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The background image shows a city at night with a prominent clock tower. Overlaid on the image are blue digital lines and squares, suggesting a network or data flow. In the bottom right corner, there is a bright, fiery explosion or spark effect.

# WELCOME TO THE THE MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION PROJECT

# THE MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION PROJECT

## INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM WORKING GROUPS

**Meeting 1: Assimilate data and analysis**

**MARCH 31, 2021**



This program has been prepared under contract with the Middle Georgia Regional Commission (MGRC), as fiscal agent for The Middle Georgia Innovation Project, with financial support from the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation U.S. Department of Defense. The content reflects the views of The Middle Georgia Innovation Project and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation, the U.S. Department of Defense



# THE MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION PROJECT

## INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM WORKING GROUPS

Program

Time	Details	Person
5 min	Welcome from Angie Gheesling, Executive Director – Development Authority of Houston County	Angie
5 min	Introductions from Working Group participants	All
10 min	Update of the Project to date, and context of Task 3: Working Groups in relation to the overall Middle Georgia Innovation Project	Future iQ
20 min	Presentation of findings to date related to the topic area of working group from: Research from The Middle Georgia Charette and Regional Planning Initiative (2018), Task 1 – Innovation Framework and Ecosystem Report and Task 2- Innovation Performance and Gap Analysis Report(s)	Future iQ
20 min	Group discussion on findings from previous research	All
20 min	Group discussion to ‘Scope Out’ issues relating to the topic area	All
20 min	Group discussion regarding medium term ‘Desired Outcomes’ relating to the topic area	All
20 min	Next Steps in preparation for April 14 Meeting	Future iQ
5 min	Wrap-up	

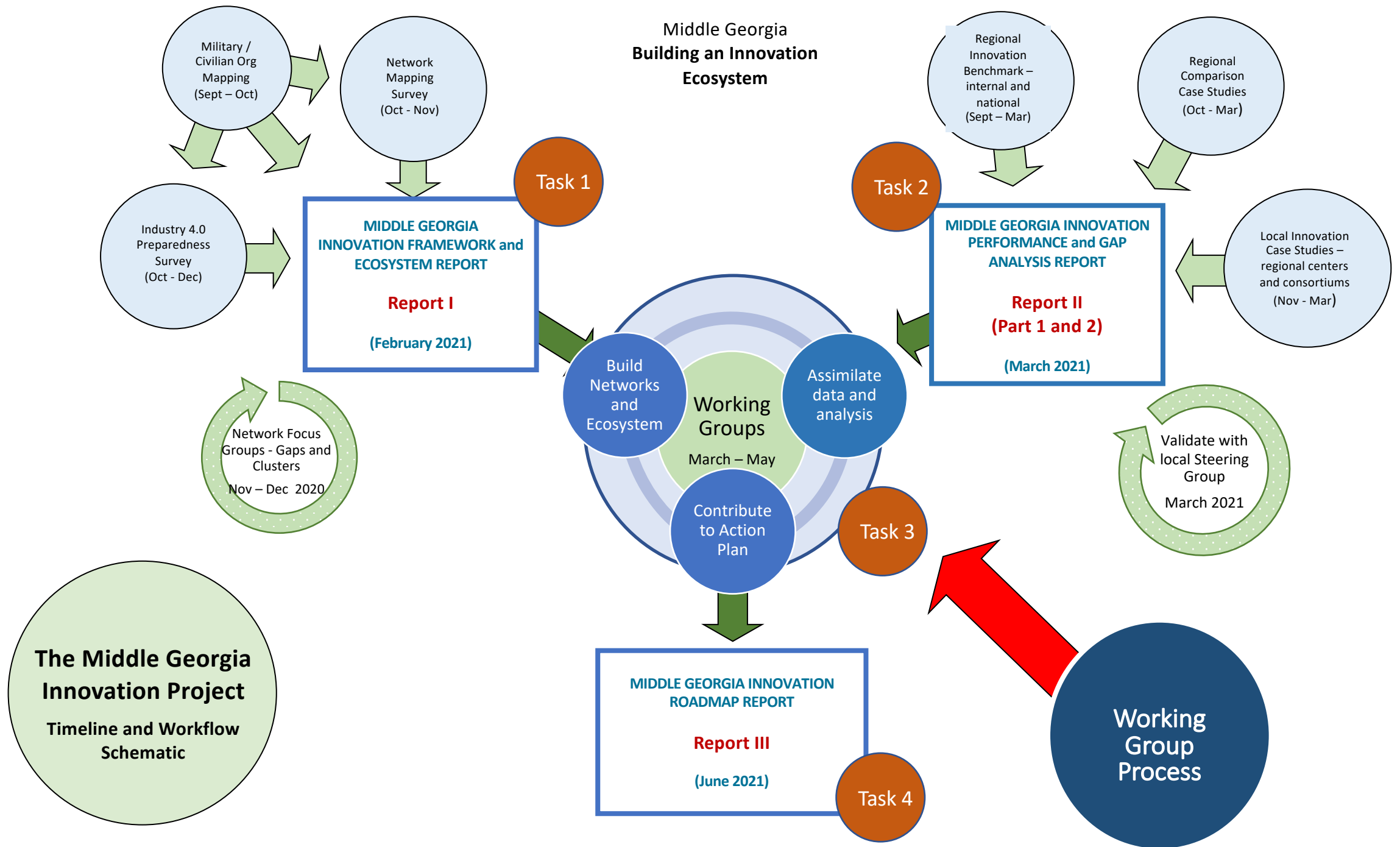
# THE MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION PROJECT

## INTENDED OUTCOMES

Overall  
Outcomes

- Develop the Middle Georgia innovation ecosystem
- Provide a road map for Middle Georgia to become a 'Center of Software Excellence'
- The project will advance the efforts building the workforce that Middle Georgia needs for the future
- The outcome will be a Middle Georgia Innovation Roadmap Report and Path Forward recommendations





# Three key 'Innovation Ecosystem' Working Groups

- **Start-Up Innovation Ecosystem**

Focus on building a connected ecosystem that fosters start-up and entrepreneurial culture.

- **Industry 4.0 Technologies Ecosystem**

Focus on building regional capability and readiness for Industry 4.0 technologies.

- **Software Engineering Ecosystem**

Focus on building local capability for software engineering and creating a relevant industry cluster.





