

## PlanFirst Program Application - May 15, 2015

**Introduction:** The Department of Community Affairs' PlanFirst Program rewards local governments that clearly demonstrate success with implementing their local comprehensive plan. To apply for PlanFirst designation, a local government must have Qualified Local Government certification and be current on required reporting to DCA. (To check status of both, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>).

A multi-agency review panel will evaluate a number of indicators of community success with plan implementation to select communities for this designation. All of these indicators are equally important, but size of the community is taken into consideration in the evaluation so that communities of various sizes are equally competitive for PlanFirst designation.

**Instructions:** Please answer all the following questions thoroughly, attaching additional pages where necessary, so that the reviewers have sufficient information to measure the success of your comprehensive plan implementation. Supporting documents might include: news articles, legal ads, lists of attendees, letters of support or other evidence of local involvement and commitment to successful plan implementation activities in your community. *Total application length, including supporting information and support letters, must not exceed 20 pages. Text areas will expand as needed.*

Applicant government	Gwinnett County
Mailing address	75 Langley Drive Lawrenceville, Ga. 30046-6935
Telephone	770-822-8000; J. Pugsley direct no. 678-518-6213
Email	james.pugsley@gwinnettcounty.com
Contact person; title	James Pugsley, Planner III
Application prepared by	James Pugsley, Todd Cleaver
I, the undersigned authorized representative of the applicant, certify that to the best of my knowledge the information in this application is true and correct.	
Name of authorized official signing; title	JAMES PUGSLEY ; PLANNER III (LONG RANGE)
Date	5/15/15
Signature	<i>James D. Pugsley, Jr.</i>

# PRE-REQUISITES

A. (1) We have a good track record of maintaining our Qualified Local Government status and submitting required reports to DCA, including the current Report of Local Government Finances. (To check status, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>).

QLG status:	yes X	no
Local government reports:	yes X	no

A. (2) We have attained the Minimum Standard for performance as called for in our regional commission's regional comprehensive plan.

Yes X	no
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For each of the following indicators, fully explain how your community addresses this indicator; identifying specific examples and resulting local successes. (Each indicator will be scored 1, 3 or 5 points, except indicators j. and t. which may score up to 10 points.) Add exhibits and examples as needed to tell your story.

## INDICATOR: GOALS

B. The Goals (or Vision) section of our comprehensive plan is supported by the community and its leadership.

Gwinnett County leadership supports and embraces our Comprehensive Plan goals. Through the leadership and support of our Board of Commissioners, Gwinnett County has adopted and implemented a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The DO includes a new Regional Mixed-Use zoning district that encourages redevelopment of commercial and residential areas along major transportation corridors into vibrant, high-density, pedestrian-friendly, live-work-play environments. The creation of this new zoning district is a major step in realizing the vision of the plan.

The 2030 Unified Plan recommended that Gwinnett County consider the use of Tax Allocation Districts (TADs) to fund infrastructure and other improvements needed to promote mixed-use development or redevelopment projects. Gwinnett County has created five TADs in support of this goal.

The 2030 Unified Plan emphasized the importance of workforce housing in order to fill service sector jobs in a community. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) is a component of Gwinnett County's program to acquire and rehabilitate vacant and foreclosed housing in the County. Once rehabilitation is completed, the homes are sold to income qualified homebuyers. One of the major targets for selling these homes has been the current Gwinnett County workforce. To date, the NSP has acquired, rehabilitated, and sold 179 homes in Gwinnett County. The Unified Development Ordinance also includes a new Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) which requires a variety of lot sizes and housing types in a single development. This includes single-family detached, single-family attached, villas, live-work units, and accessory dwellings. This variety would be expected to appeal to multiple income levels.

C. The Goals are both ambitious and achievable for the community.

When the 2030 Unified Plan goals were being discussed, three economic scenarios were considered: Regional Slowdown, Middle of the Pack, and International Gateway. The International Gateway was the most expansive vision of the County's future, and it became evident there was little sentiment to concede in any way to anything but an exceptional future for the County. Therefore, the five themes of our Unified Plan: Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health, Foster Redevelopment, Enhance Mobility and Accessibility, Provide More Housing Choice, and Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place, are all explored in the plan in the context of an economically vibrant place that attracts many diverse newcomers. The diversity and fast growth of the county are evident in all subsequent new data from the Census Bureau.

D. The Goals steer local decision-making on a continuous basis.

See items J., R., and T., and the supplementary material that accompanies them.

E. Consistent progress is being made at achieving the Goals.

See items J., R., and T., and the supplementary material that accompanies them.

## **INDICATOR: LEADERSHIP**

F. We have effective planning staff or another suitable arrangement for handling community planning matters.

Gwinnett County currently has 66 people in its Planning and Development Department and is seeking to fill 12 more positions. In addition, there are staff members in the Gwinnett Transportation, Water Resources, Police, and Fire departments who are devoted to the planning function.

