000 tend to sell much faster—often within 30 days—indicating strong buyer interest and demand in the more affordable segment of the market.

Current Inventory (April 2025)

As of April 2025, there are 30 homes listed for sale in Lowndes County priced under $500,000. These listings span a wide price range, from $94,950 to $479,900, offering a variety of options for buyers.

In the past 90 days, the median sales price for three-bedroom, two-bathroom homes—a common and desirable configuration—was $234,900. These homes typically offer around 1,726 square feet of living space

Availability Conclusions

The housing landscape in Valdosta and Lowndes County reflects a dynamic mix of opportunities and challenges shaped by age, type, and location of housing stock. Valdosta's older housing inventory, particularly within its historic districts, underscores the importance of preservation and adaptive reuse as strategies to maintain affordability and neighborhood character. While older homes may offer lower purchase prices, they often come with trade-offs in maintenance, energy efficiency, and modern amenities.

In contrast, recent residential growth has been concentrated in unincorporated areas of Lowndes County, where new construction and manufactured housing are expanding the housing supply—particularly in rural and lower-density regions. These trends highlight the need for thoughtful planning to ensure that new development aligns with infrastructure capacity and community needs.

Single-family detached homes remain the dominant housing type, but shifting demographics and rising construction costs suggest a growing need for more diverse housing options. Missing middle housing—such as townhomes and small multifamily units—remains limited but is concentrated in areas with strong demand, including near Valdosta State University and the city's commercial core. Expanding this segment could help meet the needs of smaller households and younger renters seeking affordability and walkability.

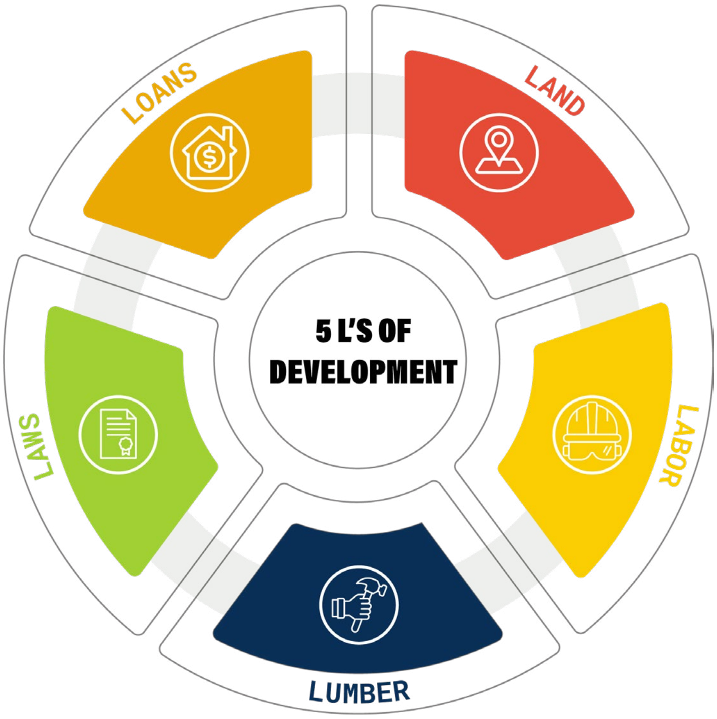
Vacancy rates in both the city and county exceed state and national averages, signaling potential inefficiencies in the housing market. At the same time, the condition and quality of multifamily housing vary widely, with a significant share of properties falling into lower-tier categories. These areas present clear opportunities for reinvestment and revitalization.

Overall, while the market offers a range of housing options across price points, ensuring long-term availability and affordability will require a balanced approach—one that supports preservation, encourages diverse new development, and aligns housing supply with the evolving needs of residents.

06

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS



The 5 L's of Development highlight the key factors influencing development costs. While the market forces are the primary drivers, local government does have influence; primarily through zoning codes and to a lesser extent through public finance instruments and the ownership of excess property.

Adopting flexible and less restrictive codes local governments can reduce barriers to development. This includes streamlining zoning regulations, reducing permitting turnaround time, and simplifying the approval process. Implementing policies that are more friendly to developers, such as expedited review processes and reduced fees on desirable projects can encourage more development activity.

Local governments can evaluate their inventory of publicly held property to determine if select parcels are suitable for residential development. Local governments could partner with a land bank or land trust to facilitate the development of affordable housing. These partnerships can reduce land acquisition costs and make projects more financially feasible.

Local governments and nonprofits can partner to provide community education on financial literacy. These programs can help residents understand budgeting, saving, and managing credit, which are essential skills for homeownership. Educational initiatives can also focus on pathways to homeownership, offering guidance on the home buying process, mortgage options, and down payment assistance programs.

To support the strategies outlined above, the implementation tables in the following section provide a practical framework for advancing community housing initiatives. These tables outline actionable steps, identify lead agencies, potential partners, timelines, and measurable outcomes. By organizing efforts into clear, trackable components, communities can more effectively coordinate across departments, leverage available resources, and monitor progress toward housing goals.

The implementation tables serve as a roadmap for local governments, nonprofits, and stakeholders to align their efforts and ensure that housing affordability strategies are not only adopted but successfully executed.

Finally, statewide best-practices in community-led housing initiatives, funding sources for both community-led and individual housing programs are outlined for reference.

