

ARGO, AL

JANUARY 2022

COMMUNITY FACTBOOK

A SUMMARY OF EXISTING TRENDS & CONDITIONS



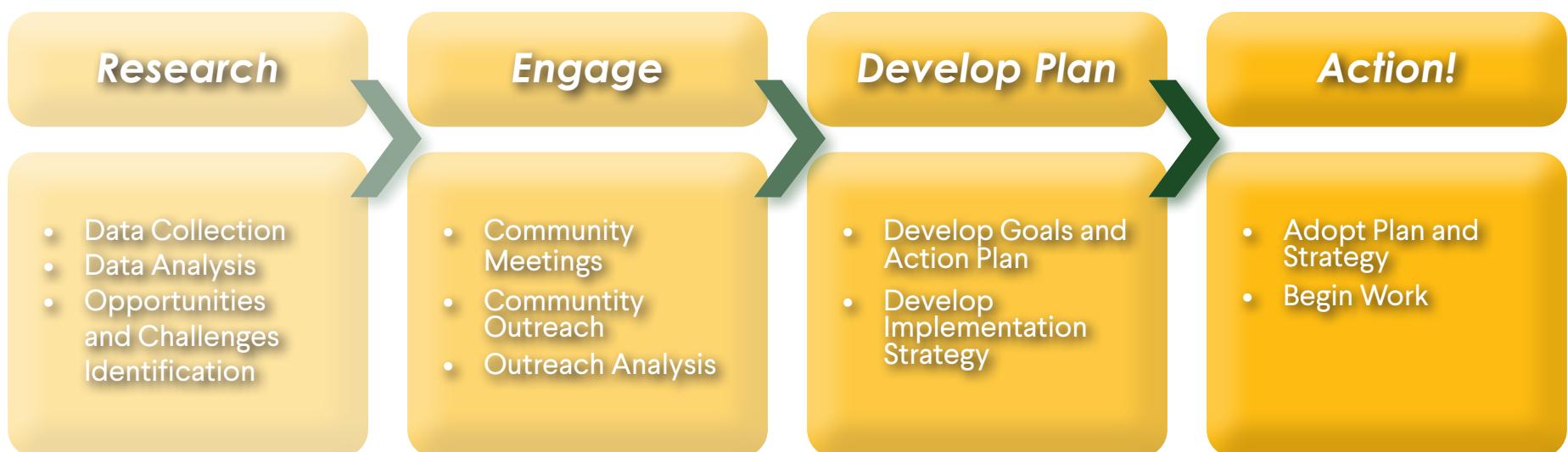
COMMUNITY FACTBOOK

Community Factbook is an analysis of the existing conditions and trends for the city of Argo, AL. It is the first step in a four pronged approach to create and implement a strategic master plan for the community. This report was compiled using research from sources such as the US Census, the American Community Survey, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and other recent state data. As an objective analysis, this report does not include any results of public input or stakeholder interviews... these findings will be collected and presented later in the strategic planning process. The following data in this report should be used to spark critical thinking and conversations about the future of Argo and to identify important topics for further exploration in the comprehensive planning process.



In 2021, the city of Argo initiated a strategic master planning process to develop a new comprehensive plan and draft a new zoning ordinance. Known as Argo ALIVE, this process draws upon statistical analysis, community and stakeholder vision, and strategic recommendations to generate an action plan that can be used by Argo to guide future development practices. The final product is a living document forged by and for the Argo community.

PLAN PROCESS



SUMMARY OF EXISTING TRENDS AND CONDITIONS

This report is structured as a categorical analysis of the current demographic context in which the Argo ALIVE planning process takes place and identifies opportunities and issues to address in the final plan. Data is divided into three classes: People, Prosperity, and Place. Below are the key findings for each class:

1. PEOPLE



(pg. 3)

Population and household characteristics and demographic trends.

Key Findings:

Growing Population...

City Population

4,368

Between 2000 and 2020, the population of Argo grew by 2,588 people, or 145%.

Young Population...

Median Age

34.3

Since 2000, the median age in Argo fell 1.2 years, defying state & national trends.

Diversifying Population...

Non White Residents

+ 3,220%

From 2000 to 2020, the non white population grew by 644 people.

2. PROSPERITY



(pg. 8)

Economy and employment, income, poverty, housing costs, and education.

Key Findings:

Decreasing Poverty...

Poverty Rate

7.5%

The poverty rate increased from 8.6% to 9.2% in the 2000s but fell to 7.5% by 2019.

Higher Incomes...

Median Household Income

\$73,550

Argo's median household income in 2019 was higher than the state's and nation's.

High Rental Cost Burden...

50%+ of Income for Rent

36.2%

4.9% of Argo's renters spend 30%-50% of income on rent while 36.2% spend 50%+.



3. PLACE



(pg. 14)

Development, land use and character, housing, transportation, and environment.

Key Findings:

Very Little Housing Diversity...

Single-Family Detached Homes

71.4%

There are not currently any multi-family housing options located in Argo.

Increasing Vacancy...

Housing Vacancy Rate

11.7%

In the 2000's, vacancy rose from 8.5% to 14.8%, then fell slightly to 11.7% by 2019.

Few Local Employment Options...

Local Jobs in Argo

398

As of 2018, Argo had just under 400 jobs, of which, 96% were held by out-of-towners.

1. PEOPLE

Argo is one of the fastest growing cities in the greater Birmingham area. The city's strongest growth in population occurred from 2000 to 2010. Growth in the city of Argo is likely to continue into the future. The city of Argo is young and getting younger, while also rapidly diversifying in race and ethnicity.

POPULATION

Argo's impressive population growth is slowing. In 2000, Argo was home to 1,780 people. As of 2020, its population was 4,368. From 2000 to 2010, the city grew by 2,291 people, or 128.7%. The following decade from 2010 to 2020 saw a much slower growth of 297 people, or 7.3%. Almost all other Birmingham area cities similarly grew slower in the 2010's than they did in the 2000's.

Argo is the fifth fastest growing city in the Birmingham metro. With a growth rate of 145% from 2000 to 2020, Argo was behind only the cities of Calera, Chelsea, Odenville, and Margaret in terms of population growth rate.

St. Clair is the second fastest growing county in the region. With an increase in population of 26,361 (or +40.7%) from 2000 to 2020, St. Clair County was second only to Shelby County for the population growth rate in the region. Strong growth in St. Clair County beyond the Argo city limits will place additional development pressures on Argo's infrastructure and services, increasing the need for a comprehensive plan to manage the city's future growth.

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Develop a strategy to sustain future growth through both economic development and quality of life improvement strategies.
2. Quantify the success of Argo's growth while ensuring city services continue to expand to match growth.

City Population

+ 145%

From 2000 to 2020, the population of the city of Argo grew by 2,588.

County Population

+ 40.7%

From 2000 to 2020, the population of St. Clair County grew by 26,361.

Region Population

+ 10.9%

From 2000 to 2020, the population of the 7-county area grew by 132,873.

Figure 1.1 - Regional City Populations, 2000-2020

	2000	2020	Percent Change	
Argo	1,780	4,368	145.4%	▲
Margaret	1,169	5,106	336.8%	▲
Trussville	12,924	26,123	102.1%	▲
Odenville	1,131	4,969	339.3%	▲
Moody	8,053	13,170	63.5%	▲
Springville	2,521	4,786	89.8%	▲
Clay	4,947	10,291	108%	▲
Leeds	10,455	12,324	17.9%	▲
Center Point	22,784	16,406	-28%	▼
Pinson	5,033	7,215	43.4%	▲
Birmingham	242,820	200,733	-17.3%	▼

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses, 2000 & 2020

Figure 1.2 - Regional County Populations, 2000-2020

	2000	2020	Percent Change	
St. Clair County	64,742	91,103	40.7%	▲
Calhoun County	112,249	116,441	3.7%	▲
Etowah County	103,459	103,436	-0.02%	▬
Blount County	51,024	59,134	15.9%	▲
Jefferson County	662,047	674,721	1.9%	▲
Shelby County	143,293	223,024	55.6%	▲
Talladega County	80,321	82,149	2.3%	▲

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses, 2000 & 2020

HOUSEHOLDS

Single-Parent households increasing quickly.

From 2000 to 2019, the total number of households in Argo grew at a rate of 103%. Households with a single-parent raising at least one child under 18 in the home was one of only two types of households to grow at a faster rate than total households and thereby increase as a share of total households. Single-parent households grew at a rate of 116.7% from 2000 to 2019.

Households growing in size.

Larger households were the other type of households that outpaced the growth rate in total households. All households under 4 people lagged the overall growth in households, while 4-person homes grew by 149.2%, 5-person homes grew by 200%, and 6-person homes grew by 185%. The higher growth rate among larger households contributed to the increase in average household size from 2000 to 2019, an increase 4 times larger than in the county and state.

Larger share of households on SNAP (food stamps).

As of 2019, there are 220 households in Argo receiving SNAP assistance, or 16.3% of all households. This share of households on SNAP is larger than the rate for the county (9.8%), state (14%), and nation (11.7%).