G. We have an active planning commission or similar body to steer local planning decisions.

The Gwinnett County Planning Commission meets on the second Tuesday of every month, and makes recommendations for zoning cases and other business that is considered later in the month by the Board of Commissioners.

H. We have a regular local plan effectiveness evaluation process (such as annual planning retreats of elected leadership).

The Board of Commissioners has an annual retreat in May, during which planning and other County business matters are considered.

I. All local officials (both elected and appointed) involved in local planning processes have recently attended training in how to use the plan effectively. Please indicate what trainings and the date(s) attended.

The county commissioners attend numerous training sessions conducted by the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG). Gwinnett Board of Commissioners Chairman Charlotte Nash, who became president of the organization in April, has long held a role in

ACCG that includes conducting training classes for county commissioners from elsewhere in Georgia.

J. Provide up to ten of your best recent examples where the plan steered a key local decision, with pertinent plan references (attach additional sheets as needed).

- The zoning of the OFS (Optical Fiber Solutions) property at the intersection of Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Interstate 85 is a primary example. That case rezoned a key 125-acre site to Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R). This is the zoning district that allows for the most intense use and highest density allowed in the County. The MU-R district is itself a product of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), a major revamping of zoning and development regulations that was a product of the Unified Plan.

The relevant Policy from the Unified Plan is A.2.2: Promote Densification in Specific Areas Designated for Mixed-Use through TDRs, Rezoning, and Increased Infrastructure Capacity. The UDO specifically comes from an Implementation Step (a subset of the Policy): "Revise zoning district text and/or create new districts to permit higher densities in accordance with policy maps." The UDO was a huge, years-long effort that exemplifies how a seemingly minor part of the Unified Plan structure of themes, policies, and implementation steps can actually be a large commitment of time and resources. Some of the other new zoning districts and their interface with the Unified Plan are mentioned in section R. in the commentary on Policy A.1.1.

- The implementation of a new Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). The County's 2030 Unified Plan recommended that the zoning ordinance be updated and combined with several land development regulations to create a modern and more user-friendly document. This new ordinance includes three new mixed-use zoning districts of varying intensities. The first, Neighborhood Mixed-Use (MU-N), is to promote complementary groupings of small-scale mixed-use buildings that are within walking distance and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. It is the intent of this district to provide for diverse housing options to accommodate multigenerational communities with a range of residential building forms, lot sizes and dwelling sizes, neighborhood-oriented retail, and services and low intensity office uses that are within convenient walking distances. The second, Community Mixed-Use (MU-C), is to promote complementary groupings of community-scale mixed-use buildings and activity areas along commercial corridors at locations that have adequate infrastructure and transportation access. The intent of this district is to promote diverse uses, including places of employment, shopping and commercial services, and varied housing options for multigenerational communities within pedestrian and bicycle friendly mixed-use activity centers and corridors that are compatible with established surrounding neighborhoods. The third, Regional Mixed-Use (MU-R), is to encourage the development, redevelopment or revitalization of commercial and residential areas along major transportation corridors into vibrant, high density, pedestrian friendly, live-work-play environments that offer employees and residents the opportunity to fulfill their daily activities with minimal use of single-occupant automobiles. The intent of this district is to allow flexibility in design standards and high density residential development in exchange for innovative and high standards inclusive of

landscaping, green space, urban space, and public amenities within a distinct, unified theme that can improve the viability of the development and surrounding communities.

- The interface between the Unified Plan and the Department of Water Resources' Water and Wastewater Master Plan is described in this excerpt from a piece submitting the Master Plan as a candidate for the Master Plan Spotlight Award.

Originally this Plan was thought of as an update to the 2003 Water and Wastewater Master Plan, itself an update of 1998 plan. It became clear early in the process of updating the previous plan that, for several reasons, a plan update would not be sufficient. The utility was maturing, rehabilitation rather than growth was becoming a primary issue, population and growth patterns were changing, and demographics were entirely different from when earlier plans were developed. Planning in this environment would require an entirely new master plan and a new way of thinking. After much consideration and consultation with our Planning and Development Department (P&D) it was decided to stop work on the Plan Update and wait for publication of the 2030 Unified Plan. This would allow the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to publish a new Water and Wastewater Master Plan that fully aligned with Gwinnett County's most current growth projections and land use plans. Additionally it would allow time for DWR staff to work integrally with P&D staff concerning future land use plans and the implications those plans could have on water and sewer infrastructure.

Work on developing a new 2030 Water and Wastewater Master Plan began in earnest after the final version of the 2030 Unified Plan was adopted by the Board of Commissioners. The first and most far-reaching decision in this process concerned internal management of the project itself. All previous Master Plans had been managed directly by DWR staff. However, the collaborative effort between DWR and P&D on the 2030 Unified Plan had proven so valuable that it became clear that interdepartmental involvement in this project was a must. Ultimately it was determined that the best way to accomplish this goal and deliver a plan that was truly reflective of current and future land use was to reassign the DWR Water & Wastewater staff to report to P&D and for the planning project to be managed by P&D using DWR staff.

