

# CASE STUDY MIDDLE GEORGIA

## PLUG INTO GEORGIA



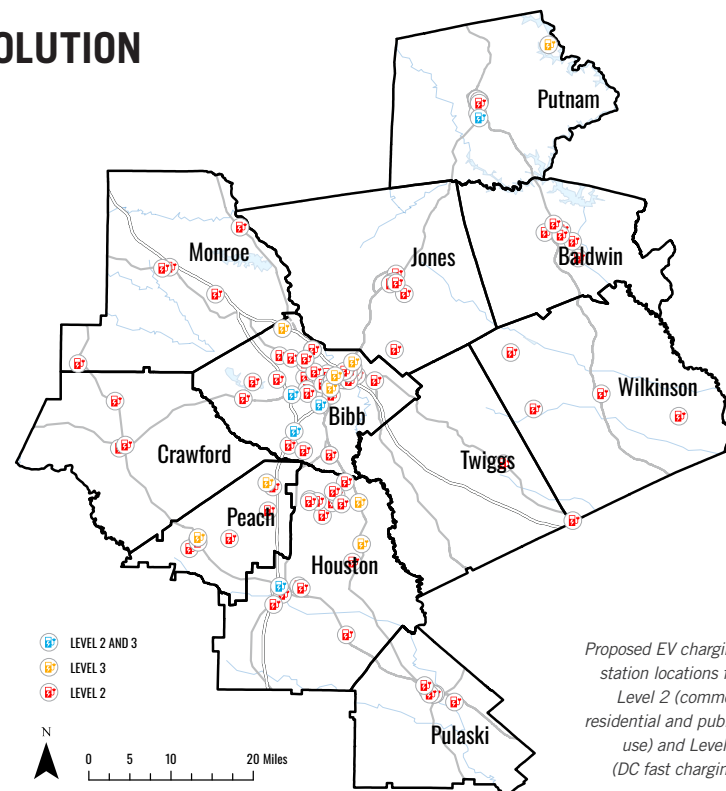
### MIDDLE GEORGIA'S ROAD TO SUCCESS

#### PUBLIC EV CHARGING AS A REGIONAL SOLUTION

In 2003, the federal government designated Middle Georgia as a non-attainment area for air quality standards. The designation could have led to reduced operations at Robins Air Force Base, a cornerstone of the region's economy and a major employer. The potential impacts also extended beyond the base to broader economic development and the health and quality of life of the region's residents and visitors.

Seeking long-term solutions, regional leaders launched the Middle Georgia Clean Air Coalition strategy to improve air quality. With the transportation sector responsible for nearly half of local air pollution, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC) prioritized the electrification of vehicles, public transportation, and freight rail in its regional compliance and economic development strategy.

However, early efforts revealed a key barrier to EV adoption: the lack of visible and reliable charging infrastructure. To address this, MGRC mapped potential locations, built public-private partnerships, and ultimately secured a \$15 million federal grant to expand access to EV charging across the region.



#### MIDDLE GEORGIA TRANSPORTATION ELECTRIFICATION HIGHLIGHTS:



Macon is home to Brosnan Yard, a major freight rail hub for the Southeast. MGRC collaborated with Norfolk Southern to convert locomotives to hybrid battery-diesel models.



MGRC secured grant funding to purchase 15 electric school buses for Bibb County and two electric Macon Transit Authority buses, along with associated charging infrastructure.



111 proposed EV charging station sites were identified to ensure that all Middle Georgians are within 15 minutes of a public charging station.

#### KEY TAKEAWAYS:

**REGIONAL COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL:** Large-scale infrastructure projects, such as public EV charging networks, may exceed the capacity of individual communities. Rural communities working together enables shared benefits and stronger funding applications.

**PLANNING AND PREPARATION MATTER:** A data-driven, well-documented regional strategy significantly strengthened MGRC's ability to attract grant funding.

**INFRASTRUCTURE DRIVES ADOPTION:** Although most EV charging occurs at home, visible public charging boosts consumer confidence and supports travel across rural regions. Areas without visible public charging similarly experience lagging EV sales.

**SLOW PROGRESS IS STILL PROGRESS:** MGRC's efforts to increase electric transportation began more than two decades ago, with initial progress tied to public investments benefiting tourism. Infrastructure and funding take time, but persistence and partnerships support success.

#### LOOKING FORWARD:

MGRC is exploring partnerships with private companies to manage the ongoing maintenance and support of the planned charging stations as required under federal grant regulations. The commission also is looking to expand partnerships with local colleges, technical schools, and employers to strengthen workforce development for jobs in the energy sector.



Public EV charging stations serve more than just drivers, they also support local businesses. Drivers spend time shopping or dining nearby while charging their vehicles, creating new opportunities for small businesses and downtown districts.

“In Forsyth, a city northwest of Macon, Mayor Eric Wilson observed the city's EV charger being used frequently around lunchtime, as hungry drivers pull off I-75 to recharge their vehicles and themselves. After the initial public investment in a downtown EV charger, the private sector installed several additional chargers, recognizing the economic value of this amenity.”

—Eric Wilson, Forsyth Mayor