Opportunities and Challenges

- Understand how changes in households affects the changing housing market, and how that could impact potential zoning updates.**
- Secure affordable and healthy food access that may be needed due to large share of residents using SNAP and the increasing share of single-parent households.**

Total Households	Share of Households with Children Under 18	Average Household Size
+ 103%	38.7%	3.1 people

From 2000 to 2019, the number of households grew from 664 to 1,348.

In 2019, 522 households had underage children living at home, up from 282 in 2000.

The average home size in 2019 increased since 2000 when it was 2.7 people.

Defining a Household:

The following definitions related to households are used by both the US Census Bureau and Department of Housing and Urban Development. These definitions underly the terms "household" and "family" in the above statistics.

Household:

A person or group of people living together in one housing unit.

Housing Unit:

A house, apartment, mobile home, group of rooms, or single room, which are intended as separate living quarters.

Family Household:

A group of two or more people living together in a housing unit who are related by birth, marriage, adoption, etc.

Figure 1.3 - Household Types in Argo, 2000-2019

	2000	2019	Percent Change	
Total Households	664	1,348	103%	↑
Family	502	1,146	128.3%	↑
w/ Children < 18	282	522	85.1%	↑
Single-Parent	48	104	116.7%	↑
non-Family	162	202	24.7%	↑
1 person	142	202	42.3%	↑
2 person	198	398	101%	↑
3 person	144	280	94.4%	↑
4 person	118	294	149.2%	↑
5 person	39	117	200%	↑
6 person	20	57	185%	↑
7+ person	3	0	- 100%	↓

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & American Communities Survey (5-year est. 2015-2019)

AGE

The population is young and getting younger.

At 34.3, the city's median age is 6 years younger than the county, about 5 years younger than the state, and about 4 years younger than the nation. The median age in Argo increased to 36.7 between 2000 and 2010 before falling by 2.4 years to its 2019 level, defying county, state, and national trends of an increase in median age. Currently, about 1 in 3 residents is under the age of 25.

Youths decreasing as share of total population while seniors increasing in share.

In 2000, the 18 and younger population in Argo numbered 498, growing to 1,041 by 2019 for a growth rate of 109%. In 2000, there were 153 people 65 and older in Argo, growing to 428 by 2019 for a growth rate of 180%. Although the youth share of the population is over twice as large as the senior share, compared to the overall population growth rate of 145%, the youth growth rate lagged total growth while the senior growth rate exceeded total growth. Despite the decrease in Argo's median age over the past decade, if the youth and senior growth rates hold steady over the coming decade, then the city's trend of getting younger has the potential to be reversed.

Opportunities and Challenges

- 1. Prepare strategies for a community that better provides for the needs of a younger population while preparing for potential aging in the future.**
- 2. Develop a strategy to grow and retain the youth population by bolstering employment opportunities, varied housing options, and quality of life initiatives.**

Median Age

34.3

The median age in Argo is considerably lower than the county, state, and nation.

Households with Retirement Income

8.7%

The share of households with retirement income fell by 5 percentage points since 2000.

Senior Population

10.1%

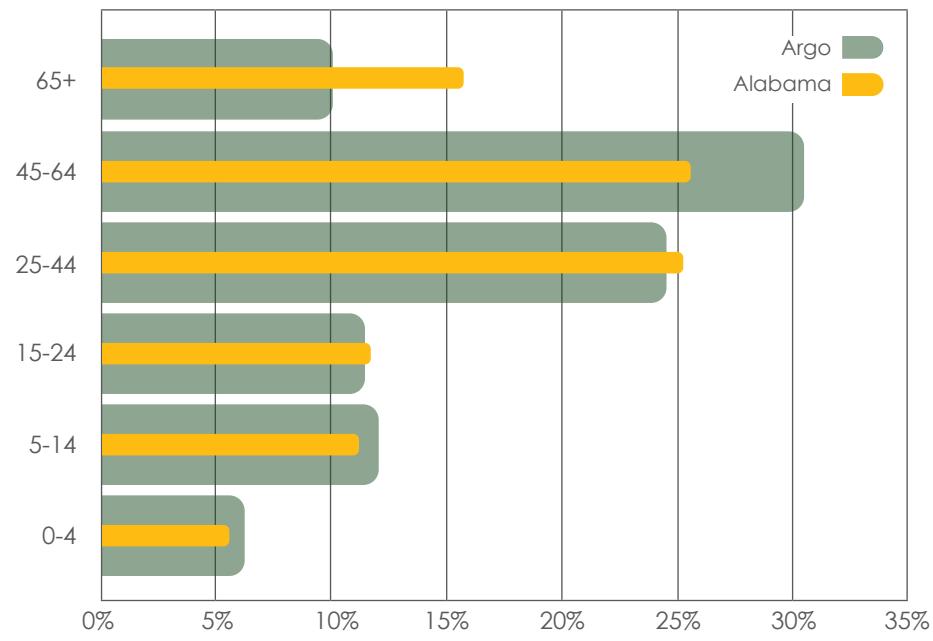
The share of the population 65 and older increased from 2000 to 2019.

Youth Population

24.7%

The share of the population younger than 18 decreased from 2000 to 2019.

Figure 1.4 - Age Groups, City & State in 2019



Source: American Communities Survey (5-year estimates, 2015-2019)

DIVERSITY

Rapid growth in the non white population.

Argo experienced significant growth in its non White population from 2000 to 2020. During this timeframe, the non white population increased by 3,220%. Black residents had the highest growth rate (at 15,850%), followed by Multiracial (at 4,000%), Asian (at 1,800%), Other (at 1,400%), and Hispanic (at 967%). As a share of the total population, Black residents grew the most, followed by Multiracial residents, then Hispanic residents, and then Asian residents. While the state similarly had much higher growth rates in the non White population over the same period, the state's share of Black people actually declined slightly and Hispanic people had the largest increase in the statewide share of population.

Declining share of the population that is white.

While the White population of Argo more than doubled between 2000 and 2010, there was a net loss of 111 White residents from 2010 to 2020. White residents declined from 99% of Argo's population in 2000, to 94% in 2010, to 85% of the local population in 2020. The rate of decline in Argo's White population from 2010 to 2020 was 3 times larger than statewide and the decline in share of population was 2 times larger than the state.

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Manage the planning process and align goals and outcomes in an equitable manner that is inclusive of the city's quickly diversifying population groups and addresses the unique needs of each group.

**Change in Share of White Population
- 14.2% pts.**

White residents are the only racial group that is declining as a share of the total population.

**Growth Rate of Non White Population
3,220%**

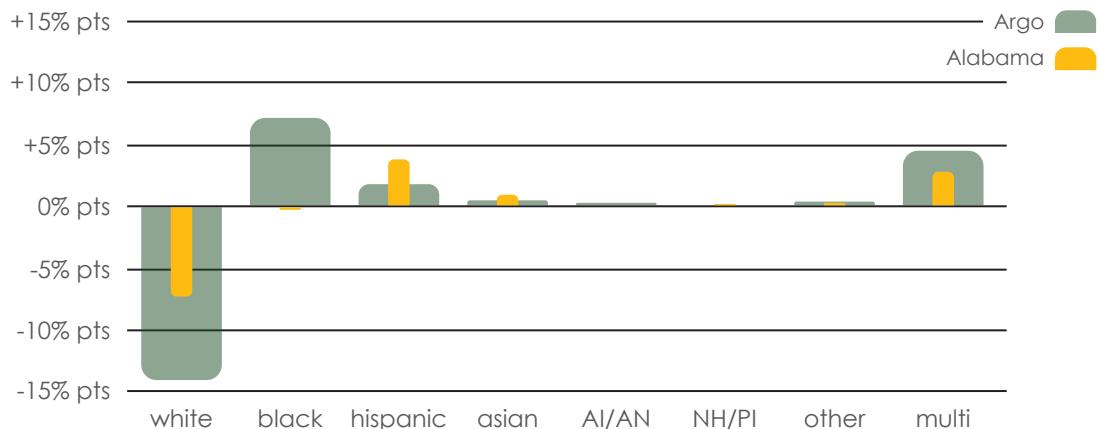
The non-white population increased from 20 to 664 between 2000 and 2020.

Figure 1.5 - Race & Ethnicity in Argo Ranked by Growth Rate, 2000-2020

	2000	2020	Growth Rate	
Black	2	319	15,850%	↑
Multiracial	5	205	4,000%	↑
Asian	0	17	1,800%	↑
Other	0	13	1,400%	↑
Hispanic (any race)	9	96	966.7%	↑
Am. Ind./ AK Native	2	13	550%	↑
White	1,771	3,704	109.1%	↑
HI Native/ Pac. Isl.	0	0	0%	↑

Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses, 2000 & 2020

Figure 1.6 - Change in Share of Population among Racial Groups, 2000-2020



Source: U.S. Decennial Censuses, 2000 & 2020

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Relatively good health outcomes in the county.