The relevant policies from the Unified Plan include: Policy A.1.3: Strategic Placement of Sewer; and Policy A.2.2: Promote Densification in Specific Areas Designated for Mixed-Use Through TDRs, Rezoning, and Increased Infrastructure Capacity.

## **INDICATOR: PARTICIPATION**

K. Our comprehensive plan was prepared with multiple community input opportunities.

Gwinnett County believes strongly that it is critical to utilize a cooperative and integrated approach to planning. The development of our Unified Plan was an innovative process which incorporated updates to the Comprehensive Plan, Consolidated Housing Plan, and

Transportation Plan into one process. Community input was integral to the creation of the plan throughout this integrated process

The public input process during the writing of the Unified Plan is described in a 32-page document which is too large to include in its entirety here, due to this application's 20-page limit. Pages 8, 9, and 10 (see Attachment 1 on page 13), which describe participation by the general public, are included as exhibits.

**L.** The community input received during plan preparation influenced the content of the plan. Input from the Planning Advisory Committee was instrumental in almost every step of the plan writing process. Pages 6 and 7 (See Attachment 2 on page 16) from the same document referenced above describe this process.

**M.** Our steering committee that guided development of the plan included local leaders and elected officials.

Our steering committee that guided development of the plan involved numerous stakeholders from outside entities including adjacent local governments, Gwinnett County Public Schools, the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce, the Gwinnett Hospital Authority, local colleges, Community Improvement Districts, the Council for Quality Growth, the Housing Advocacy, Environmental Advocacy, the Recreation Authority, the Transit Advisory Board, local homeowners associations, and official representatives appointed to represent each of the commissioners. Additionally, when this plan was begun, agreements were made with several of the local cities in Gwinnett to participate in data collection and collaboration on the project.

**N.** We have an active, ongoing, outreach process for soliciting input on planning matters from a broad spectrum of the community, including non-traditional populations, and the resulting input is listened to by community leaders.

One example, the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners conducted a series of meetings on March 10, March 26, April 23, and May 12 of this year at various County locations to solicit citizen's opinions on planning matters.

Another example, there is a detailed process for disseminating zoning case information, described in the attached document Public Involvement in the Zoning Process (see Attachment 3 on page 19).

The Gwinnett Planning Committee is a bi-monthly forum that has met since the late 1980s. It has a special focus on representatives from Gwinnett's cities, but invites any member of the interested public. It features speakers and field trips addressing matters of County interest.

**O.** We have active advocates for plan implementation (such as activist citizens, organizations or neighborhood groups) that are listened to by community leaders.

Some of the most effective advocates of action congruent with the Unified Plan themes in recent years have been the Community Improvement Districts. Gwinnett has four CIDs with active

relationships with the county government (there is a fifth CID in parts of Braselton). The CIDs have been effective in implementing projects that promote ease of mobility, accommodations for pedestrian access, and economic development, echoing themes and policies from the Unified Plan. The CIDs have leveraged their property tax income to obtain matching funds from state, federal, and county sources. Examples of that are the two DDIs (Diverging Diamond Interchange) projects on the Jimmy Carter Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road bridges over Interstate 85 that are currently wrapping up construction. Both of these projects are important because they are experiments in a relatively inexpensive modification of existing infrastructure to relieve traffic bottlenecks that have threatened the quality of life in their respective areas. Changing the direction of traffic over the bridges has improved travel time. The Gwinnett Department of Transportation has contributed significant funding and technical help to these projects. The approximate amount of GDOT financial help on the Jimmy Carter Boulevard DDI is \$5.4 million, out of a total project cost of about \$7 million. The Gwinnett Village CID advocated for the project and contributed funds as well as project oversight. The GDOT figure for the Pleasant Hill DDI is about \$7 million, working in the same way with the Gwinnett Place CID. The alternative is bridge replacement, with a \$50 million price tag per project and a much longer period of traffic disruption. Collaboration between the County and the CIDs has produced a low cost way to alleviate two of the County's worst traffic bottlenecks, while gaining experience in a technique that will probably have application elsewhere.

## **INDICATOR: IMPLEMENTATION**

**P.** The Work Program section of our comprehensive plan consists primarily of specific action items that make it clear exactly what we intend to do to implement the plan.

The Work Program is divided into the five themes identified in the Unified Plan. Under each theme specific implementable, measurable action items are identified as policies that would promote that theme and lead to the success of the plan. The themes themselves (Maintain Economic Development and Fiscal Health, Foster Redevelopment, Maintain Mobility and Accessibility, Provide More Housing Choice, and Keep Gwinnett a Preferred Place) serve as the destination for our future while the specific policies provide the roadmap to that future.