Implementation Table

Table 10: Short-Tem Implementation Table (6-9 months)

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Funding Contribution	Implementation Partners
Establish a community wide housing collaborative	1	<1 Year	Staff Time	OVL, CoV, LC, VLLB, VHA, HFH, UW
Revitalize/reinstate urban redevelopment authority	2	< 1 Year	Staff Time	CoV, LC
Update Urban Redevelopment Plan	3	1-5 Years	$$	CoV, LC
Partner with Georgia Heirs Property Law Center	2	< 1 Year	Staff Time	CoV, LC, VLLB
Target property identification and mapping	5	< 1 Year	Staff Time	CoV

COST LEGEND

$: Less than $50k

$$: $50k-$100k

$$$: $150k+

PARTNERS LEGEND

Public Partners	Private Partners	Non-Profit Partners
CoV: City of Valdosta	GPC: Georgia Power	OVL: One Valdosta Lowndes
LC: Lowndes County		GAHP: Georgia Heirs Properties
VLLB: Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority		HFH: Habitat for Humanity
VHA: Valdosta Housing Authority		UW: United Way of Greater Valdosta

TASK ONE

TASK: ESTABLISH COMMUNITY WIDE HOUSING COLLABORATIVE

CONVENER: ONE VALDOSTA LOWNDES

COST: $

BEGIN: SEPTEMBER 2025

September 2025 - Initial Meeting

- Review Housing Study
- Group Visioning
- Brainstorm groups not represented to include
- Establish a regular meeting schedule (bi-monthly)

Potential Participants

- City of Valdosta – Neighborhood Development, Planning, Downtown Development
- Lowndes County
- Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority
- Valdosta Housing Authority
- Valdosta Urban Redevelopment Authority
- Habitat for Humanity
- United Way of Greater Valdosta
- DCA Regional Representative
- Southern Georgia Regional Commission Representative
- Others – nonprofits, school systems, churches

Resources + Models

- Housing Savannah, Inc.
- City of Canton Housing Team
- National Association of Counties (NaCO) Housing Task Force

Ongoing + Additional Work

- Continue community-wide housing conversations & forums for regular updates from implementation partners (City, County, Housing Authority, Land Bank, etc)
- Community Education Initiative for Homeownership
    - Financial Literacy
    - Georgia Dream Products
    - Planning for homeownership
    - Estate Planning/Title preservation workshops
    - Rehabilitation resources
- Develop a plan for outreach to developers (following completion of Tasks 2 & 3)

COST LEGEND $: Less than $50k | $$: $50k-$100k | $$$: $150k+

TASK TWO

TASK: URBAN REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING

CONVENER: CITY OF VALDOSTA

COST: $$

BEGIN: OCTOBER 2025

October 2025 - Reconstitute Valdosta Urban Redevelopment Commission

- Low Cost (Staff Time)
- Diverse Board
- Bylaws – create or update
- Schedule board education/orientation in conjunction with a meeting of the Communitywide Housing Collaborative to define roles

July 2026 Completion of refreshed City of Valdosta Urban Redevelopment Plan (2013)

- Medium Cost (Private Consultant)
- Request implementation steps as part of plan (similar to this)
- Require regular communication & collaboration with Community-wide housing collaborative

COST LEGEND $: Less than $50k | $$: $50k-$100k | $$$: $150k+

TASK THREE

TASK: SITE IDENTIFICATION CONVENER: CITY OF VALDOSTA

COST: $

BEGIN: OCTOBER 2025

October 2025 – Targeted Property Identification

- Identify vacant properties/buildings within the City of Valdosta that could potentially be redeveloped for residential use.
- Focus on excess publicly-owned properties that could go to land bank to bring down development costs and be a net return to the digest.
- Where could existing single-family properties be converted to missing middle?
- Map Parcels
    - GIS format – include zoning, setbacks, utilities, etc.
    - Identify non-conforming parcels to determine if there is a common theme, if so, adjust code/overlay to bring into compliance and seek development.

July 2025 - Property Owner Forum

- Engage owners of identified privately-owned vacant property to vision development/ redevelopment
- Forum Topics
    - Help with marketing property to developers
    - Land bank transfer opportunities
    - Partnership with housing authority/non-profits to redevelop

COST LEGEND $: Less than $50k | $$: $50k-$100k | $$$: $150k+

Implementation Table

Table 11: Medium and Long-Term Implementation Table (Year 2+)

Recommendation	Priority	Time Frame	Funding Contribution	Implementation Partners
Land Bank Strategic Plan	1	Year 2	$$	VLBB (Lead)
Fund Land Bank	2	Year 2	$$$	CoV, LC
Leverage Blight Tax	1	Year 2	Staff Time	CoV, LC
Explore HUD Neighborhood Choice Program	3	1-5 Years	$$	CoV, VHA, OVL

COST LEGEND

$: Less than $50k

$$: $50k-$100k

$$$: $150k+

PARTNERS LEGEND

Public Partners	Private Partners	Non-Profit Partners
CoV: City of Valdosta	GPC: Georgia Power	OVL: One Valdosta Lowndes
LC: Lowndes County		GAHP: Georgia Heirs Properties
VLLB: Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority		HFH: Habitat for Humanity
VHA: Valdosta Housing Authority		UW: United Way of Greater Valdosta

STATEWIDE BEST PRACTICES

Great Sites Committee

A newly established committee created by a commercial real estate firm to showcase large tracts of land in overlooked areas. Currently, this committee focuses on the City of South Fulton.

Secure Neighborhoods Program

A collection of programs administered by the Atlanta Police Foundation to support APD officers live in the city. Included are programs that provide a take-home vehicle, down payment assistance to purchase a home, and a courtesy officer program where officers patrol the multifamily development they live in exchange for reduced rent.

Marietta Public Service Housing Program

A partnership between the City of Marietta & Habitat for Humanity NW Metro to provide housing options for employees of the City or Marietta City Schools. Target 4 homes funded by a $500,000 ARPA contribution from the City.

Statesboro Right Start Process

The Right Start Process is a pre-development initiative designed to help business owners and developers get a clear, coordinated understanding of what's required to move forward with their projects in the city.

Canton Pre-Approved ADUs

The city of Canton pre-approved 4 ADU plans that are available for use within single-family zoning districts. The free plans also included reduced permit fees.