Among Alabama counties, St. Clair County ranks 11 of 67 in overall health outcomes according to a nationwide analysis by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Based on the study, St. Clair County has fewer alcohol related driving deaths and less homicide/ violent crime than the state averages. However, the county has less access to exercise opportunities, more suicides, twice as many drug overdose deaths, and more preventable hospital stays than the state averages. Similar to the state, the leading causes of death in the county are cardiovascular disease and cancer, both of which have been linked to obesity. Roughly 2 in 5 residents of St. Clair County are obese.

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Develop proactive health policies around existing and emerging health challenges.
2. Better understand the impact of the built environment on community health outcomes.

Health Factors Ranking

18 of 67

On health factors (behavior, clinical care, socioeconomics, & environment)
St. Clair ranked top 27% of the state.

Health Outcomes Ranking

11 of 67

On health outcomes (length & quality of life) St. Clair ranked top 16% of the state.

Food Insecurity

12%

Roughly 1 in 8 people in St. Clair County do not have adequate access to food.

Access to Exercise Opportunities

42%

Access to nearby locations for exercise is 19 percentage points lower than the state average.

Drug Overdose Deaths

32 per 100,000

The rate of drug OD deaths is twice as high in St. Clair County than in Alabama.

Uninsured

10%

Among people under 65, 1 in 10 people in St. Clair County have no health insurance.

2. PROSPERITY

The local workforce in Argo expanded modestly between 2000 and 2020. Among workers who live in Argo, health care/ social assistance and retail trade are the primary employers. Among those working in Argo, accommodation/ food services and construction are the primary employers in town. Most jobs in Argo are held by people living outside the city. Argo has a high median household income level and poverty is lower than the county, state, and nation.

EMPLOYMENT

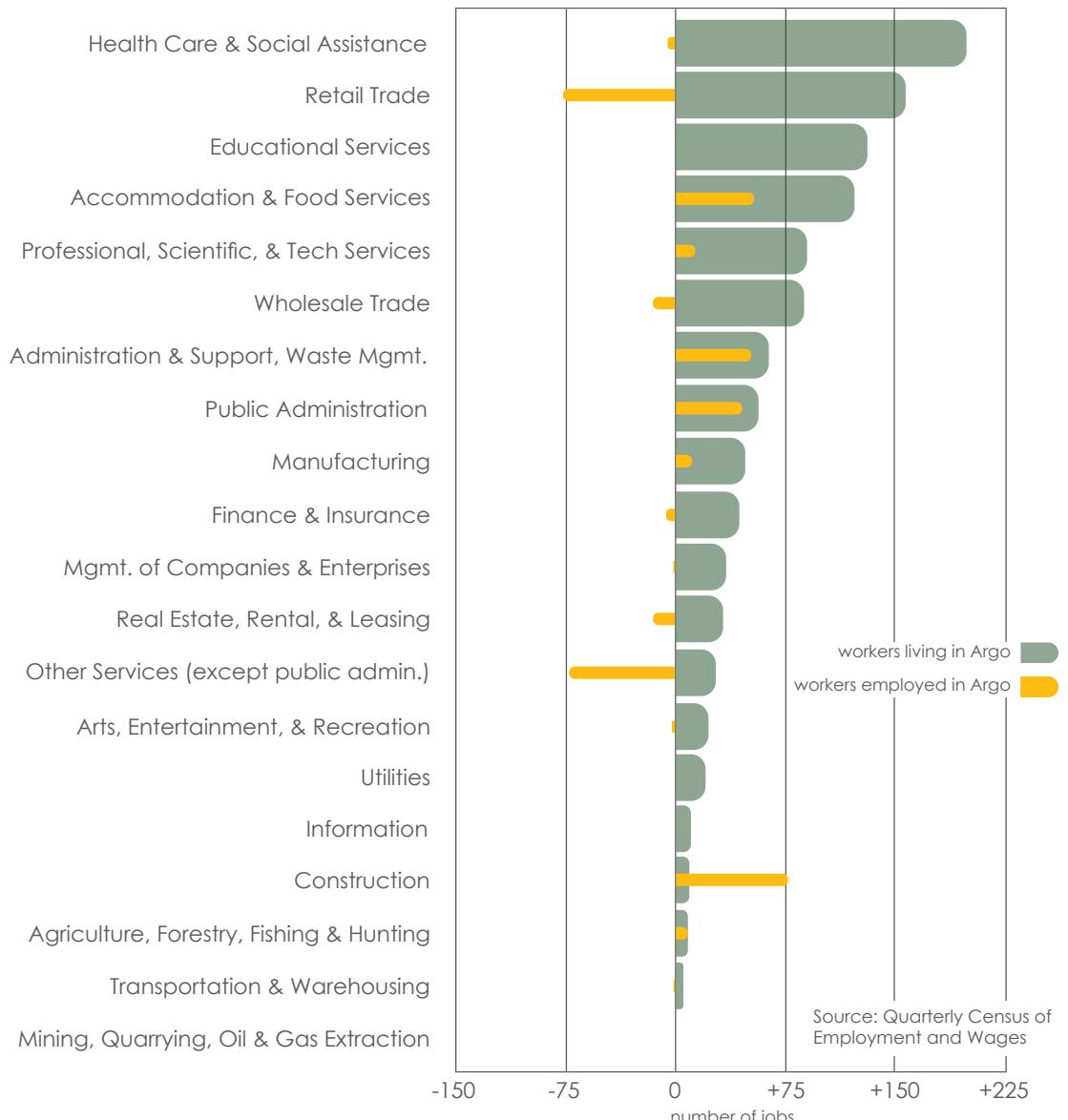
Local jobs increased during the 2000s and decreased in the 2010s. From 2000 to 2010, the number of jobs in Argo increased by 90 and then decreased by 12 from 2010 to 2019. As of 2019, 381 of 398 jobs in town are held by out of town residents, leaving limited local employment opportunities for Argo residents. Most of Argo's employed residents work out of town, a plurality (28%) in Birmingham.

Important trends in major industries. In 2019, Construction employed the greatest number of people working in Argo, and it added the most local jobs from 2000 to 2019. Accommodation and Food Services employed the second largest number of local workers as of 2019. The fastest growing sector for workers in Argo from 2000 to 2019 was Administration & Support/ Waste Management (725%).

In 2019, Health Care/ Social Assistance employed the most Argo residents. It also added the most employees from Argo between 2000 and 2019. Retail Trade employed the second largest number of Argo residents. The fastest growing sectors among residents between 2000 and 2019 were Accommodation & Food Services (555%) and Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing (542%).

Local industry specializations. Compared to the county and state in 2019, Workers from Argo had industry specializations in the Information sector and the Real Estate, Rental, & Leasing sector. For jobs in Argo, the town had specializations in Construction and Agricultural jobs.

Figure 2.1 - Change in Employment by Industry Sector for Argo Residents, 2000-2019



OCCUPATIONS

Professional services and Transportation are the top occupations for Argo residents. Professional services is the most common occupation among Argo residents and also had the largest numeric increase from 2000 to 2019. It grew by 379% (+439 jobs) from 2000 to 2019. Transportation is the second largest occupation in Argo. It grew by 418% (+290 jobs) from 2000 to 2019.

Personal Care/ Services is the fastest growing occupation.

The number of personal care employees from Argo had the highest growth rate from 2000 to 2019 at 985% (+92 jobs).

WORKFORCE

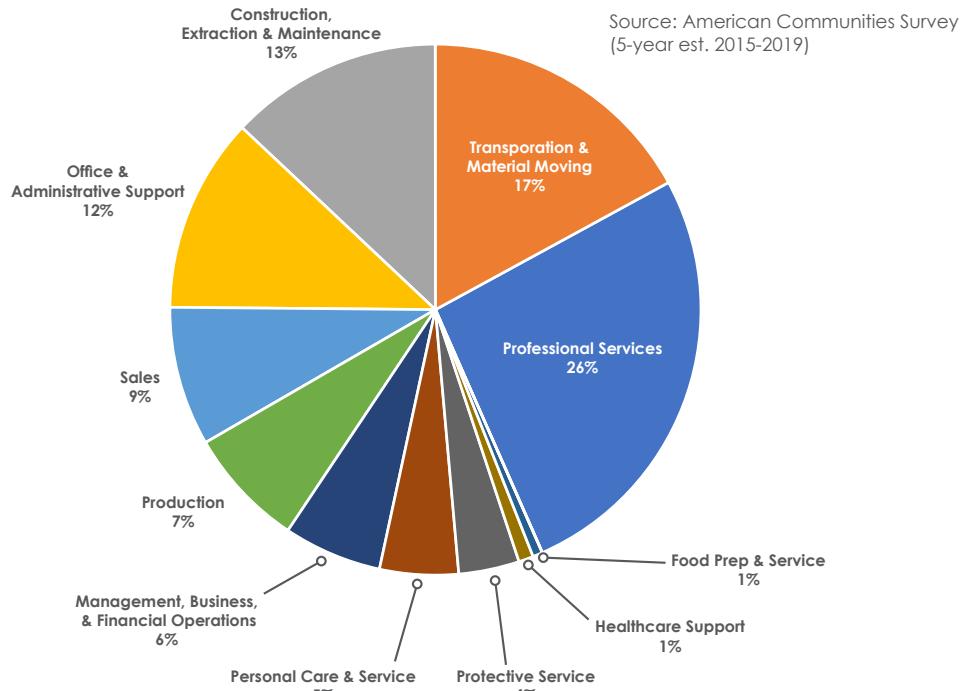
Decreasing unemployment along with state trends.