# Working group process.



Steps in  
process

- **STEP 1 – ASSEMBLE**

- Identify and invite key stakeholders to each Working Group. (March)

- **STEP 2 - CONVENE WORKING GROUPS** (March – May)

- Meeting 1 - Assimilate data and analysis
  - Meeting 2 - Brainstorm how to Build Ecosystem
  - Meeting 3 - Contribute to Action Plan

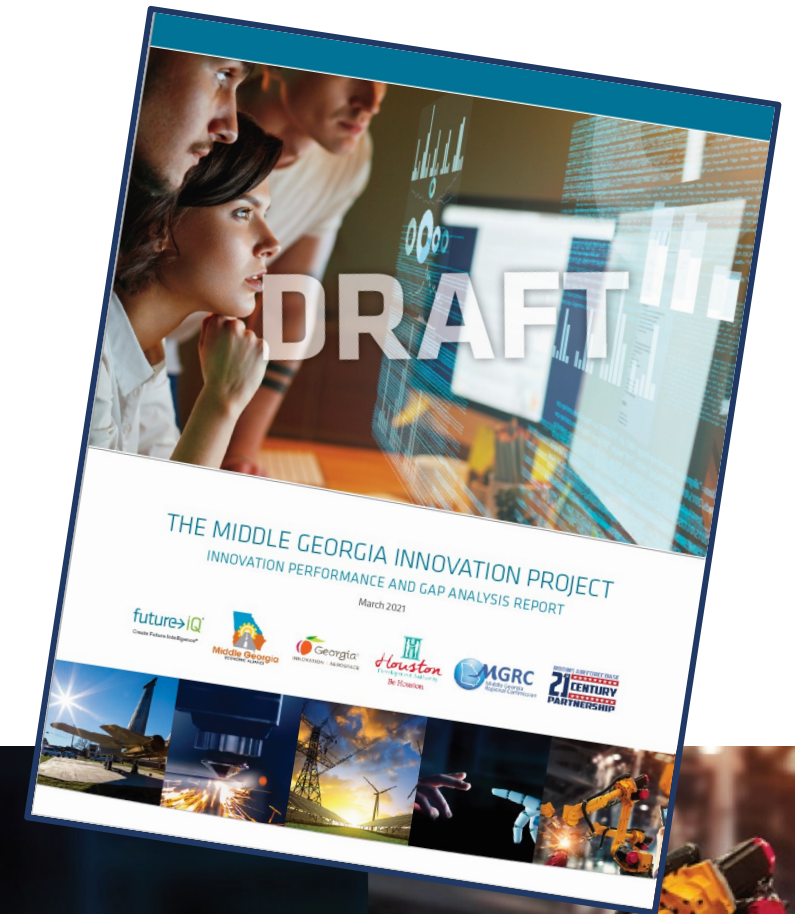
- **STEP 3 - PRESENT** (May)

- Host Regional Future Summit where Working Groups present their finding and recommended Action Plans. (May)

Each working group will meet (virtual) three times (over two months), and then all groups join for a Future Summit. Working sessions will be approximately two hours in length and will be supplemented by surveys and conference calls as required

# MEETING 1: ASSIMILATE DATA AND ANALYSIS

- Middle Georgia Charette and Regional Planning Initiative – Action Plan (2018-19)
- Task 1: The Middle Georgia Innovation Framework and Ecosystem Report (2020-21)
- Task 2: Innovation Performance and Gap Analysis Reports (2020-21)





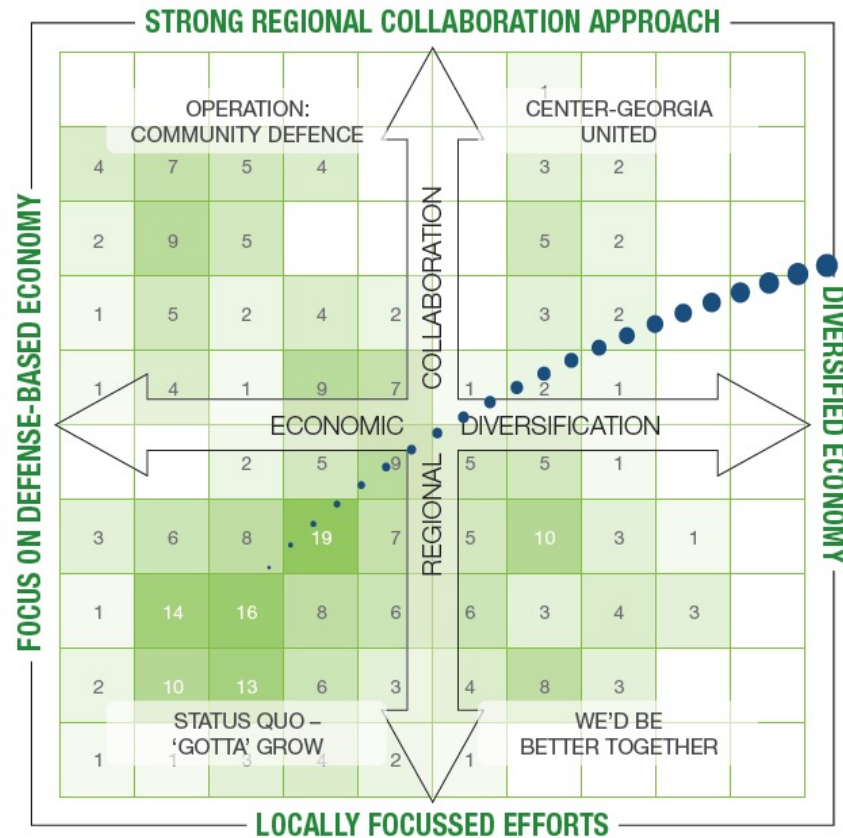
# MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE (2018)

- A key outcome of the initiative was to identify a shared vision for the future, which could then be supported by strategic actions.
- The strategic action pillars were identified through in-depth stakeholder engagement work
- The Middle Georgia Innovation Project has taken two of these pillars to focus upon:
  - Creating a regional innovation eco-system
  - Leveraging the region's natural, technological and intellectual assets