Cleveland Code Revision

Cleveland updated its code to permit the use of buildings that don't currently conform to existing land uses under certain conditions. They also approved the use of modular housing to expedite the affordable housing construction process.

COMMUNITY FUNDING AND PROGRAMS

Below are funding opportunities and programs the City and its local partners can apply for to support workforce housing development, rehabilitate existing housing, and address vacant and abandoned property.

Community Development Block Grants

Federal funding to support quality of life improvements for moderate to low-income people. The Department of Community Affairs administers funding for non-entitlement communities.

Community Reinvestment Act

A federal law that encourages local banks to meet the needs of everyone in their community. Affordable housing investments qualify for CRA credit.

Community HOME Investment Program (CHIP)

CHIP funds support the rehabilitation of owner-occupied homes and the construction and renovation of homes to sell to eligible homebuyers.

Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program

The Federal Home Loan Bank offers financing for affordable homeownership and rental units.

Rural Workforce Housing Equity Fund

New state funding to support housing development and related infrastructure to support workforce housing development.

Housing Preservation Grants

Provides grants to eligible organizations to renovate and repair housing occupied or owned by low and very low-income rural citizens.

HOPE IV Main Street Program

A federal funding source that supports the development of affordable housing in communities that have an existing Main Street project.

Center for Community Progress

The Technical Assistance Scholarship is designed to assist communities with vacant and abandoned properties through innovative solutions.

Pathways to Removing Obstacles to Housing

This funding supports communities to identify and remove barriers that impact the development and preservation of affordable housing.

Multifamily Rental Code Compliance

A requirement for multi-family rental property owners who failed to meet business license or inspection requirements in the previous year to submit code compliance certificates for 100% of their units—rather than just 50%—when renewing their business license.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMS

Below are funding opportunities that the low- and moderate-income households can apply for to help them live in safe affordable housing.

Georgia Dream Program

A down payment assistance program that provides funding to increase the down payment amount a homebuyer has. The standard down payment loan is $10,000, and the purchase price must not exceed limits determined by geography.

Single Family Housing Guaranteed Loan Program

Supports low- and moderate-income households to purchase, rehabilitate, build or move a home in an eligible rural area with 100% financing.

Single Family Housing Direct Home Loans

This loan program is available for low- and very low-income households to achieve safe and decent housing in designated rural areas.

Energy Assistance for Savings & Efficiency

Free energy efficiency improvements available for qualified Georgia Power Clients. You must complete an application and have a household income below 200% of the Federal Poverty guidelines.

State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property

For eligible properties, homeowners can receive a 25% state income tax credit for up to $100,000 of qualified rehabilitation expenses.

ECONOMIC MOBILITY RESOURCES

[Rent Reporting as a Pathway to Credit Building]

It is exceedingly difficult to get by in the US economy without participating in the credit system. Rent reporting—providing data on tenant rental payments to at least one of the major consumer credit bureaus—has seen significant growth in recent years. The major credit scoring companies have begun adjusting scoring algorithms to include reported rental payments. Nonprofit housing providers, and public housing authorities have incorporated rent reporting, and several states and municipalities have encouraged the adoption of rent reporting. Urban Institute presented findings from new research—results from the first randomized controlled trial that tests the impact of rent reporting on credit visibility and credit scores. Experts will also discuss the growth of rent reporting, and policy developments

Using the Toolkit to Increase Upward Mobility in Your Community

Achieving long-term social mobility and economic prosperity is a major challenge. Despite the promise that talent and hard work lead to advancement, research shows that adults with the lowest incomes rarely rise to the middle or top of the income distribution, and significant racial disparities persist, particularly between Black and white Americans. Urban's Toolkit for Increasing Upward Mobility in Your Community is designed to help local leaders address these challenges. Whether you're a policymaker, a practitioner, or a community member, this workshop will guide you through how to use the toolkit to identify effective strategies and begin catalyzing change.

Mobility Action Learning Network

Urban Institute has posted summaries that describe the efforts of the 26 communities from across the country who participated in the Mobility Action Learning Network. Each community participated in one of four tracks focused on using data, building coalitions, empowering community partners, and measuring impact. The summaries highlight each team's unique focus within their track, what they have accomplished so far, and how they are laying the groundwork for continued progress in their communities. The Federal Home Loan Bank offers financing for affordable homeownership and rental units.

Virtual Workshop

Learn how to use the toolkit to apply the Upward Mobility Framework to local policymaking, programming, best practices, and tools for developing strategies tailored to your community's needs.

Source: Urban Institute Credit Building and Toolkit

07

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE: TABLE OF FIGURES

Figure 71: Community Fact Sheets: Instruction Page

INSTRUCTIONS

Each of the following pages presents information about a census tract or census-designated place, serving as a proxy for a potential neighborhood for the Phase 2 Small Area Plan. Once the final areas are selected, the boundaries can be adjusted to better align with the existing community.

Please review each page carefully and use the information to help determine which community should move forward with a Small Area Plan. After reviewing, navigate to the survey to submit your priority area preferences.

At our next meeting, we will discuss the survey results and finalize the selected neighborhoods together.

If you're viewing this on a computer, the survey link is here. If you're viewing a print copy, use the QR code below.