Unemployment is only a measure of those without a job who are actively looking for work and does not include discouraged job seekers. The unemployment rate in Argo increased sharply during the 2008 recession and peaked in Aug. 2009 at 12.2%. During the economic recovery of the 2010's, the unemployment rate for Argo fell steadily along with county, state, and national trends. However, the unemployment rate increased sharply again in 2020 due to the economic stress factors of the COVID-19 pandemic, peaking at 12.6% in Apr. 2020. This recovery has been much quicker, however, and local unemployment in Jun. 2021 was 3.9%, compared to 3.7% in the state and 5.9% in the U.S.

Opportunities and Challenges

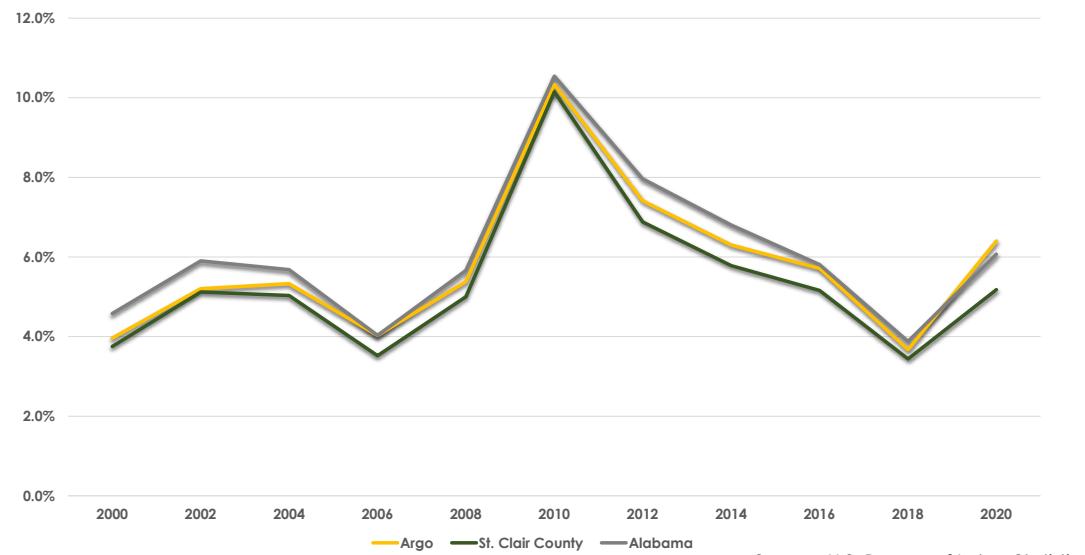
1. Consider partnering with universities and community colleges to target the needs of employers and potential job markets.
2. Capitalize on industry specializations and growing employment sectors to maximize the local job market and grow the number of jobs and businesses in town.

Figure 2.2 - Employment by Occupation among Argo Residents, 2019



Source: American Communities Survey
(5-year est. 2015-2019)

Figure 2.3 - Annual Unemployment Average, 2000-2020



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

TRAVEL PATTERNS

Most residents travel outside of Argo for work.

In 2019, there were 2,000 Argo residents who were actively employed in the civilian workforce. Of those 2,000 employees, only 17 people (0.9%) both lived and worked in the Argo city limits, with the remaining 1,983 employees commuting outside the city for work. In 2019, 381 people a day commuted into Argo from elsewhere for work, meaning that only 4.3% of the 398 jobs in Argo were held by Argo residents.

Argo residents having to commute farther for work.

While the share of residents commuting less than 10 miles each way to work stayed about the same from 2000 to 2019 and the share traveling between 10 and 24 miles fell, the share of Argo residents commuting 25 to 49 miles and those commuting 50+ miles both increased. The average commute time for residents in 2019 was 29 minutes and roughly 1 in 6 residents commuted more than 45 minutes each way to work.

Figure 2.4 - Labor Force Origin Destination, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, On the Map, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2019

Figure 2.5 - Where Argo Residents are Employed, 2000-2019

	2000	2019
Argo	2.4%	0.9%
Birmingham	33.8%	27.5%
Trussville	7.0%	6.6%
Hoover	3.2%	4.5%
Homewood	5.1%	4.1%
Moody	1.6%	3.9%
Some other place	46.9%	52.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
On the Map, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2019

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Align planning goals to increase the number of employment opportunities in Argo and target new commuters coming into the city.
2. Better understand municipal economic development strategies specific to "Bedroom Communities."

Figure 2.6 - Distance to Work for Argo Residents, 2000-2019

	2000	2019
less than 10 mi.	17.6%	18.4%
10 mi. - 24 mi.	57.5%	49.8%
25 mi. - 49 mi.	16.5%	19.6%
50+ mi.	8.4%	12.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau,
On the Map, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics, 2019

PERSONAL PROSPERITY

Median income increased quickly from 2010 - 2019.

In 2000, the median household income in Argo was \$64,157, which was 20.6% higher than the statewide rate. Argo's median income remained stagnant from 2000 to 2010, despite a decrease in the statewide median. Median income rose sharply in Argo from 2010 to 2019, despite stagnant income levels at the county and state level.

Racial disparities in average poverty rates.

When averaging annual poverty rates for each year from 2010 to 2019, Asians had a decade average of 0% poverty, Whites had 7% poverty, Blacks had 39% poverty, Hispanics had 56% poverty, and Multiracial people had 76% poverty. For comparison, the decade poverty average for all residents was 9%.

Fluctuations in youth and senior poverty rates.

The youth poverty rate steadily declined from a high of 14% in 2010 to 0% by 2017 before increasing in 2018 and 2019 to 6%. The senior poverty rate was low at 3% in 2010 and fell to 0% in 2011 and 2012. Senior poverty then spiked to a high of 23% in 2013 then steadily fell to 9% in 2016 before spiking again to 22% in 2017, again declining steadily to 15% in 2019. In the most recent years with data available, youth poverty is rising and senior poverty is on the decline.

Poverty Rate Calculations

The poverty rate refers to the percentage of the population whose household income falls below the nationally-calculated poverty thresholds. If a household's total (pre-tax) income is less than the corresponding threshold, all members of that family are considered to be in poverty. Thresholds are determined according to family size: for example, the threshold income for a family of four (with two children) in 2020 was \$26,200. The threshold for a single person under the age of 65 was \$12,760. (Source: U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services)

Median Household Income

\$73,550

Argo's median income is higher than the county (\$59k) and state (\$51k).

Poverty Rate

7.5%

As of 2019, roughly 1 in 13 Argo residents lives below the federal poverty line.

Extremely Low Income Households

17%

Roughly 1 in 6 households earns less than 30% of area median income (< \$22,000).

Figure 2.7 - Poverty Rates, 2010-2019

	2010	2019	Change	
Argo	9.2%	7.5%	-1.7% pts.	⬇️
St. Clair County	10.6%	12.2%	1.6% pts.	⬆️
Alabama	17.2%	16.7%	-0.5% pts.	⬇️
< 18 yrs	14.3%	6.0%	-8.3% pts.	⬇️
18-64 yrs	8.3%	6.9%	-1.4% pts.	⬇️
65+ yrs	2.8%	14.5%	11.7% pts.	⬆️
white	8.4%	4.9%	-3.5% pts.	⬇️
black	?	0.0%	?	?
hispanic	54.3%	63.3%	0% pts.	▬
asian	0.0%	0.0%	0% pts.	▬
multi-racial	?	?	?	?

Source: American Communities Survey (5-year est., 2006-2010 & 2015-2019)

Figure 2.8 - Income Distribution in Argo, 2000-2019



Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000 & American Communities Survey (5-year est. 2015-2019)

Median rental costs rose fast then suddenly declined.

From 2010 to 2016, median rent was increasing 4 times faster than median owner costs. Then in 2017, median rent suddenly fell to less than half of what it was the year prior in 2016. This was likely caused by the steady decrease in mobile homes as a share of rental units from 78% in 2010 to 33% in 2016 and the sudden jump in mobile homes back to 67% of rental units in 2017. From 2017 to 2019 median rent held steady around \$500 while the share of mobile homes remained elevated compared to 2016 levels. Median rent averaged about \$750 for the entire decade.

Higher cost burden among renters than homeowners.

41% of renters in Argo pay 30% or more of their monthly income in rent, while only 17% of homeowners pay 30% or more of their income to housing. The disparity is even greater for extreme cost-burdens, with 36% of renters paying 50% or more of their monthly income for housing and only 3% of homeowners spending 50% or more of their income on housing.

Homeownership is high and housing vacancy is declining.