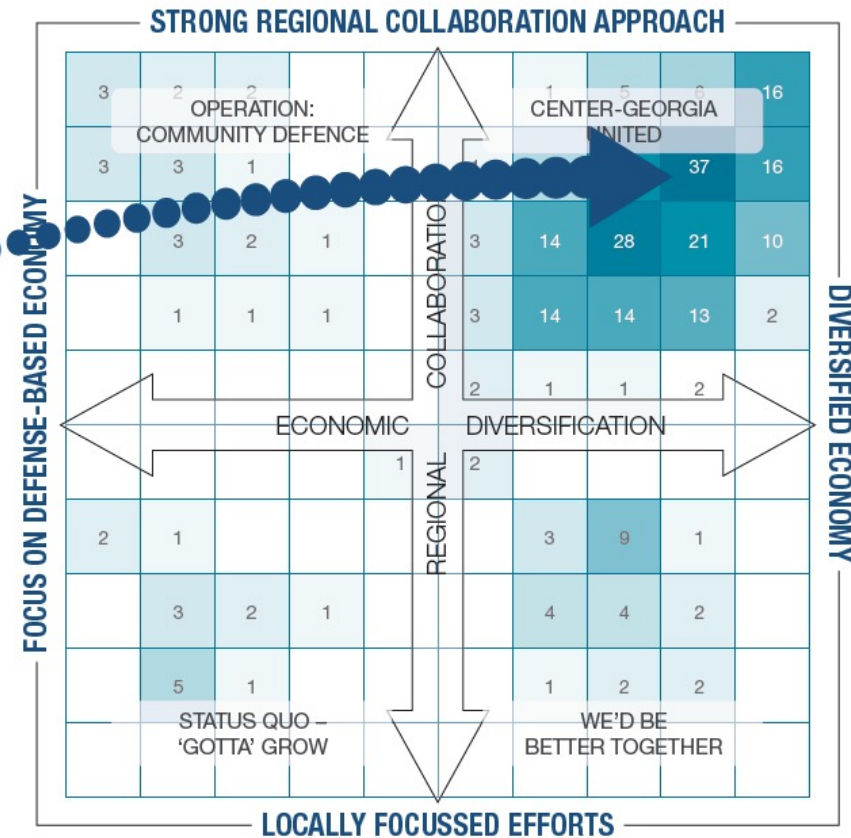
## MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING HEAT MAPS

EXPECTED FUTURE – 2030



## MIDDLE GEORGIA CHARRETTE AND REGIONAL PLANNING HEAT MAPS

PREFERRED FUTURE – 2030



DataInsight

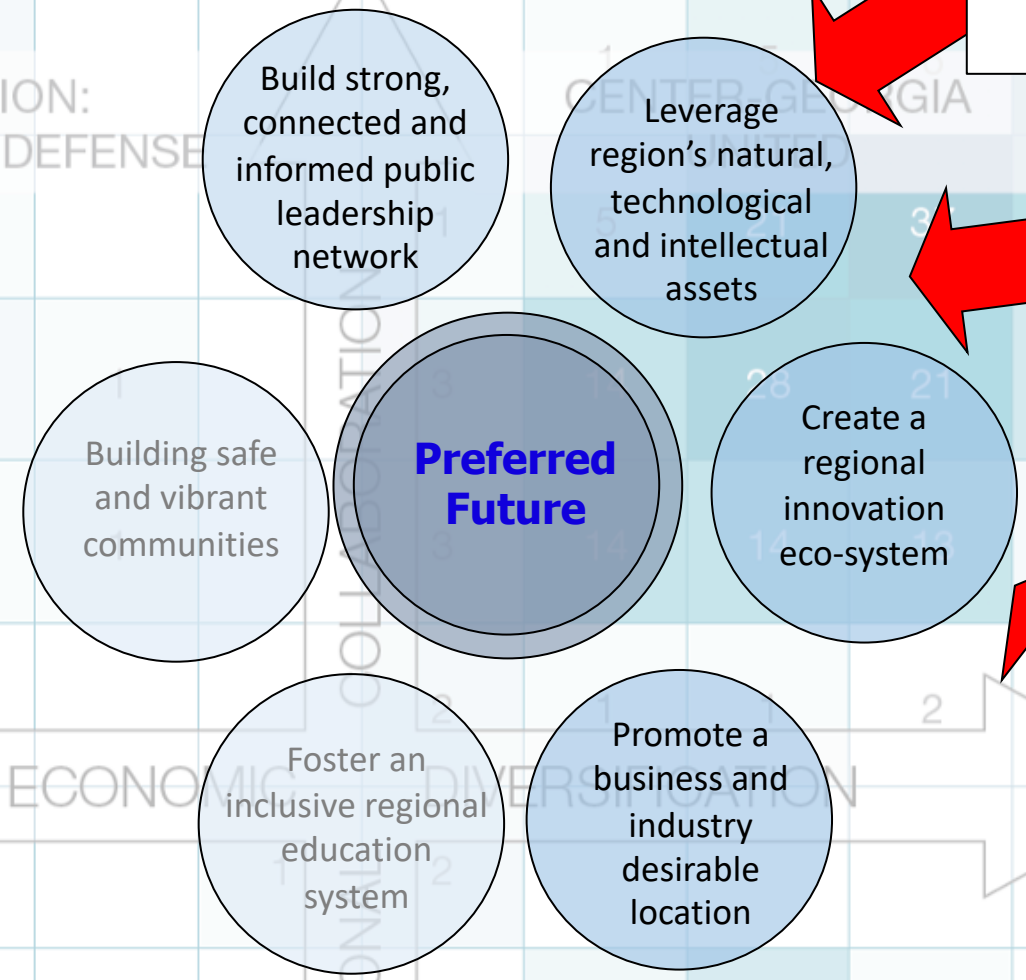
### KEY THINGS TO NOTE

- There is a large gap between the Expected and Preferred futures, suggesting an opportunity for collaborative action.
- This will be a significant task for the region to build a diversified economy
- This planning process will help define this roadmap

Built shared  
vision

# STRONG REGIONAL COLLABORATION APPROACH

## Key Focus Areas



**Cluster of Higher Education Institutions**

**Innovation and Commercialization across RAFB membrane**

**Asset mapping team to morph into 'Innovation Eco-system'**

**2 KEY STRATEGIC ACTIONS**



# MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL PLANNING INITIATIVE FINDINGS RELATED TO START-UP INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

- Limited speed/scale of moving from innovation to commercialization
- A need to create a regional innovation ecosystem
- Potential 'islands of excellence' identified
- Higher education institutions should strengthen critical role in driving innovation
- Partnership is key – innovation ecosystem should connect industry, education and government