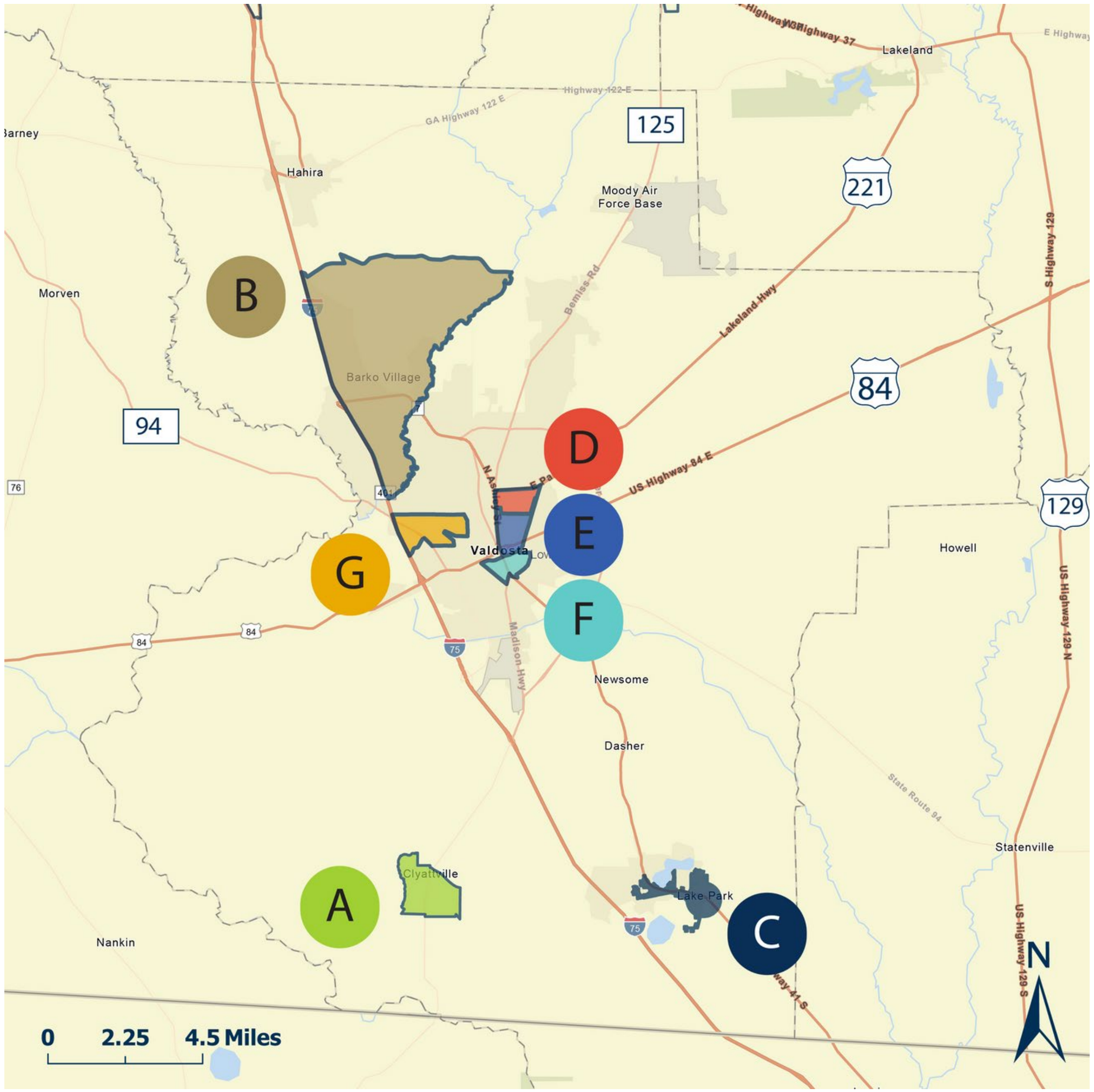
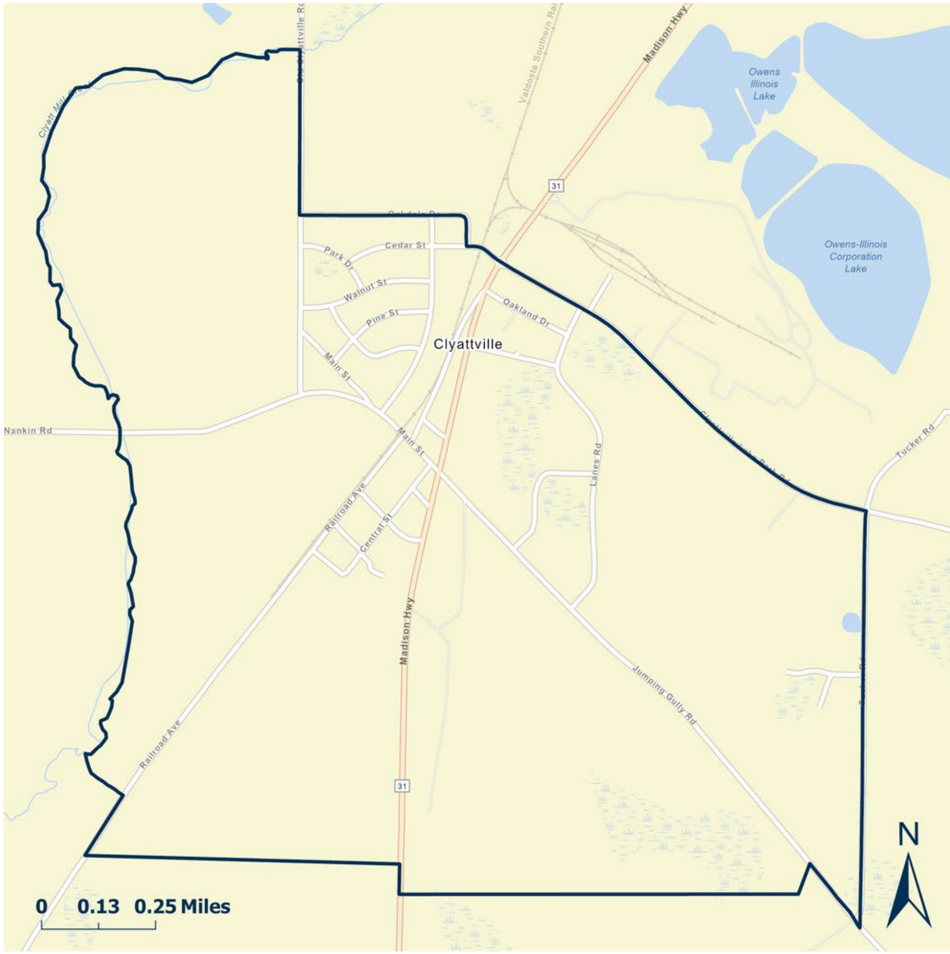