Argo had a homeownership rate of 85% in 2019, compared to 80% in St. Clair County and 69% in Alabama. From 2000 to 2010, the housing vacancy rate nearly doubled from 8% to 15%. From 2010 to 2019, the vacancy rate in Argo fell to 12%.

Homeownership Rate

85.3%

Ownership rose from 85.5% in 2000 to 87.6% in 2010 then fell to 85.3% in 2019.

Median Rent

~\$500

Rent in 2019 was low, likely due to growth in share of mobile homes as rentals.

Median Gross Ownership Cost

\$1,058

Median monthly owner cost in 2019 grew by \$178, or 20.2% since 2010 when it was \$880.

Rent as % of Household Income

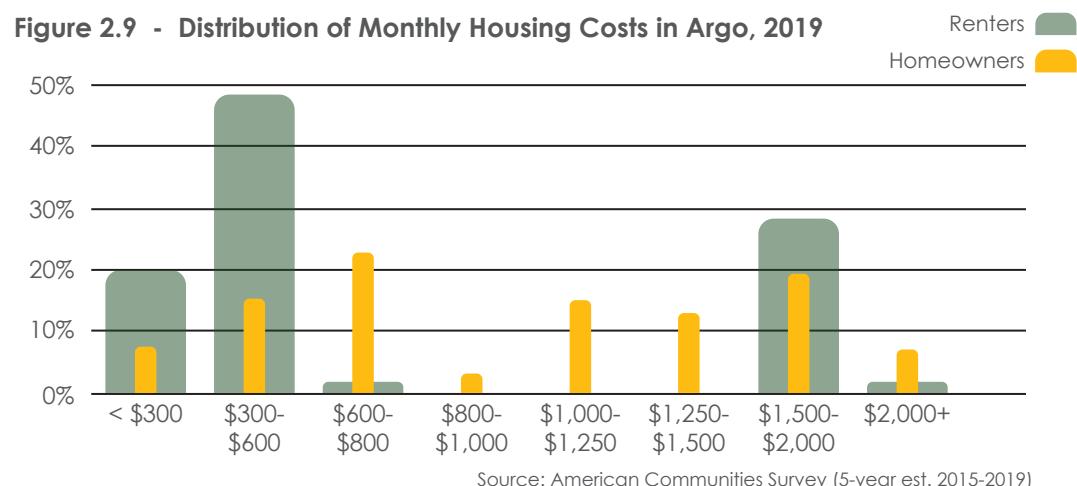
19.2%

On median, renters in Argo spent about a fifth of their income on housing costs.

Owner Costs as % of Household Income

13.5%

On median, homeowners spent about a seventh of their income on housing.

Figure 2.9 - Distribution of Monthly Housing Costs in Argo, 2019

Source: American Communities Survey (5-year est. 2015-2019)

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Target lower personal prosperity outcomes with quality education, job training, and local employment opportunities.

EDUCATION

Fewer people with less than a high school education and more people with a graduate/ professional degree.

In 2000, about 28% of Argo residents 25 and older had less than a high school education. By 2019, that proportion had dropped to 11.5%. Approximately 11% of Argo residents had a higher education degree in 2000, but by 2019 the ratio had increased to just under 17%. This mirrors state trends for better educational attainment over the same period.

Roughly 3 in 5 Springville High students are proficient in reading, math, and science.

For the 2018 to 2019 school year at Springville High, 58% of students were reading proficient compared to 45% in the state. 59% were math proficient compared to 47% in the state. 64% were science proficient compared to 39% in the state. Springville High students outperform students statewide on all levels of proficiency as well as college and career readiness.

Opportunities and Challenges

- Maintain high academic standards and outcomes in area public schools.**
- Partner with continuing education and workforce development entities.**

High School Report Card

B (88)

For the 2018-2019 school year, Springville High School was rated 88/100.

K-12 Public School Enrollment

697

In 2019, 697 Argo children were enrolled in public school for K-12.

College/ Career Readiness

85%

5 of 6 Springville High School graduates were prepared for college/ work in 2019.

Figure 2.10 - Educational Attainment in Argo, 2019

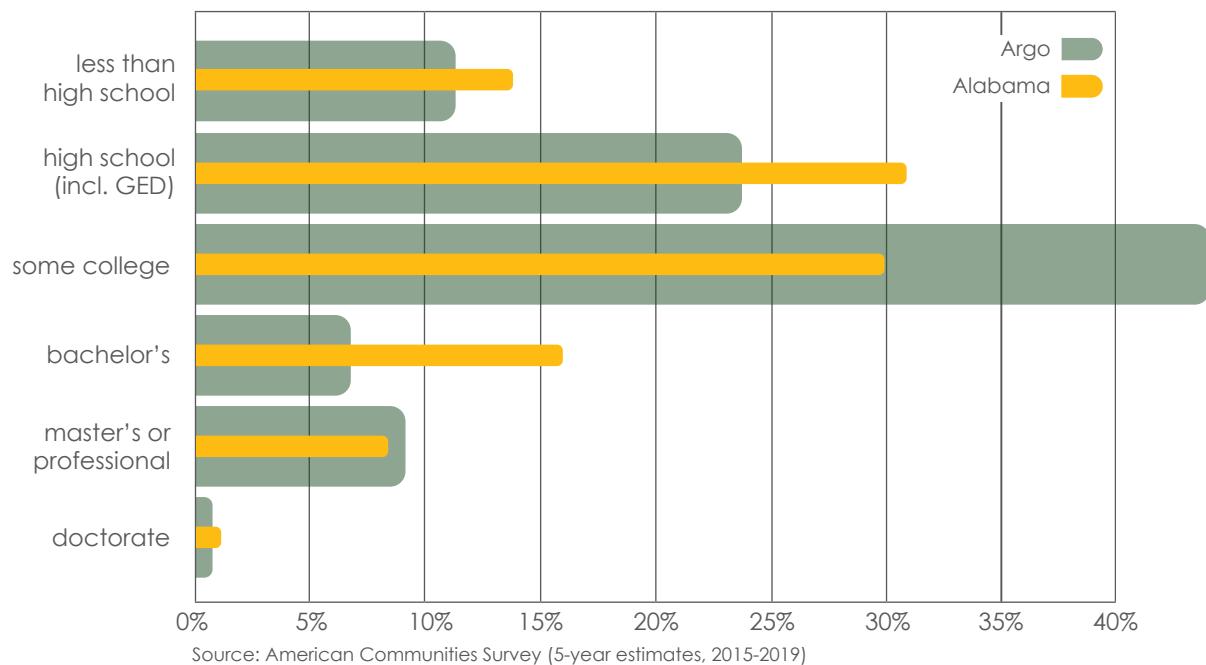


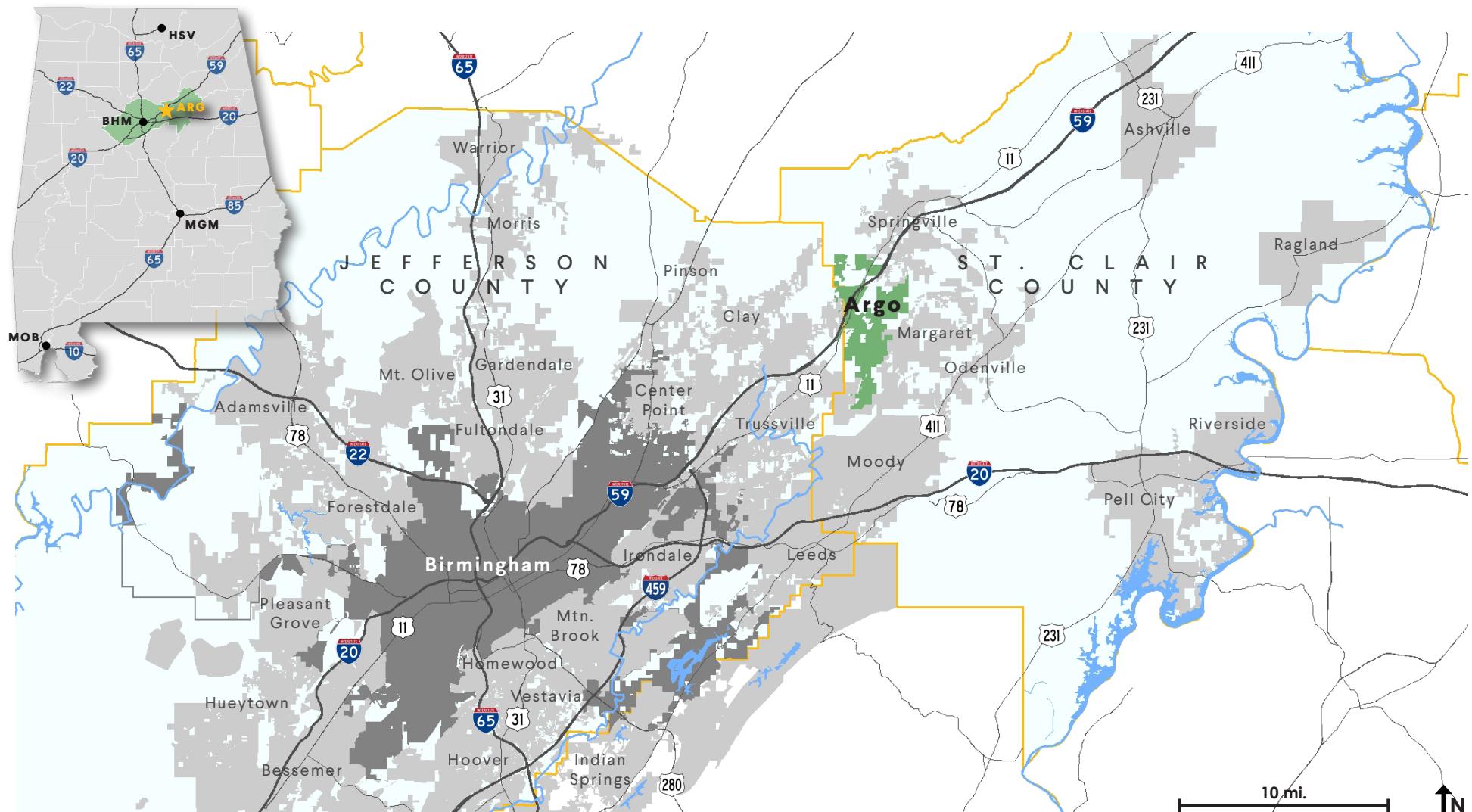
Figure 2.11 - Academic Year 2018-2019 Statistics