**Q.** Our Work Program action items clearly address local needs or goals identified in the plan. Each of our Work Program action items is presented under the heading of the plan goal that it is intended to promote. For example, under the plan goal of Foster Redevelopment one of the Work Program action items is the use of Tax Allocation Districts. This is just one example of an action item that is tightly integrated with the overall goals of the plan.

**R.** We have a good track record of accomplishing most of the action items included in past plan Work Programs.

Gwinnett County is proud of its track record in plan implementation. We work hard to set well thought out, clear goals that we believe, while sometimes challenging, are realistic and implementable. In that light some of the important accomplishments from our 2009-2014 Work Program are noted below:

Policy A.1.1: Promote Major Mixed-Use Developments. The County implemented a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). This new ordinance includes three new mixed-use zoning districts of varying intensities. The first, Neighborhood Mixed-Use (MU-N), is to promote complementary groupings of small-scale mixed-use buildings that are within walking distance and compatible with the surrounding neighborhood. It is the intent of this district to provide for diverse housing options to accommodate multigenerational communities with a range of residential building forms, lot sizes and dwelling sizes, neighborhood-oriented retail, and services and low intensity office uses that are within convenient walking distances. The second, Community Mixed-Use (MU-C) is to promote complementary groupings of community-scale mixed-use buildings and activity areas along commercial corridors at locations that have adequate infrastructure and transportation access. The intent of this district is to promote diverse uses, including places of employment, shopping and commercial services, and varied housing options for multigenerational communities within pedestrian and bicycle friendly mixed-use activity centers and corridors that are compatible with established surrounding neighborhoods. The third, Regional Mixed-Use (MU-R) is to encourage the development, redevelopment, or revitalization of commercial and residential areas along major transportation corridors into vibrant, high-density, pedestrian-friendly, live-work-play environments that offer employees and residents the opportunity to fulfill their daily activities with minimal use of single-occupant automobiles. The intent of this district is to allow flexibility in design standards and high-density residential development in exchange for innovative and high standards inclusive of landscaping, green space, urban space, and public amenities within a distinct, unified theme that can improve the viability of the development and surrounding communities.

Policy A.1.6: Promote University Parkway (Hwy 316) as Gwinnett's Research and Development Corridor/Grade Separation along Highway 316. The 2030 Unified Plan identified the Highway 316 Corridor as a prime area to further develop into a Research and Development Corridor. The corridor presently has a number of resources to serve to anchor further high tech-biotech development, including the recently expanded Gwinnett Medical Center, existing industrial parks, Briscoe Field, Georgia Gwinnett College, and Gwinnett Technical College. With the two ongoing Georgia DOT interchange grade separation projects scheduled for completion this year, the corridor is moving toward becoming a limited access parkway, which will contribute to its success as a Research and Development Corridor. The Unified Development Ordinance incorporates several new zoning districts that are designed to attract high-tech/biotech employees to live, work, and play in the County.

Policy A.1.7: Employ debt financing for major infrastructure. Gwinnett County has a long history of using a pay-as-you-go approach to financing major infrastructure. The Unified Plan recommended that the County begin to explore other options, primarily debt financing, in order to provide needed County infrastructure going forward due to several factors, including reductions in State and Federal funding opportunities and tax revenue decreases during challenging economic times. Since the adoption of the 2030 Unified Plan, debt financing has been utilized to construct two major wastewater projects totaling more than \$300 million – the Yellow River Water Reclamation Facility Expansion and the Reuse Line to Lake Lanier.

Policy A.2.3: Use Tax Allocation Districts (TADs). The 2030 Unified Plan recommended that Gwinnett County consider the use of TADs to fund infrastructure and other improvements needed to promote mixed-use development or redevelopment projects. The Department of Planning & Development created five TADs that were originally established in 2009. Since TADs work best in a rising real estate market, the Board of Commissioners reset the TADs in December 2013 to allow the new, lower tax digest base value to generate a positive tax increment from the increased value of any redevelopment project.

Policy A.2.1: Institute a variety of Redevelopment Incentives and Bonuses. The Unified Development Ordinance includes a new Regional Mixed-Use zoning district that encourages redevelopment of commercial and residential areas along major transportation corridors into vibrant, high-density, pedestrian friendly, live-work-play environments that offer employees and residents the opportunity to fulfill their daily activities with minimal use of single-occupant automobiles. This zoning district provides bonuses to developers in return for additional desired amenities to help to level the playing field with greenfield development.

Policy A.3.3: Enhance incident management (traffic control center). The 2030 Unified Plan identified enhanced incident management as a viable and inexpensive method of reducing traffic congestion and increasing roadway safety. Since 2009, various ITS improvement projects, incorporating the latest technology, have seamlessly integrated the local road system with GDOT's statewide Navigator System. Gwinnett County DOT has also implemented numerous improvements to the County's Smart Commute Program.