Figure 72: Community Fact Sheets: Option A

OPTION A

Clyattville could be a strong candidate for redevelopment if the focus is on industrial expansion, workforce housing, or leveraging its proximity to Valdosta and Wild Adventures. However, as an unincorporated area, its infrastructure needs and lower density may require significant strategic planning and external investment to ensure long-term success.



POPULATION
552

HOUSING
86% SF DETATCHED
0% 10+ UNITS
11.5% MOBILE HOMES

AGE
53.7 - MEDIAN AGE
25.7% AGE 55-59

RENTAL RATE
18% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
1.9 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$46,250

ZONING
MIX OF RESIDENTIAL, AGRICULTURAL, AND INDUSTRIAL

POVERTY RATE
23%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 73: Community Fact Sheets: Option B

OPTION B

This census tract stands out due to its higher median household income and larger household sizes. Predominantly featuring single-family detached homes, the area could benefit from a small area plan to explore new housing typologies, strategic locations, and support managed growth.

POPULATION
8,718

HOUSING
97% SF DETATCHED0% 10+ UNITS
3% MANUFACTURED

AGE
30.6- MEDIAN AGE
21% - 25-44 YEARS

RENTAL RATE
17% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
3.05 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$105,693

ZONING
PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL AND PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

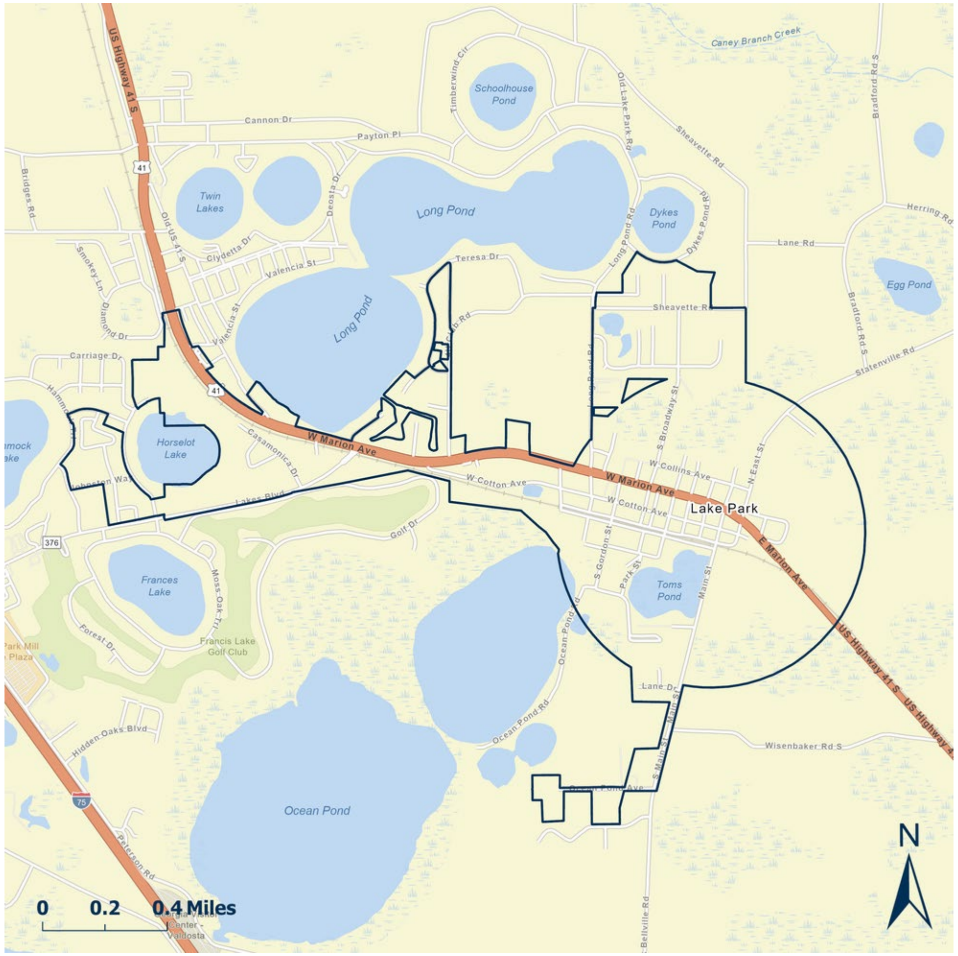
POVERTY RATE
5%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 74: Community Fact Sheets: Option C

OPTION C

Lake Park has an affordable housing market and a growing, diverse population, making it a candidate for a small area plan. Its proximity to I-75 enhances growth potential. However, the rural character may necessitate infrastructure investments to support residential expansion, and market volatility must be managed to support long-term visioning.



POPULATION
962

HOUSING
64% SF DETATCHED
25% 10+ UNITS
0% MANUFACTURED

AGE
30.6- MEDIAN AGE
26% - 25-44 YEARS

RENTAL RATE
53% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
2.69 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$38,571

ZONING
PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL ALONG TRANSPORTATION ROUTES

POVERTY RATE
37%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 75: Community Fact Sheets: Option D

OPTION D

This area offers a promising opportunity for a small area plan within Valdosta, leveraging its Opportunity Zone status and strategic location near the University. However, addressing economic disparities, preventing resident displacement, and upgrading infrastructure are critical challenges that must be navigated in a predominantly rental community.