Source: Alabama State Department of Education

	Grade	Enrollment	Economically Disadvantaged	Reading Proficiency	Math Proficiency	Science Proficiency	Graduation Rate	College/ Career Readiness
Alabama Schools	B (84)	740,118	53%	45%	47%	39%	90%	75%
St. Clair C. Schools	B (87)	9,528	46%	52%	55%	46%	90%	79%
Margaret Elem.	B (85)	670	43%	50%	55%	44%	-	-
Springville Elem.	A (97)	973	26%	70%	73%	65%	-	-
Springville Middle	A (93)	593	26%	59%	65%	53%	-	-
Springville High	B (88)	704	23%	58%	59%	64%	93%	85%

3. PLACE

Argo is a small city of 10.8 square miles. Part of the Appalachian Valley and Ridge region of Alabama, it straddles Blackjack Ridge on the western edge of St. Clair County, between Owens Mountain to the east, Red Mountain to the west, and Cahaba Mountain to the north. Argo is a suburban bedroom community on the outskirts of the Birmingham urban area, roughly a 30 minute drive northeast of downtown along the I-59 corridor. With no identifiable town center, there is minimal diversity in the city's built environment, which is dominated by rural and suburban areas with a single commercial strip on Highway 11. Argo's housing is very homogeneous, with few offerings apart from single-family detached and mobile homes. With limited dining and entertainment options in town, the natural landscape could become the city's primary source of recreation.



DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER

Development charter goes beyond standard parcel-by-parcel land use classification and describes the look, feel, and function of a district overall. As an example, a downtown may be home to various land uses, but the integration and interaction of these uses help to create the unique character of the district.

From the city's central commercial strip to its outer periphery, Argo's 11 sq miles include a variety of uses and densities. The following is an initial breakdown of the development types in Argo today. Understanding the current forms of development throughout the city is important, and it is also important to understand the character types that do not currently exist. Argo currently lacks any traditional downtown core, relying instead on a few sparsely developed commercial strips scattered along Hwy 11 for its commercial activity. The city also has no traditional neighborhood developments that would typically be found along the outskirts of a city's downtown area. The most prominent development pattern is traditional suburban where houses are more spaced out and rely on vehicular access with little pedestrian infrastructure to be found. The density decreases further as development patterns give way to rural land used for agriculture where homes can be thousands of feet apart and highly isolated from the city. There is ample untouched tree cover left in the city, yet park offerings are limited to a small playground and walking trail located behind the city's municipal building.

Commercial



Traditional Suburban



Opportunities and Challenges

1. Consider the potential of establishing a town center type development.

Development History

Originally inhabited by Muscogee (Creek) Native Americans for thousands of years, the land on which Argo now sits was ceded to the United States in 1814. The earliest European descended settlers originally came to the area from South Carolina in the early 1800's using a Native American trail that became known as the Georgia Road. Settlers coming from the Carolinas crossed northern Georgia and the Cherokee Nation to get to the Alabama Territory by taking the Georgia Road through what would eventually become Gadsden, Ashville, Springville, and Argo. Norfolk-Southern brought the railroad line to the Argo area in 1871, providing freight and passenger service from the newly founded city of Birmingham to Chattanooga. In the late 1920's and early 1930's, the Georgia Road was straightened and placed along the west side of the railroad, becoming part of the new U.S. Highway 11, which ran from New Orleans to the Canadian border at its junction with New York and Vermont. Federal interstate highway construction brought about the opening of I-59 in 1960, connecting New Orleans to Chattanooga through Birmingham and Argo. Argo's development has centered around the transportation corridors of the railroad, Highway 11, and I-59. All brought new life to the town but also split Argo's built environment, which is further divided by St. Clair and Jefferson Counties.

Rural/ Agricultural



Natural/ Tree Cover



DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER MAP

Water



Commercial



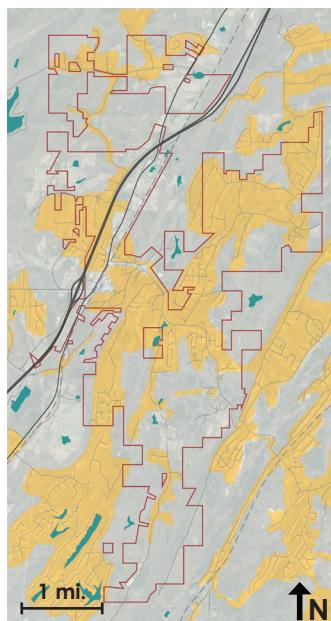
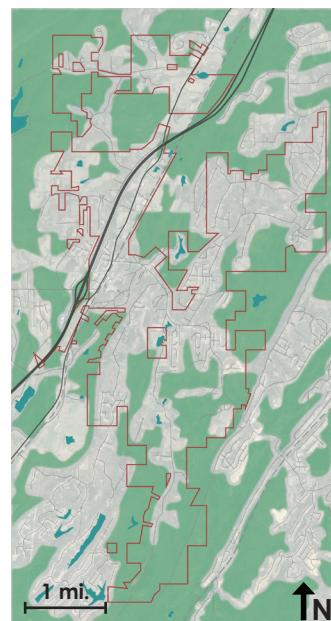
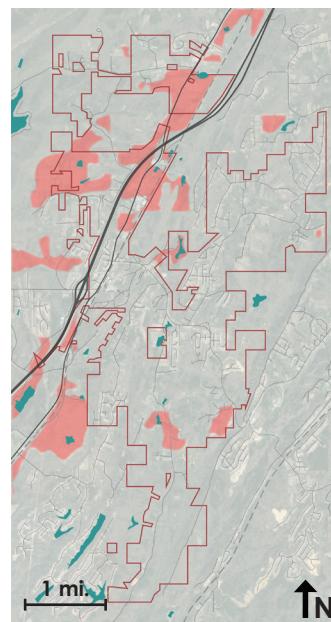
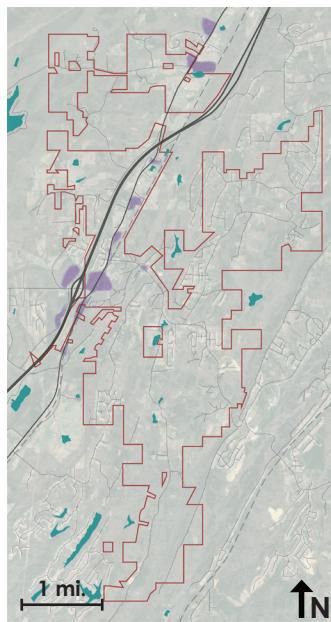
Traditional Suburban