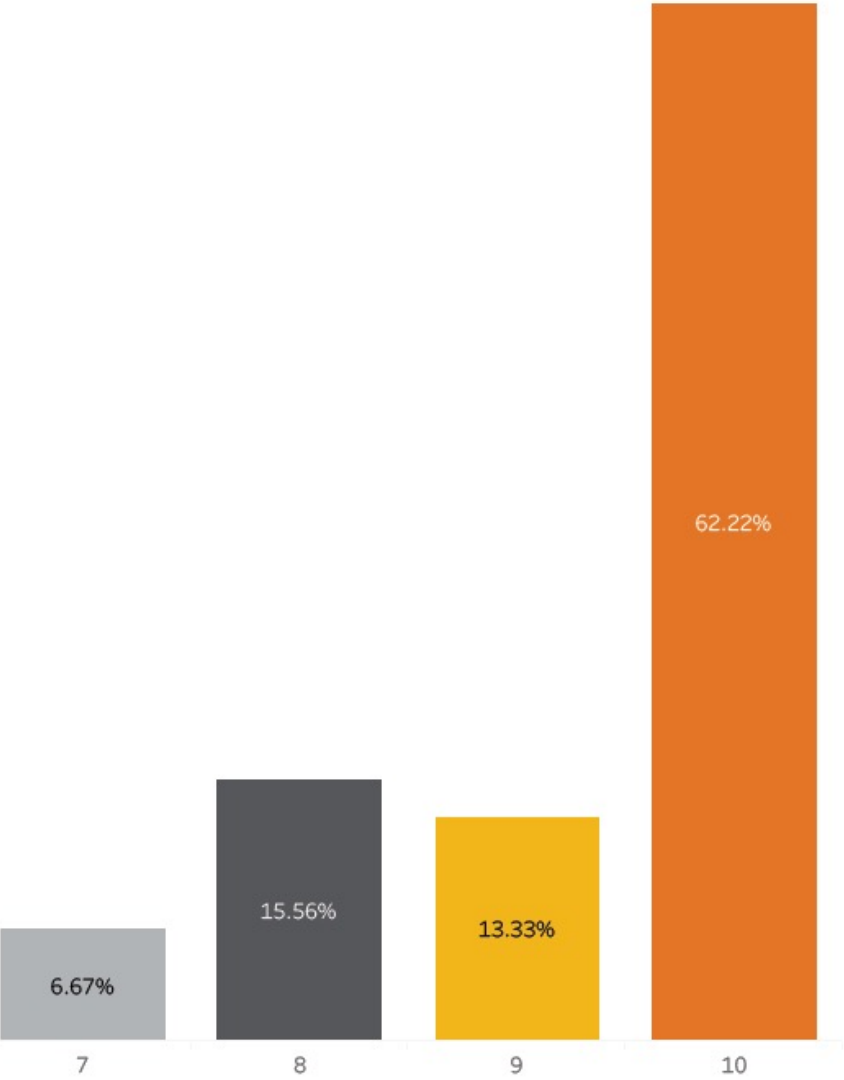


# TASK 1: MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION AND ECOSYSTEM REPORT (2021)

- Explored the existing innovation framework and ecosystem across the Middle Georgia Region
- Innovation measured through lens of Industry 4.0 Technologies
- Methodologies used:
  - High level Environmental Scan
  - Industry 4.0 Disruption and Preparedness Survey
  - Network Focus Groups and individual expert network interviews to identify gaps and clusters