Policy A.4.2: Preserve existing workforce housing. The 2030 Unified Plan emphasized the importance of workforce housing in order to fill service sector jobs in a community. The Neighborhood Stabilization Program is a component of Gwinnett County's program to acquire and rehabilitate vacant and foreclosed housing in the County. Once the rehabilitation is completed, those homes are sold to income qualified homebuyers.

Policy A.5.3: Invest in youth enrichment programs. The 2030 Unified Plan recommended that Gwinnett increase its investment in activities for young people as a crime deterrent and to provide healthy learning environments for youth. The Department of Community Services presently offers a multitude of programs, including Doc in the Park; Youth Sports; Environmental and Heritage Center daycare programs; special events; 4H Leadership; robotics; health and nutrition program; and an after-school program at Centerville Elementary School.

**S.** Our local capital budget is consistent with, and is designed to implement, the comprehensive plan.

The fiscal year 2015 capital budget totals \$371 million. The capital budget includes funding for facilities, technology, roads, maintenance, and equipment. Approximately 63 percent of the fiscal year 2015 capital budget resides in Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds.

Major public safety projects include the construction of two fire stations using SPLOST funds. Fire Station 31 will be located across from Georgia Gwinnett College at Collins Hill Road, and is expected to be fully operational in the second quarter of 2016. Increased student enrollment and the addition of student dormitories factored into the decision where to locate this new station. Fire Station 10 will be relocated to improve fire and emergency services in the Mall of Georgia area. The addition of the Gwinnett Braves stadium has the potential to impact current resources adequately meeting increased service demands. Existing personnel will staff the relocated station.

The following is an excerpt from p.28 of the Gwinnett FY 2015 Budget document:

The County has relied upon its budget process as an integrated planning tool alongside the County's 2030 Unified Plan, as well as the Business Planning Process. The quality of the County's Unified Plan has received both state and national recognition, with awards coming from both the Georgia Planning Association and the American Planning Association.

The County's 2030 Unified Plan encompasses the following themes:

- Maintaining economic development and fiscal health
- Fostering redevelopment
- Maintaining mobility and accessibility
- Providing more housing choices
- Keeping Gwinnett a preferred place

In developing the 2015 budget, County Administration continued the Business Planning Process that was set up in 2009. This process directs departments to develop cohesive business plans that produce resident-driven outcomes. The Business Planning Process connects strategy and core services to the budget and decision-making process.

The budget represents the financial plan resulting from the Business Planning Process. This process provides the basis for all stakeholders to understand the expected results and for policymakers to make informed decisions .

The 2015 budget was developed with input from four county residents and business people who were selected by Commission Chairman Charlotte Nash to serve on the budget review committee. They worked with elected officials and staff to review departmental business plans and projected revenues to set priorities.

T. Provide up to ten of your best recent examples of important projects carried out as a result of the plan, with the specific plan references (attach additional sheets as needed).

Gwinnett County Government is a large and complex enterprise, with literally hundreds of activities that can be linked in some way to one of the Unified Plan five themes. The material below is from the transportation project list for the 2014 SPLOST, which is anticipated to bring in about \$250 million into county and city coffers through 2016. The projects were selected by the

Citizens Project Selection Committee (CPSC) The relevant Policies (which are a subset of each theme) from the Unified Plan are noted.

**2014 CITIZENS PROJECT SELECTION COMMITTEE  
RECOMMENDED PROJECTS:  
MAJOR ROADS**

BOC DISTRICT	PROJECT NAME	LOCATION	IMPROVEMENT TYPE
1	Pleasant Hill Road	Howell Ferry Road to the Chattahoochee River	4 to 6 lanes
2	Spalding Drive	Winlers Chapel Road to SR 140 / Holcomb Bridge Road	2 to 4 lanes
3 & 4	SR 324 / Auburn Road	Jim Moore Road to Dacula Road	2 to 3-4 lanes
4	SR 324/ Gravel Springs Road	at I-85	Interchange
3 & 4	Sugarloaf Parkway, Phase II	SR 316 / University Parkway to I-85	New Location
1 & 2	US 23 / SR 13 / Buford Highway	SR 378 / Beaver Run Road to Old Norcross Road West / Langford Road	2 to 4 lanes

The relevant Unified plan Policy is A.3.7: Pursue Strategic Road Widening and New Alignments, which is part of Theme 3: Enhance Mobility and Accessibility. This table is truncated from the original document to keep the total projects enumerated here to ten.

A very significant project focus is in ATMS (Automated Traffic Management Systems). Below are four ATMS projects, culled as above from a larger list.