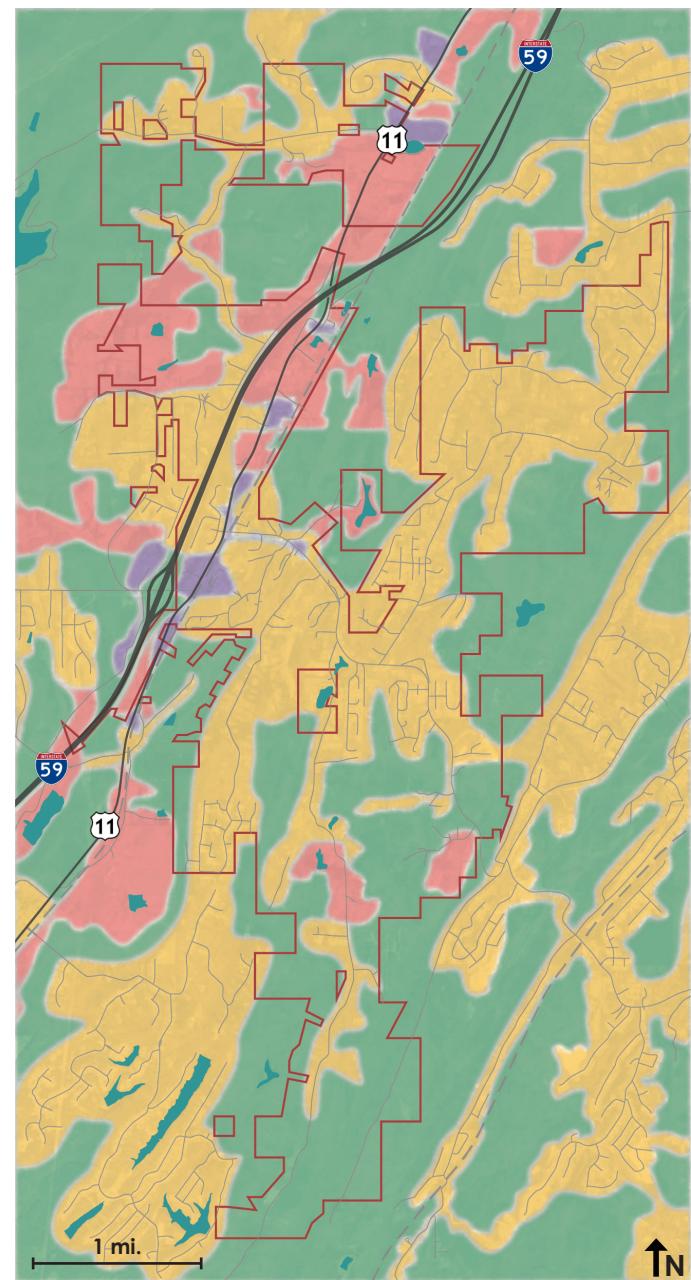
Rural/ Agricultural



Natural/ Tree Cover



Composite



HOUSING STOCK

Rapid housing development since 2000.

Between 2000 and 2019, the city of Argo added 801 new housing units, a growth of 110%. This was a much faster rate than St. Clair County where there was 35% growth and Alabama where there was 15% growth. Housing development was much stronger from 2000 to 2010 than from 2010 to 2019 (similar to population growth trends).

No multi-family housing options.

In 2000, Argo had about 5 multi-family housing units: 1 duplex and 1 triplex. By 2019, all multi-family housing was gone from Argo, leaving a current housing stock that is exclusively single-family. 5 of 7 units are detached single-family, 1 of 4 units is a mobile home, and 1 of 50 units are attached single-family.

Increasing vacancy during 2000's, decrease during 2010's.

The percentage of vacant housing units increased substantially from 8% in 2000 to 15% in 2010. However, the vacancy rate fell slightly from 2010 to 2019, when there were 179 vacant units (12%).

Newer housing stock than the county and state.

The median year of home construction in Argo is 2001. This makes the median home in Argo a decade newer than the median home in St. Clair County and two decades newer than the median home in Alabama. Nearly 3 in 5 Argo homes were built since 2000 while only 1 in 5 homes statewide were built since 2000.

Opportunities and Challenges

1. Lack of housing variety could prove to be a barrier to future population growth and economic development.

Growth in the Housing Stock

+ 801

From 2000 to 2019, Argo's housing stock more than doubled, for a total increase of 110.3%.

Vacant Housing Units

11.7%

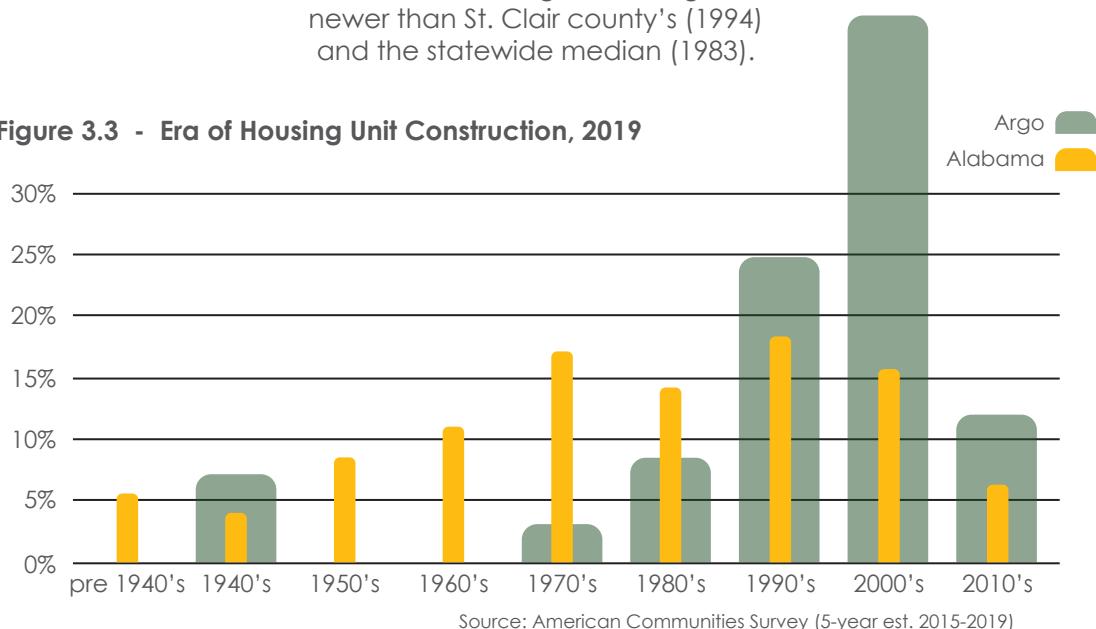
More than 1 in 10 housing units in 2019 were vacant, up from 8.5% in 2000.

Median Year Housing Built

2001

On median, Argo's housing is newer than St. Clair county's (1994) and the statewide median (1983).

Figure 3.3 - Era of Housing Unit Construction, 2019



Source: American Communities Survey (5-year est. 2015-2019)

Figure 3.4 - Types of Housing in Argo, 2019



Source: American Communities Survey (5-year est. 2015-2019)