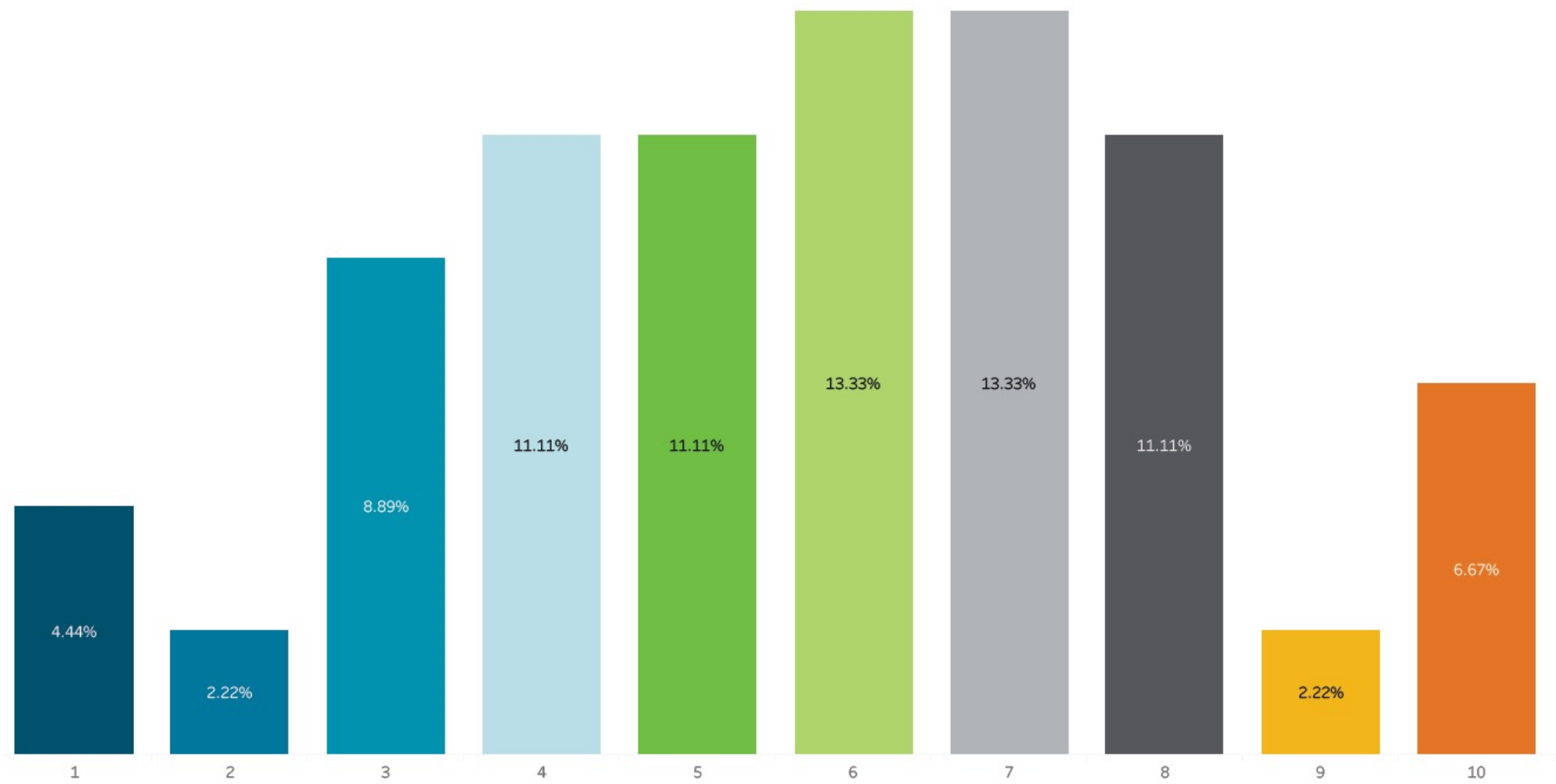


Overall, how important do you think it is for companies and industries in the Middle Georgia region to PLAN for Industry 4.0 technologies and future innovations? Scale 1=Not Important; 10=Critically Important

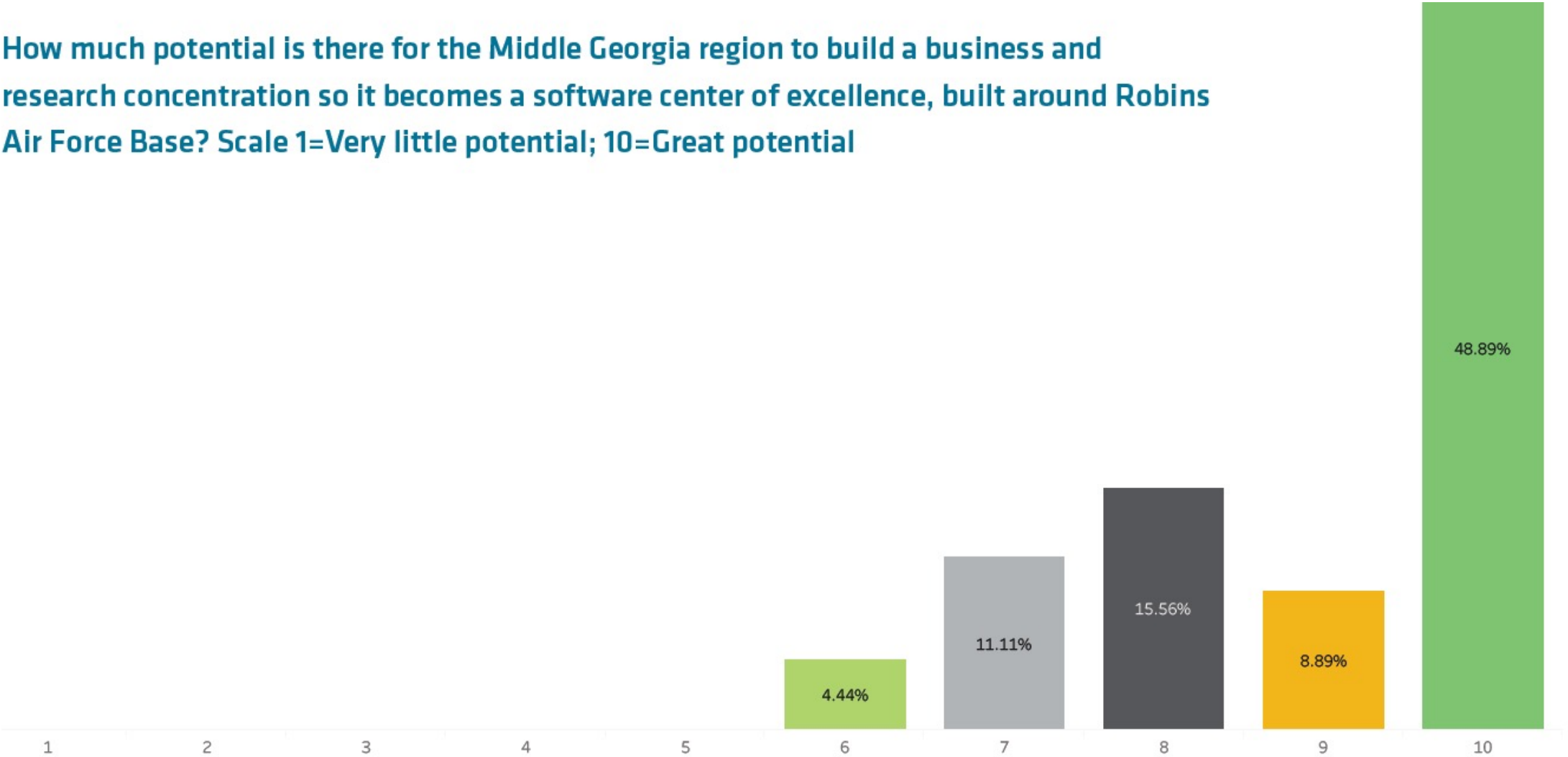




How would you currently rank the Middle Georgia region in terms of having a strong ecosystem of innovation, where multiple groups work together to drive innovation? Scale 1=Very Weak; 10=Very Strong



How much potential is there for the Middle Georgia region to build a business and research concentration so it becomes a software center of excellence, built around Robins Air Force Base? Scale 1=Very little potential; 10=Great potential



The ‘Software Center of Excellence’ concept plays off some of these identified strengths, and especially focuses on the economic and technology driver of the Robins Air Force Base.