POPULATION
4,022

HOUSING
54% SF DETATCHED
9% 10+ UNITS
0% MANUFACTURED

AGE
29.7- MEDIAN AGE
45% - 15-44 YEARS

RENTAL RATE
85% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
2.73 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$35,080

ZONING
PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL WEST, CENTRAL PARK SPACE

POVERTY RATE
29.6%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 76: Community Fact Sheets: Option E

OPTION E

A plan for this neighborhood would need to prioritize either residential or commercial development, as both require dedicated attention. The focus could be on revitalizing Main Street to attract and retain businesses or on enhancing the residential pockets surrounding downtown to uplift the existing housing stock and promote infill.

POPULATION
3,053

HOUSING
85% SF DETATCHED
2% 10+ UNITS
0% MANUFACTURED

AGE
38- MEDIAN AGE
45% - 15-44 YEARS

RENTAL RATE
50% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
2.2 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$31,458

ZONING
MIX OF COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL

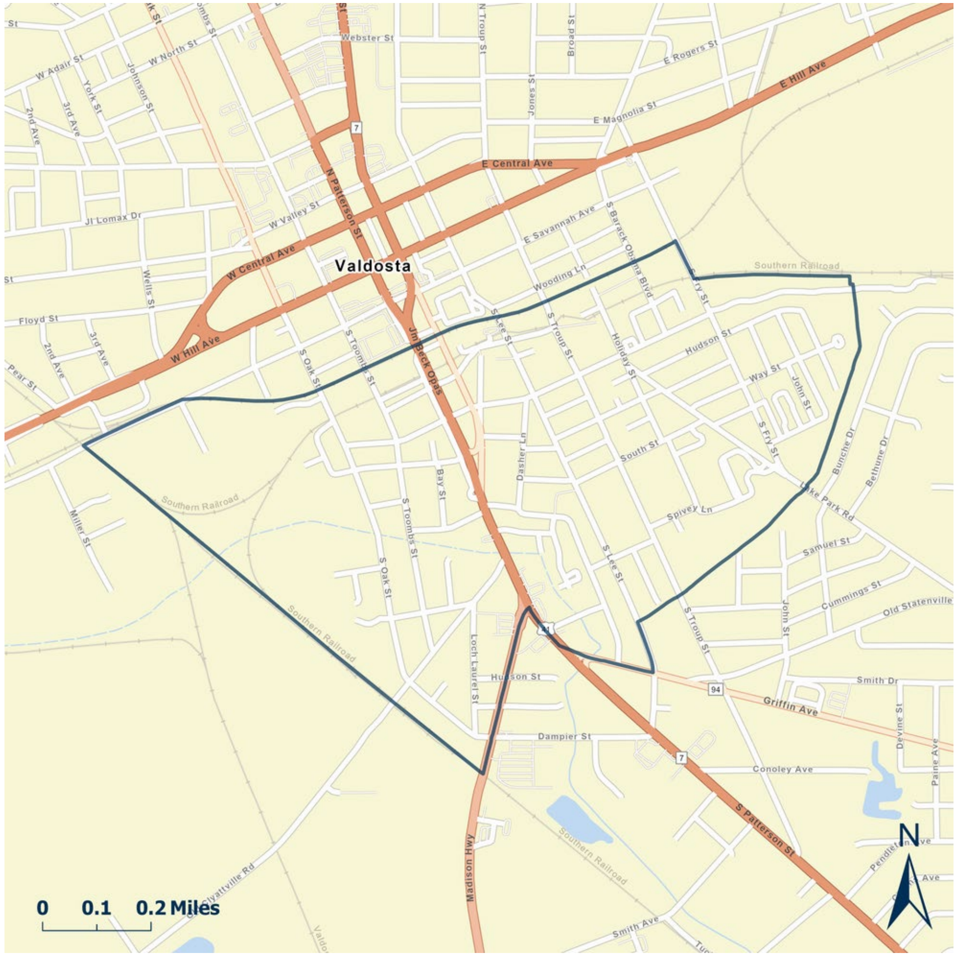
POVERTY RATE
50.4%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 77: Community Fact Sheets: Option F

OPTION F

The neighborhood south of Downtown Valdosta benefits from its prime location, historic assets, and connectivity. However, challenges such as economic disparities, aging infrastructure, and the risk of displacement must be addressed.



POPULATION
1,856

HOUSING
66% SF DETATCHED
12% 10+ UNITS
0% MANUFACTURED

AGE
25- MEDIAN AGE
33% OVER 45 YRS

RENTAL RATE
60% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
2.9 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$20,273

ZONING
PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL WEST

POVERTY RATE
50.4%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

Figure 78: Community Fact Sheets: Option G

OPTION G

The area surrounding Remerton and the mall could be a strong candidate for a Small Area Plan due to its diverse housing stock and younger student population, which contribute to a dynamic community. However, the significant presence of commercial properties may limit opportunities for residential-focused redevelopment.

POPULATION
4,800

HOUSING
23% SF DETATCHED
20% 10+ UNITS
1% MANUFACTURED

AGE
22.6 - MEDIAN AGE
35.3% AGE 20-24

RENTAL RATE
93% RENTERS

AVG HOUSEHOLD SIZE
2.1 PEOPLE

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME
$22,834

ZONING
COMMERCIAL WEST,
RESIDENTIAL EAST

POVERTY RATE
55.2%

Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute
Center for Economic Development Research

APPENDIX THREE: MULTIFAMILY PROPERTY INFORMATION (2 AND 3 STARS)

The following table provides a list of high-vacancy priorities in the Lowndes market area from CoStar.