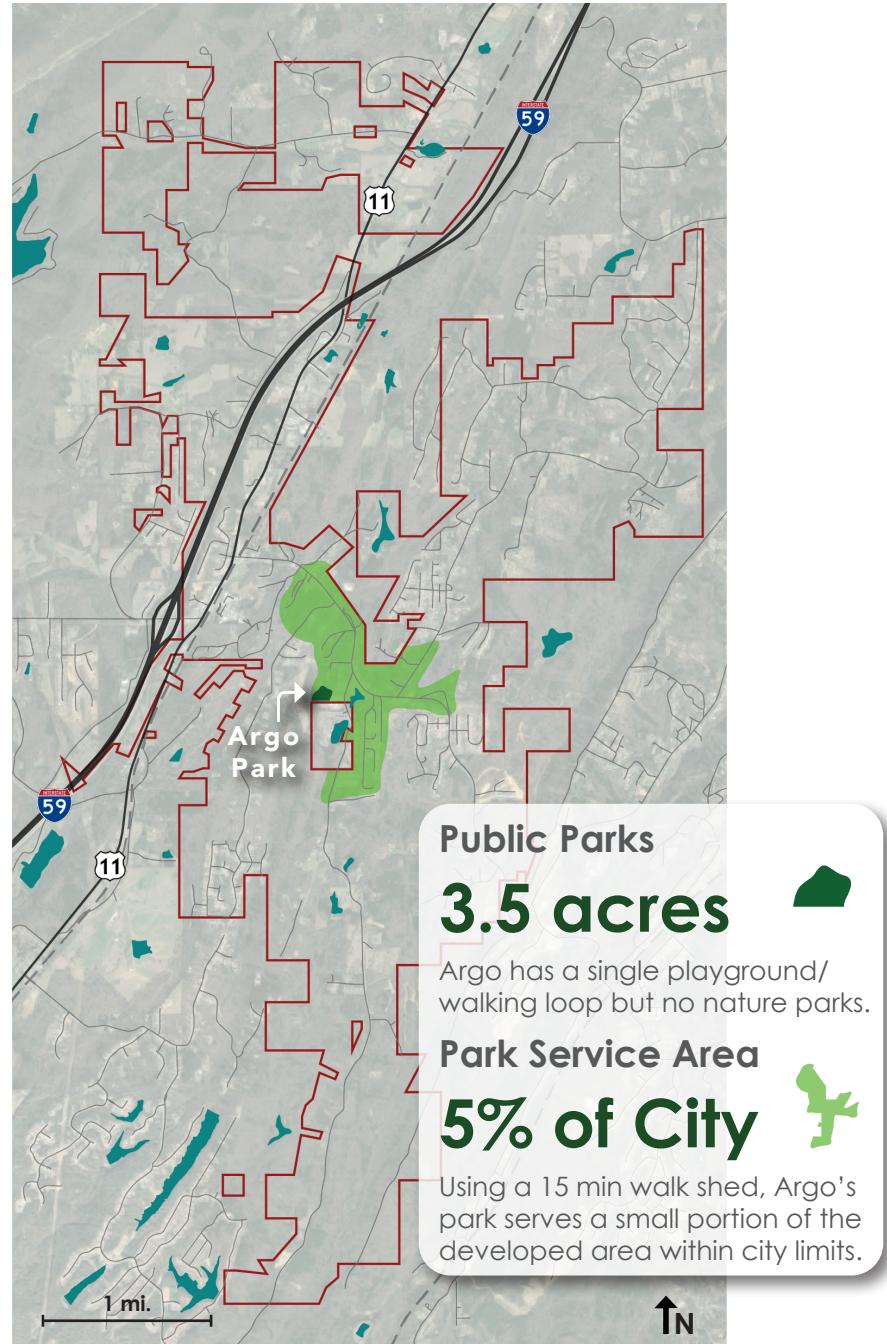
PARKS AND RECREATION

Argo's park system is comprised of a single site behind city hall with limited amenities, including a playground structure, a swingset, a covered pavilion, and a 1,750 foot long walking path (3 loops = 1 mile). This 3.5 acre site is isolated behind the municipal building and lacks meaningful connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and other significant areas of the city. Argo Park is roughly a 30 minute walk from the city's commercial corridor along a highly trafficked road with no sidewalks or bike lanes, limiting its overall accessibility to visitors and patrons of local businesses. Using a 15 minute (3/4 mile) walk shed (the max distance most people will walk instead of driving), about 5% of the city has easy access to parks.



Opportunities and Challenges

1. Preserve and update the existing park space and expand recreational opportunities currently offered in the city.
2. Develop new parks centered around natural landscapes and connect key parks and areas of the city with sidewalks and bike lanes along key roadways as well as strategic off-road trails.



MOBILITY

Primary thoroughfares experiencing increased traffic.

From 2015 to 2020, the main thoroughfares through Argo (I-59, Hwy 11, and Argo Margaret Road) have all had an increase in the number of Average Daily Vehicles (ADV). In just 5 years, the ADV driving through Argo on I-59 at the county line increased by roughly 2,400 - a 9% increase. The ADV for Highway 11 through "downtown" Argo increased by roughly 600 in 5 years - a 5% increase, while the figure for Highway 11 by Angus Road grew by roughly 1,100 - an astounding 25% increase. ADV for Argo Margaret Road increased by roughly 800 in 5 years - a 9% increase.

Lack of pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

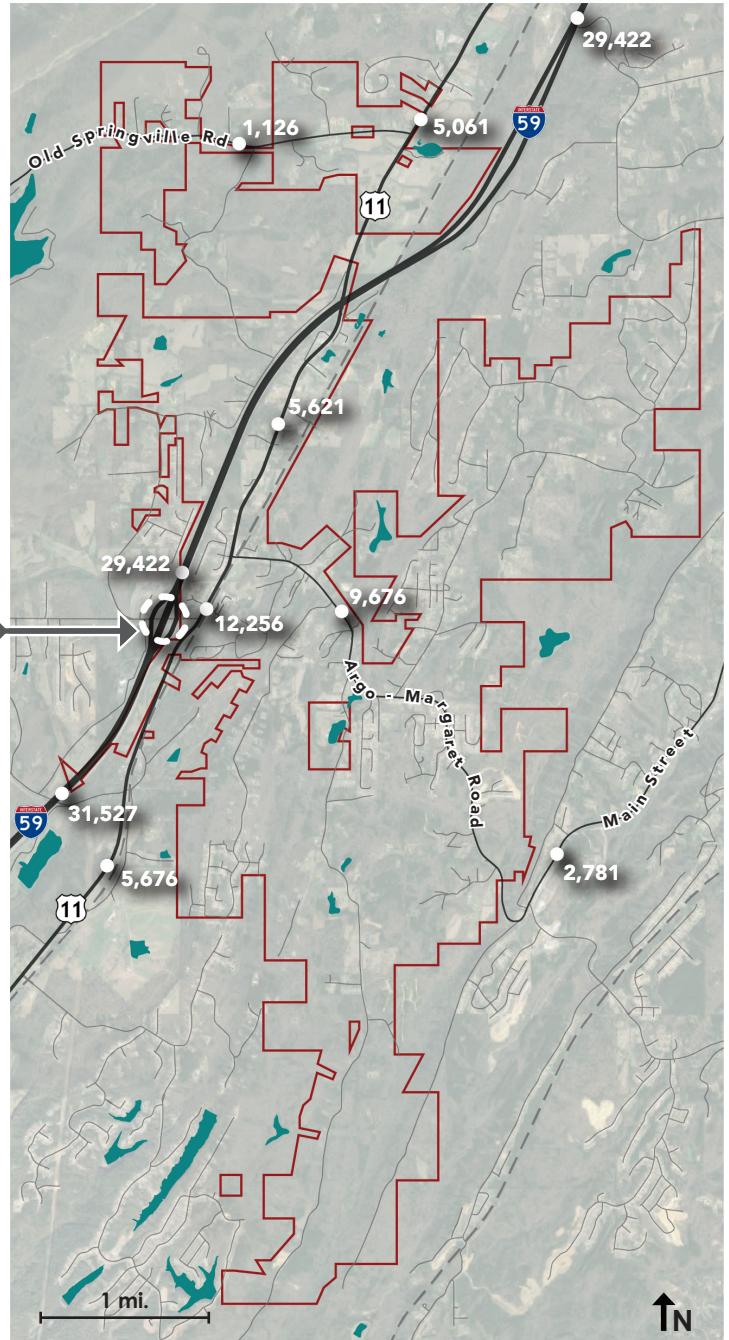
Argo currently has no sidewalks or bicycle lanes along its road network, limiting the ability of residents and visitors to utilize alternate forms of transportation than cars.

Design of critical intersection between Highway 11 and Argo Margaret Road causing substantial traffic delays.

The lack of a turn lane or turn signal at this intersection's stoplight makes it difficult for southbound traffic on Highway 11 to turn left onto Argo's important Argo Margaret Road corridor during heavy traffic. This causes a backup of traffic on Highway 11 north of the intersection until someone in the northbound lane of traffic chooses to let someone through who is waiting to turn left from the opposite direction.

Opportunities and Challenges

1. **Beautify important corridors through Argo, such as Highway 11 and Argo Margaret Road, while optimizing improvements for increasing average levels of daily traffic.**
2. **Add sidewalks and bike lanes to key roads and commercial developments to improve walkability and bikeability.**
3. **Redesign the intersection of Highway 11 and Argo Margaret Road to serve as a gateway to the potential town center and alleviate traffic backups.**



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES SUMMARY

The following list is a compilation of the opportunities and challenges from each subsection of this three-part analysis. Each of these findings has been derived from the data presented throughout this report and represents a key topic that should be addressed as the planning process transitions into community engagement and plan development.

1. PEOPLE

- Develop a strategy to sustain future growth through both economic development and quality of life improvement strategies.
- Quantify the success of Argo's growth while ensuring city services continue to expand to match growth.
- Understand how changes in households affects the changing housing market, and how that could impact potential zoning updates.
- Secure affordable and healthy food access that may be needed due to the large share of residents using SNAP and the increasing share of single-parent households.
- Prepare strategies for a community that better provides for the needs of a younger population while preparing for potential aging in the future.
- Develop a strategy to grow and retain the youth population by bolstering employment opportunities, varied housing options, and quality of life initiatives.
- Manage the planning process and align goals and outcomes in an equitable manner that is inclusive of the city's quickly diversifying population groups and addresses the unique needs of each group.
- Develop proactive health policies around existing and emerging health challenges.
- Better understand the impact of the built environment on community health outcomes.

2. PROSPERITY

- Consider partnering with universities and community colleges to target the needs of employers and potential job markets.
- Capitalize on industry specializations and growing employment sectors to maximize the local job market and grow the number of jobs and businesses in town.
- Align planning goals to increase the number of employment opportunities in Argo and target new commuters coming into the city.
- Better understand municipal economic development strategies specific to "Bedroom Communities."
- Target lower personal prosperity outcomes with quality education, job training, and local employment opportunities.
- Maintain high academic standards and outcomes in area public schools.
- Partner with continuing education and workforce development entities.

3. PLACE

- Consider the potential of establishing a town center type development.
- Lack of housing variety could prove to be a barrier to future population growth and economic development.
- Preserve and update the existing park space and expand recreational opportunities currently offered in the city.
- Develop new parks centered around natural landscapes and connect key parks and areas of the city with sidewalks and bike lanes along key roadways as well as strategic off-road trails.
- Beautify important corridors through Argo, such as Highway 11 and Argo Margaret Road, while optimizing improvements for increasing average levels of daily traffic.
- Add sidewalks and bike lanes to key roads and commercial developments to improve walkability and bikeability.
- Redesign the intersection of Highway 11 and Argo Margaret Road to serve as a gateway to the potential town center and alleviate traffic backups.