# **TASK 2: MIDDLE GEORGIA INNOVATION PERFORMANCE AND GAP ANALYSIS REPORT (2021)**

- Provide an Innovation performance and gap analysis of the Middle Georgia region
- Provide an in-depth look at the potential for innovation in Middle Georgia and explore:
  - Comparable regional case studies in Georgia (Columbus, Augusta, Savannah)
  - Case studies in Alabama, Tennessee and Ohio
  - Military Bases (Hill AFB, Utah; Fort Benning, Columbus; Fort Gordon, Augusta)
  - Local Middle Georgia Business Case Studies including LBA Ware, Fort Valley State University, Atrium Health Navicent and Wayne Reaves Software





## TASK 2: REGIONAL INNOVATION BUILDING BLOCKS

- Robins Air Force Base (RAFB)
- Strength in knowledge creation
- Rapidly growing technical and computer science sectors
- Proximity to Atlanta and emerging regional identity



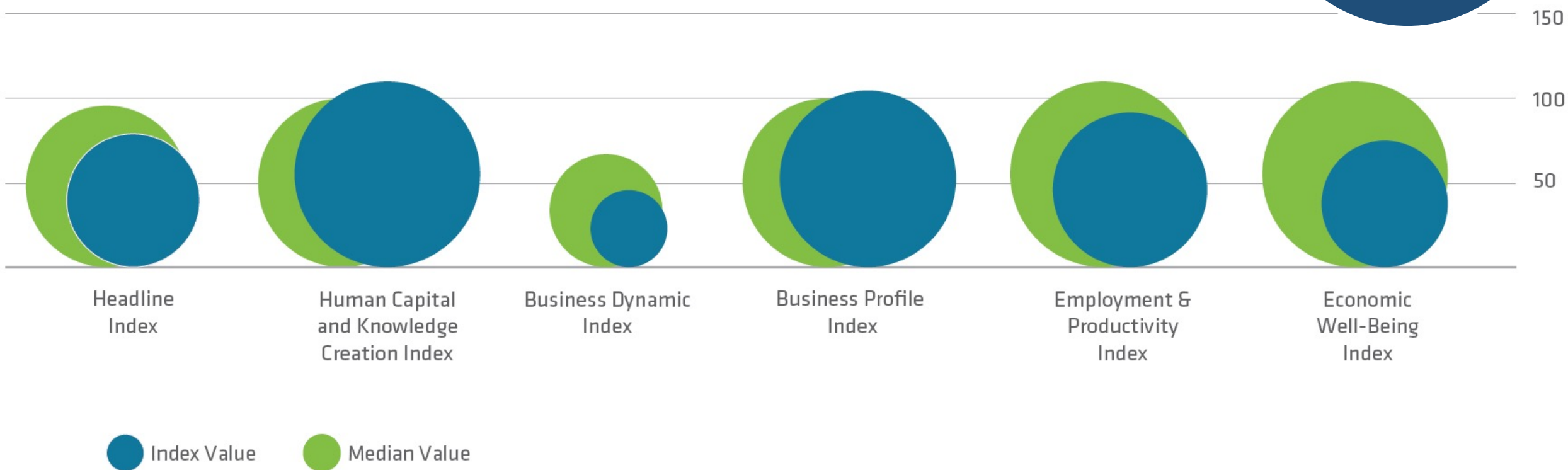
Located in Houston County, the military base employed 23,967 individuals in 2019 (6,188 military, 14,821 civilian, and 2,958 other employees) and contributed an estimated total economic impact of \$3.38 billion. The base awarded \$7.1 billion in contracts during 2019 fiscal year with \$518 million to Georgia firms and \$224 million to firms in Houston County. (Data sourced from the *Robins Air Force Base Economic Impact Statement, 2019*)





## Innovation Index for Middle Georgia compared to Median US value

Outperforms  
in Knowledge  
Creation



Source: StatsAmerica - Innovation Index 2.0, U.S. Economic Development Administration, 2016



# Comparable Headline Innovation

## Headline Innovation Index for Middle Georgia

Areas	State	County	Largest City/Town	Headline Index	Rank (3110)	Capacity
Middle Georgia	Georgia	Baldwin County	Milledgeville	72.7	2,614	Low
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Macon-Bibb County</b>	<b>Macon</b>	<b>81.4</b>	<b>1,850</b>	Normal
	Georgia	Crawford County	Roberta	76.8	2,252	Low
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Houston County</b>	<b>Warner Robins</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>1,018</b>	Normal
	Georgia	Jones County	Gray	76.6	2,272	Low
	Georgia	Monroe County	Forsyth	81.4	1,850	Normal
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Peach County</b>	<b>Fort Valley</b>	<b>82.7</b>	<b>1,712</b>	Normal
	Georgia	Pulaski County	Hawkinsville	65.1	3,001	Very Low
	Georgia	Putnam County	Eatonton	75.8	2,364	Low
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Twiggs County</b>	<b>Jeffersonville</b>	<b>68.2</b>	<b>2,884</b>	Very Low
	Georgia	Wilkinson County	Gordon	72.6	2,625	Low
Regional Case Study	Tennessee	Hamilton County	Chattanooga	106	268	Very High
	Alabama	Madison County	Huntsville	111	140	Very High
	Ohio	Hamilton County	Cincinnati	108.1	208	Very High
Local Case Study	Georgia	Richmond County	Augusta	85.9	1,385	Normal
	Georgia	Muscogee County	Columbus	88.4	1,152	Normal
	Georgia	Chatham County	Savannah	95.5	626	High

Source: StatsAmerica – Innovation Index 2.0, U.S. Economic Development Administration