<b>GW-390A</b>	<b>GWINNETT COUNTY ATMS/ITS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION - FIVE FORKS TRICKUM ROAD</b>	Jurisdiction	Guinnett County	Existing	Planned	Length (mi.)	Network Year		
0013143	FROM ROCKBRIDGE ROAD TO SUGARLOAF PARKWAY	Sponsor	Guinnett County	N/A	N/A	TBD	2020		
Programmed		Service Type	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Analysis Exempt from Air Quality Analysis (40 CFR 93)					
		Status	Year	Fund Type	Federal	State	Local	Bonds	Total
PE			2015	STP - Urban (>200K) (ARC)	\$61,500	\$0,000	\$15,375	\$0,000	\$76,875
CST			2017	Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	\$1,279,000	\$0,000	\$319,700	\$0,000	\$1,598,700
					\$1,340,500	\$0,000	\$335,075	\$0,000	\$1,675,575
<b>GW-390B</b>	<b>GWINNETT COUNTY ATMS/ITS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION - RONALD REAGAN PARKWAY</b>	Jurisdiction	Guinnett County	Existing	Planned	Length (mi.)	Network Year		
0013143	FROM PLEASANT HILL ROAD TO SR 124 (SCENIC HIGHWAY)	Sponsor	Guinnett County	N/A	N/A	TBD	2020		
Programmed		Service Type	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Analysis Exempt from Air Quality Analysis (40 CFR 93)					
		Status	Year	Fund Type	Federal	State	Local	Bonds	Total
PE			2015	STP - Urban (>200K) (ARC)	\$61,500	\$0,000	\$15,375	\$0,000	\$76,875
CST			2017	Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	\$1,211,700	\$0,000	\$302,900	\$0,000	\$1,514,600
					\$1,273,200	\$0,000	\$318,275	\$0,000	\$1,591,475
<b>GW-390C</b>	<b>GWINNETT COUNTY ATMS/ITS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION - OLD PEACHTREE ROAD</b>	Jurisdiction	Guinnett County	Existing	Planned	Length (mi.)	Network Year		
0013143	FROM SUGARLOAF PARKWAY TO NORTH BROWN ROAD/NORTHBROOK PARKWAY	Sponsor	Guinnett County	N/A	N/A	TBD	2020		
Programmed		Service Type	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Analysis Exempt from Air Quality Analysis (40 CFR 93)					
		Status	Year	Fund Type	Federal	State	Local	Bonds	Total
PE			2015	STP - Urban (>200K) (ARC)	\$61,500	\$0,000	\$15,375	\$0,000	\$76,875
CST			2017	Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	\$578,700	\$0,000	\$144,700	\$0,000	\$723,400
					\$640,200	\$0,000	\$160,075	\$0,000	\$800,275
<b>GW-390D</b>	<b>GWINNETT COUNTY ATMS/ITS INFRASTRUCTURE EXPANSION - SR 316</b>	Jurisdiction	Guinnett County	Existing	Planned	Length (mi.)	Network Year		
0013143	FROM SR 20 INTERCHANGE TO BARRON COUNTY LINE (APALACHEE RIVER)	Sponsor	Guinnett County	N/A	N/A	TBD	2020		
Programmed		Service Type	Roadway / Operations & Safety	Analysis Exempt from Air Quality Analysis (40 CFR 93)					
		Status	Year	Fund Type	Federal	State	Local	Bonds	Total
PE			2015	STP - Urban (>200K) (ARC)	\$61,500	\$0,000	\$15,375	\$0,000	\$76,875
CST			2017	Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ)	\$1,604,600	\$0,000	\$401,200	\$0,000	\$2,005,800
					\$1,666,100	\$0,000	\$416,575	\$0,000	\$2,082,675

The relevant Unified Plan Policy is A.3.1: Enhance Signal Coordination and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).

Please attach additional sheets as needed to tell your story. Application should not exceed 20 pages. Application may be electronically transmitted or printed, scanned and emailed to [adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov](mailto:adriane.wood@dca.ga.gov) . For more information, contact Adriane Wood.

Attachment 1- see page 6 of the application for item K.

The Municipal Planning Team will draw on a pool of consultant resources that includes land use planners, market analysts, environmental planners, and transportation planners. Many of these municipal team members are also part of the Unified Plan effort that will help facilitate close coordination.

Another forum for including officials in the participation process is through the monthly Gwinnett Planning Committee (GPC) meetings. The GPC consists of officials from Gwinnett County municipalities that meet every 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month with the Gwinnett Planning staff. The members of the Technical Advisory Committee will update GPC members on the project status at key points in the planning process as it progresses.

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**COMMUNITY LEADERS**

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**PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE** - The Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) is comprised of 25 individuals representing a broad cross section of the County's interest groups. PAC members were selected based on their special interests in the development of the community agenda for Gwinnett County (see Appendix A: Letter of Invitation).