Table 12: High-Vacancy Properties

Property Address	Property Name	Star Rating	Building Class	Number Of Units	Year Built	Year Renovated	Vacancy %
200 W Adair	**Adair West Apartments**	2	C	14	1993		65.0
1200 Melody	**Magnolia on Melody**	2	C	30	1983		60.7
1505 Lankford Dr	**Blanton Commons Apartments**	3	B	277	2005		60.3
1415 N Saint Augustine Rd	**The Gables of St. Augustine**	3	C	140	1989		30.1
1635 E Park Ave	**Parc at Sixteen 35**	2	C	92	1970	2019	21.9
480 Murray Rd	**Latitude 30**	3	B	131	1996	2018	20.6
1213-1214 Bradley Bowen Dr	**1213-1214 Bradley Bowen**	2	C	15	1996		20.3
1718 Northside Dr	**Lakeside Lakeview Apartments**	3	C	216	1973		20.0
1425 E Park Ave	**1425 Park**	3	B	56	1968		19.9
1531 Woodard	**College Town Apartment**	3	B	15	1995		19.7
1603 Victory		3	B	20	1993		14.7

Source: CoStar, April 2025

4203 Herme Pl	**Camellia Cottages**	2	C	83	1991		11.0
3833 N Oak St Ext	**Three Oaks Apartments**	3	B	240	1991		10.9
422 Connell Rd	**Spanish Mission**	3	B	150	1973		10.8
1616-1618 E Moore St	**Del Rey Terrace Apartments**	3	C	26	1993		10.8
1615 Williams St	**Treeloft Apartments**	2	C	20	1972		10.4
1503 E Park Ave	**Prosper Azalea City**	3	B	300	1978	2017	10.0

Source: Costar, April 2025

APPENDIX FOUR: GREAT SITES COMMITTEE ARTICLE

By Zachary Hansen

Sept 29, 2023

Real estate brokers are wired to see potential whenever they gaze upon a vacant parking lot, shuttered big box store or expanse of trees along a highway.

But in some pockets of metro Atlanta, especially in majority Black communities south of I-20, those untapped sites often lie ignored.

T. Dallas Smith, the founder of one of the country's largest Black-led commercial real estate firms, said those plots of land are ripe for new housing or mixed-use projects. In his view, there's untapped potential — and profit — for brokers who shed preconceived notions about Atlanta's Southside and focus on the oldest adage in real estate.

"The three most important things with real estate should be location, location, location," said Smith, this year's president of the Atlanta Commercial Board of Realtors. "But oftentimes, its complexion, complexion, complexion."

Smith is helping lead a new initiative called the Great Sites Committee, which aims to find and showcase large tracts in overlooked areas. On Wednesday, he and the city of South Fulton took roughly a dozen seasoned brokers on a bus tour of four sites identified as potential hidden gems along Old National Highway, the city's main thoroughfare.

Credit: Courtesy photo

Commercial real estate executive T. Dallas Smith spoke to roughly a dozen brokers before leading them on a bus tour of possible development sites along Old National Highway in South Fulton on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023. Image courtesy of The Collaborative Firm.

Through a partnership with The Collaborative Firm, the brokers saw sites ranging from 14 acres to nearly 500 acres in a city whose leadership is eager for new investment.

Despite being home to more than 110,000 people, of which 92% are African American, South Fulton doesn't have a building taller than four stories, according to Mayor Khalid Kamau. The city’s median household income is about $69,500, roughly the same of the city of Atlanta but about $15,000 less than the overall metro region, according to U.S. Census data.

“We are thinking about building up,” he said.

Median incomes in Fulton County

The city of South Fulton's median household income is roughly equivalent to the city of Atlanta, but it lags behind the metro region and some north Fulton cities.

Location	Population	Median household income
Alpharetta	67K	$133,920
Sandy Springs	108K	$86,548
South Fulton	111K	$69,557
Atlanta	499K	$69,164
Metro Atlanta	5.16M	$84,876

Table: Zachary Hansen • Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

‘A fresh perspective’

South Fulton, a city incorporated in 2017, was awarded a grant last year to evaluate Old National Highway.

The grant was awarded by the Atlanta Regional Commission through its Livable Centers Initiative, which aims to identify potential sites for live-work-play developments and walkable infrastructure. The five-lane road was the obvious candidate, cutting through the most populated area of the city and leading to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

It’s a stretch of concrete Smith knows well, because he grew up in the area.

Credit: special

Participants in a tour of South Fulton development sites make a stop at one location along the Old National Highway corridor on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023. Image courtesy of The Collaborative Firm.