## Human Capital and Knowledge Creation Core Index for Middle Georgia

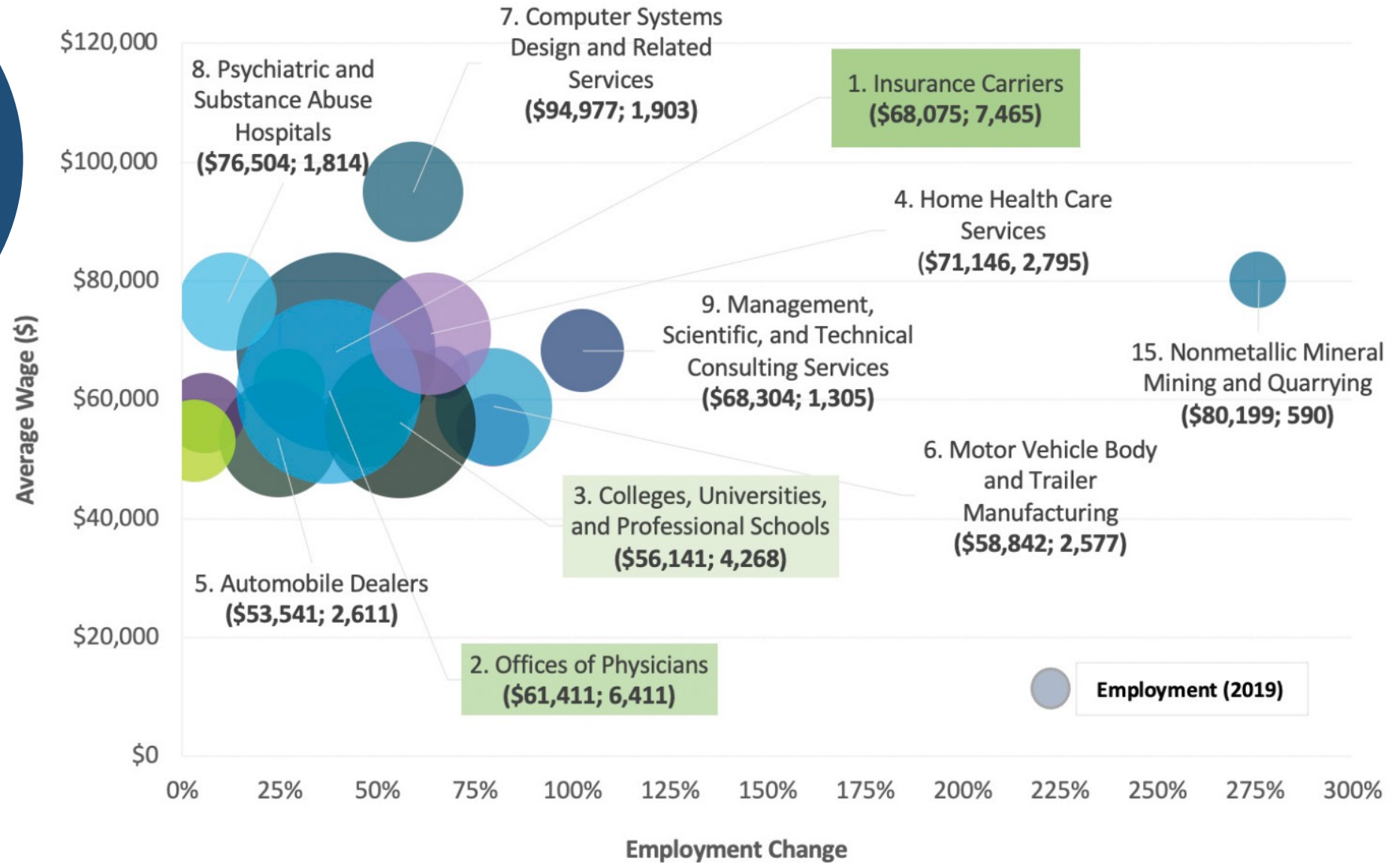
Outperforms  
in Knowledge  
Creation

Areas	State	County	Largest City/Town	Headline Index	Rank (3110)	Capacity
Middle Georgia	Georgia	Baldwin County	Milledgeville	93.4	1,402	Normal
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Macon-Bibb County</b>	<b>Macon</b>	<b>108.5</b>	<b>788</b>	High
	Georgia	Crawford County	Roberta	69	2,690	Low
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Houston County</b>	<b>Warner Robins</b>	<b>124.5</b>	<b>426</b>	Very High
	Georgia	Jones County	Gray	84.7	1,853	Normal
	Georgia	Monroe County	Forsyth	92.9	1,419	Normal
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Peach County</b>	<b>Fort Valley</b>	<b>131.4</b>	<b>308</b>	Very High
	Georgia	Pulaski County	Hawkinsville	78.2	2,227	Low
	Georgia	Putnam County	Eatonton	90.7	1,529	Normal
	<b>Georgia</b>	<b>Twiggs County</b>	<b>Jeffersonville</b>	<b>60.5</b>	<b>2,967</b>	Very Low
	Georgia	Wilkinson County	Gordon	65.5	2,820	Very Low
Regional Case Study	Tennessee	Hamilton County	Chattanooga	126.3	396	Very High
	Alabama	Madison County	Huntsville	142.8	144	Very High
	Ohio	Hamilton County	Cincinnati	147.3	95	Very High
Local Case Study	Georgia	Richmond County	Augusta	102.5	991	Normal
	Georgia	Muscogee County	Columbus	131.3	309	Very High
	Georgia	Chatham County	Savannah	127.2	382	Very High

Source: StatsAmerica – Innovation Index 2.0, U.S. Economic Development Administration

Emerging scientific  
and computer  
systems sectors

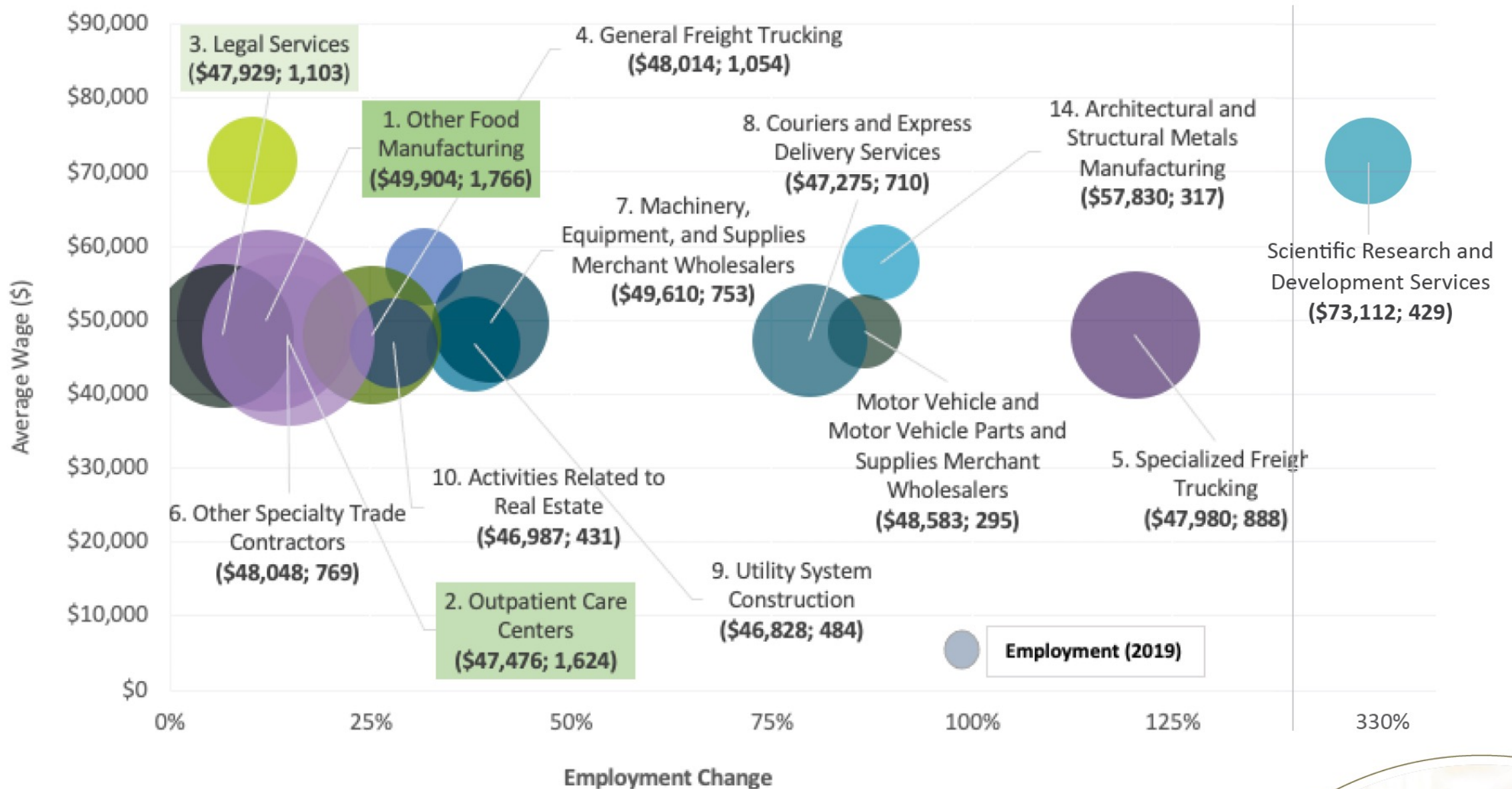
## High Performing Industries Tier I: Average Wage by Employment Change and Employment Level