A special effort has been made to insure that this committee reflects the ethnic diversity of the county. The committee ethnic makeup is 8 African American, 8 Asian, 16 Hispanic, and 68 Caucasian. Those involved will be representative of the following boards, organizations and associations:

<b>PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC)</b>	
Gwinnett Co. Board Members	Gwinnett Co. Board of Education
Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce	Gwinnett Clean & Beautiful
Gwinnett Place Mall CID	Highway 78 CID
Council for Quality Growth	Environmental Advocacy
Gwinnett Municipal Association	Homeowners' Associations
Hospital Authority Board	Housing Advocacy
Gwinnett Co. Planning Commission	Recreation Advisory Board
SPLOST Citizen Committee	Transit Advisory Board
Water & Sewer Authority	Gwinnett Village CID

The committee is intended to be the primary vehicle for driving public involvement and community input. The committee will provide guidance and feedback to the project team throughout the planning process. Meetings will be scheduled at appropriate milestone dates to coincide with project deliverables and in advance of all public meetings. The meetings will take place on roughly a monthly basis. The individuals represented on the PAC's have been identified by the Board of Gwinnett County Commissioners from the geographic sub areas of unincorporated Gwinnett County, as well as municipalities, and given a clear mandate and set of responsibilities by the commissioners

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS – Approximately 40 one-on-one, confidential interviews will be conducted during the Community Assessment stage (see Appendix B: List of Stakeholder Interviews). Information gathered from these interviews will give the consultant team a firsthand understanding of how the County's key players view the County's future, including its positive attributes and areas of needed improvement.

So that the interviews solicit the same type of information from all of the stakeholders, a questionnaire will be developed and used. The interviews will summarize major points, reactions, and ideas for in house team use and understanding. Those interviewed are representative of the following groups and communities for individual names and affiliated organizations:

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS	
Board of Commissioners	Planning Commission
CID Directors	Development Community
Human Services	Environmental
Faith Based	Business Leaders
Homeowner Groups	Schools
Housing	Hospital/Medical Services
College/Tech Schools	Seniors

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## BUSINESS COMMUNITY

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The County's business community will be engaged through a cooperative process between the Unified Plan Team and the Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has retained a firm, Market Street Services, to identify issues that have limited the County's ability to retain and attract high technology industries. These industries provide higher paying jobs for information workers, which in turn provide support for the service sector in the County. Market Street Services will conduct 10 focus groups with a broad cross section of the business community. Market Street Services will also conduct focused interviews as needed. The results of focus groups and focused interviews will be shared with the Unified Planning Team. This will allow the Unified Planning Team to focus on other segments of the community. Similarly, the Unified

Planning Team will provide the Chamber with the results of its focus groups (discussed below). In addition, the PAC does include members of the business community.

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## GENERAL PUBLIC

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Gwinnett County will use a variety of community participation techniques to develop the plan. The Community Participation Program activities are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Unified Plan and to ensure a broad participatory base beyond the targeted groups previously identified. So that all of Gwinnett's residents have an opportunity to be engaged in the plan development process, there will be specific emphasis paid to gathering the views of low and moderate income residents and minority populations, as well as transit dependent residents and senior citizens. The following tasks will aid the planning, assessment, evaluation, and implementation of the Unified Plan:

***Open House Public Information/ Public Hearing Meetings*** – Two sets of four public information/public hearing meetings will be held to provide the general public an opportunity to participate in the process. To allow residents convenient access to a meeting, the County will hold meetings at four different locations from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The first set of public hearings/public information meetings will take place November 1 and 2, 2006, to permit citizens an opportunity to provide the County with needs assessment input. At these meetings, the Community Needs Assessment Study and the Community Participation Plan will be primary topic for discussion.

The second set of public hearings/public information meetings will be held in summer 2007. The refined scenarios will be presented at the second set of hearings. The general public will have an opportunity to comment on the content of the hearings, and the Community Agenda will be the primary topic.

At the meetings the public will have opportunities to look at the specifics of the plan developed thus far and provide comments and suggestions on the plan components. The public will be encouraged to view maps and other presentation graphics and examine information regarding proposed HUD grant funded activities, the Atlanta Regional Commission, demographic statistics, transportation and land use, community facilities, economic development, and other data being used in producing the Gwinnett County Unified Plan to satisfy the State of Georgia's Comprehensive Plan requirements. A HUD/CDBG table, a DOT table, and a comprehensive plan table will be provided. Comment forms will be distributed at these meetings. Staff will be available to take statements from the public for those individuals who prefer to provide their comments verbally. In addition to these opportunities of general public involvement, two mandatory public hearings will be held (see below). The November meetings will take place at the following locations:

- Dacula City Hall, Dacula
- Lenora Park Activity Center, Snellville
- Mountain Park Activity Center, Lilburn

- Suwanee City Hall, Suwanee
- Additional site: Simpsonwood Retreat Center. This additional meeting was added at the request of the Peachtree Corners Homeowners Association. The displays will be a part of their regular meeting on Monday, November 27, 2007.

Spanish and Korean-speaking translators will be available at these meetings, as deemed necessary.

The County placed a display ad on October 17, 2006 in the Gwinnett Daily Post –the official legal organ of Gwinnett County. The public information meetings/public hearings were also advertised on the County website and information flyers were sent to the homeowner associations and all the members of the Planning Advisory Committee and Planning Commission. Appendix C provides the formal public notice of the Needs Assessments Public Hearings/Public Information Meetings.

