FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Alison Tyrer
(o) 404-679-0661; (c) 404-670-4408
alison.tyrer@dca.ga.gov

State recognizes 10 Georgia communities for successful planning

New “PlanFirst” designation brings funding, visibility benefits

ATLANTA—The Georgia Department of Community Affairs announced today that ten Georgia communities have received statewide distinction in a new program recognizing excellence in community planning. Athens-Clarke County, Coweta County, Johnson County, Jones County and the cities of Braselton, Gainesville, Madison, Suwanee, Vienna and Woodstock have each achieved the state of Georgia’s first-ever “PlanFirst” designation, which acknowledges communities that have a proven track record of implementing their plan and a history of good plan development.

“Good planning by local communities is the hallmark of economic growth,” said Gretchen Corbin, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. “These are communities that can serve as statewide models for others in how to actively and strategically implement a vision for the future.”

The PlanFirst program received 30 applications in its inaugural year. Eligible communities were required to address four primary program criteria focused on having a proven record of plan implementation success: goals, leadership, community participation, and implementation. The designation will last for three years, beginning Jan. 1, 2015, and enables these communities to take advantage of various incentives that include public visibility, eligibility for funding, and certain reduced interest loans. Communities will receive their awards during “PlanFirst Day” at the Capitol on Jan. 28, 2015, which will celebrate Georgia’s new PlanFirst designation in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of the Georgia Planning Act.

The next deadline for applications is May 15, 2015. More information about the program is available at http://www.dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/PlanFirst.asp.

The Department of Community Affairs developed the program with a steering committee comprised of partners including the Georgia Municipal Association, Association County Commissioner of Georgia, the Georgia Planning Association, the Regional Commissions, and the University of Georgia Archways...
program, and other state agencies including the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, the Historic Preservation Division and Environmental Protection Division.

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (GDCA) partners with communities to create a climate of success for Georgia’s families and businesses through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, GDCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism. GDCA also helps qualified low- and moderate-income Georgians buy homes, rent housing, and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit www.dca.ga.gov.

###