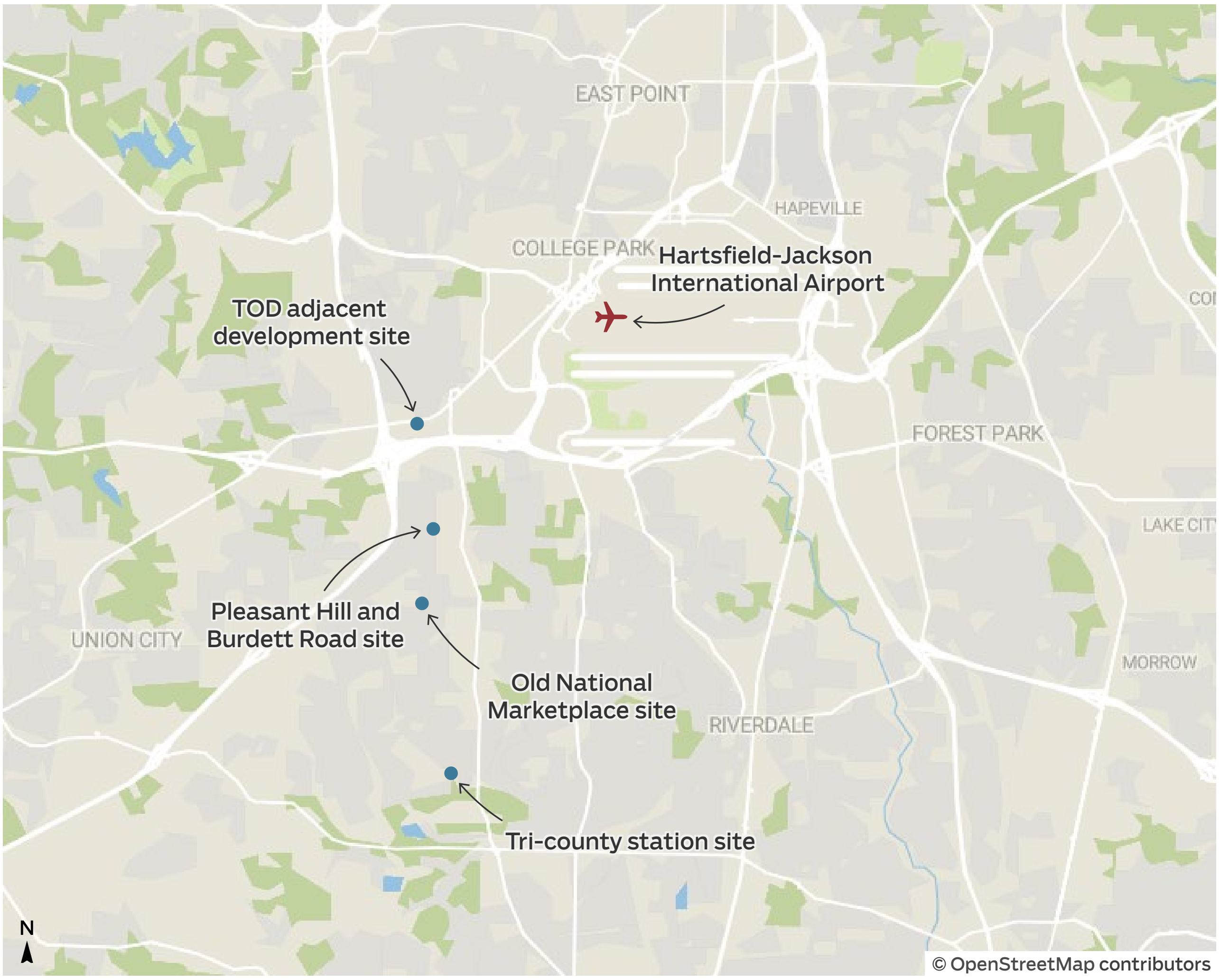
He said he got his first job washing dishes at a Steak ‘n Shake off the highway, a location that’s since been replaced with a storage facility. The corridor was the place to be for restaurants at the time, he said.

“You name it, they were here,” he added.

He later worked at Richway, the discount division of the former Rich's department store brand, and the vacant building is one of the four plots identified for re-development. The properties also include the unused parking lots of World Changers International Church, the dilapidated Camelot Condominiums and undeveloped forests near Pleasant Hill Road.

South Fulton development sites

Here are the four catalytic development sites identified along the Old National Highway corridor in the city of South Fulton.



Map: Zachary Hansen

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Dan Buyers, a partner at McWhiter Realty Partners and head of the Great Sites Committee, said there are long-held stigmas that south Atlanta can't be home to high-quality developments that gain traction north of I-20. But he said showing brokers what is possible — and available for a fraction of the cost — should move the needle.

"Somebody from out of town will come into town and not have our predispositions, not have our prejudices, and they'll say, 'Why the hell is this still available?'" he said. "So sometimes, it takes an outsider to have a fresh perspective."

Explore Developer envisions 'mini version of Avalon' in Atlanta's Southside

An uphill battle

Areas like South Fulton that are begging for investment not only face challenges getting attention from developers, but they also have to overcome current economic headwinds.

The past year has been turbulent for commercial real estate as developers struggle to get projects financed, even in hot markets in Midtown and along the Beltline. High interest rates coupled with a tight lending environment have stalled several projects across metro Atlanta in recent months and commercial foreclosures loom.

Multiple brokers at the event said the city needed to temper expectations on how quickly these sites could be redeveloped, even if their locations and fundamentals jumped off the page. Sarah-Elizabeth Langford, the executive director of the Development Authority of Fulton County, which rebranded this week as Develop Fulton, said her agency is prepared to help developers.

Credit: special

Participants in an initiative to spotlight South Fulton development sites listen to speakers Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023. Image courtesy of The Collaborative Firm.

"The incentive program at Fulton County was really designed for areas like this where developers are willing to make a large investment and maybe need some incentives or assistance," she said.

Buyers said he expects the Great Sites Committee to expand its mission to other overlooked parts of the metro in the years to come, but is staying focused on South Fulton for now. More site tours are planned to continue showing the land to brokers in hopes of generating momentum, especially for new housing.

“Once you have that residential mass, the retail will follow,” he said.

Credit: special

Merchandise touting the Old National District and South Fulton was seen at a brokers roundtable and site tour focused on overlooked properties on Atlanta's Southside on Wednesday, Sept. 27, 2023. Image courtesy of The Collaborative Firm.

Smith said it’s difficult to break decades of preconceptions. But promising real estate and discount prices should cut through any color barrier, he said.

“If you go to Midtown, land is trading at $18 million an acre,” Smith said. “We just passed land that is $160,000 an acre near the busiest airport in the world.”

About the Author

Zachary Hansen

Zachary Hansen, a Georgia native, covers economic development and commercial real estate for the AJC. He's bee newspaper since 2018 and enjoys diving into complex stories that affect people's lives.

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