Source: BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics(1991-2019), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages(1991-2019)

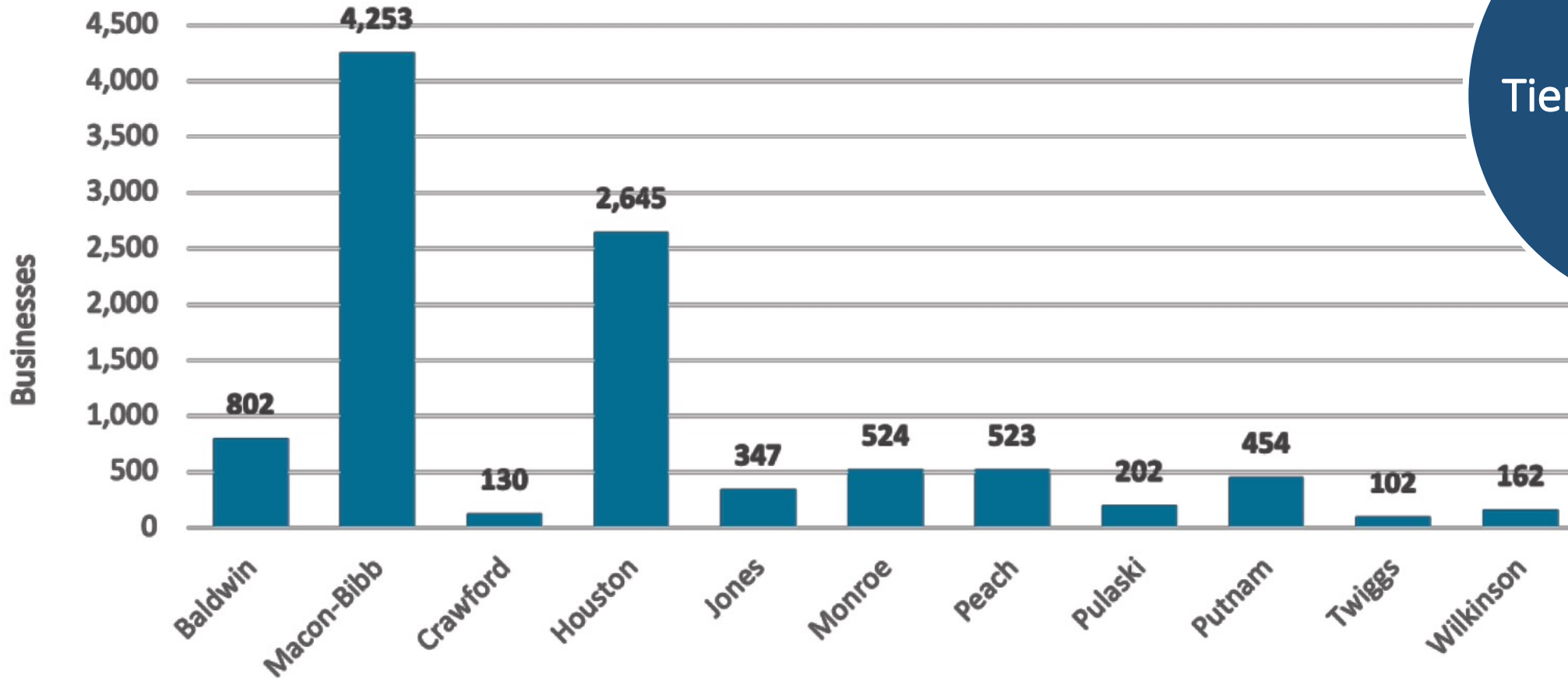


## High Performing Industries Tier II: Average Wage by Employment Change and Employment Level



Source: BLS, Local Area Unemployment Statistics(1991-2019), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages(1991-2019)

Average Annual Number of New Businesses in Middle Georgia (2018)



Macon  
Tier 2 regional city  
proposition

# DISCUSSION ON MEDIUM TERM 'DESIRED OUTCOMES'





# DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS FROM RESEARCH TO DATE – 20 MIN



# DISCUSSION TO 'SCOPE OUT' ISSUES and CHALLENGES – 20 MIN



# NEXT STEPS FOR START-UP INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM WORKING GROUP

- **Meeting 2: Brainstorm how to Build Ecosystem (Wednesday 14 April)**
  - Brainstorm and explore how to build the relevant networks and ecosystems
- **Meeting 3: Contribute to Action Plan (Wednesday 28 April)**
  - Develop recommendations and input into 5-year action plan with a list of achievable key actions
- **Future Summit (Wednesday 12 May)**
  - The 3 Working groups present findings and recommended Action Plans