**Focus Groups** – In order to ensure meaningful involvement of Gwinnett County's diverse cultural population, five focus group sessions will be conducted with a representative selection of Hispanic, African American, Chinese, and Korean residents of Gwinnett County. The focus groups are intended to capture the perceptions, needs, and recommendations from the public about Gwinnett County related to economic growth, land use, transportation, and other issues or concerns the public may have. The focus groups will also be used to help create a community vision for the future of Gwinnett that is reflective of the County's residents. The focus group sessions will be conducted after an initial round of scenarios have been developed. The participating individuals will be asked to react to the scenarios and their performance and provide input into the refinement of the scenarios.

A demographic profile will be used to recruit the focus group participants. The profile will ensure that selected members meet the desired demographic profile and that the information obtained meets the objectives of the project.

**Gwinnett Homeowner Association** – In mid-2006, Gwinnett County began compiling a record of contact information with the homeowner associations (HOA). To date, Gwinnett County Government has 92 active HOAs in its email records. The County will communicate periodically with these HOAs via email. A letter was sent to all notifying them of the Unified Plan process. This includes the public information meetings and the website. There is also a comment process via the website where the County will receive comments.

**Project Website** – The website for the 2030 Unified Plan will reside on the Gwinnett County website, [www.gwinnettcountry.com](http://www.gwinnettcountry.com). The website will function as a repository of information about the project for the public to view and download. Content will include descriptions of the three components of the Unified Plan (comprehensive transportation

plan, comprehensive plan, consolidated plan); schedule of events (such as public meeting dates); links to important related websites (e.g., the Water and Sewer Master Plan, the Community and Economic Development Strategy sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Community Services, and the Atlanta Regional Commission); frequently asked questions; and recent news about development, housing, and transportation in the County.

The website will post press releases, meeting presentations, and focus group results. Products developed through the planning process, such as demographic forecasts, market assessment, and proposed development scenarios, will also be posted. Additionally, the website will have a form citizens can fill out to receive an email about upcoming meetings and other ways to get involved. Content will be developed by the project consulting team in conjunction with County staff. Comments can be sent to [UnifiedPlan@gwinnettcountry.com](mailto:UnifiedPlan@gwinnettcountry.com).

***Gwinnett County Government Access Cable TV Channel*** – This media outlet will be used to advertise open house public meetings and to broadcast excerpts of the PAC meetings.

***Other Methods of Outreach*** – Public meetings and hearings will also be announced on signs posted throughout the County as well as in local newspaper advertisements.

***Required Public Hearings*** – There will be two sets of public hearings for this project. Each set of hearings will consist of a meeting before the Planning Commission and a meeting before the Board of Commissioners. The first set of hearings will brief the community in a formal setting on the potential issues and opportunities to be identified during the Community Assessment task at the outset of the project. The public hearings will also serve to obtain input on the Community Participation Program. Spanish- and Korean-speaking translators will be available at these hearings, as required.

***Evaluation*** – In order to measure the effectiveness of the Community Participation Program, follow-up will be made with a random number of public hearing attendees. Directed comments will be solicited from these attendees as a feedback mechanism and qualitative evaluation of the public involvement process for this project.

Attachment 3- see page 6 of the application for item N.

#### Public Involvement in the Zoning Process

There are a number of ways in which the public can be involved in the Gwinnett County zoning process. Upon submittal of a rezoning/change in conditions/special use permit application, the case is scheduled for two public hearings: one before the Planning Commission and one before the Board of Commissioners. The zoning case information is published by the Planning and Development Department as a legal advertisement in the local paper no less than 15 days and no more than 45 days before the first public hearing. The applicant is responsible for posting a zoning sign on the property no less than 15 days prior to the first public hearing. The applicant also mails notices to neighboring property owners within a 1,000-foot radius using names and addresses from the Gwinnett County tax records and provided by the Current Planning Division of the Planning and Development Department. This is also done at least 15 days prior to the first scheduled public hearing. Proof of the mail out is submitted to the Current Planning Division or the application may be tabled by the Planning Commission or the Board of Commissioners.

Prior to the public hearings, interested parties may contact the Current Planning Division to obtain additional information about a particular application. If they prefer to view the information online rather than in person, they may do so online at [www.gwinnettcounty.com](http://www.gwinnettcounty.com). They may also call, email, or mail the Planning Commissioners and the district commissioner who represents the district where the proposal is located. Current Planning staff will then research the proposal and prepare a written report with a recommendation to approve or deny the request and submit the report to the Planning Commission. That case report is also available to view online one week prior to the first hearing. The Planning Commission then holds the first public hearing and makes their recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners then holds the second public hearing and makes the final binding decision on the matter. During both of these public hearings, the applicant and opposition have 10 minutes each to speak for or against a specific proposal.