

ANALYSIS OF CONSISTENCY WITH QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES (QCOs)

QUALITY COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES: LOCAL ASSESSMENT

In 1999, the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the DCA, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community “you are here.” Each of the fifteen QCOs has a set of yes/no questions, with additional space available for assessors’ comments. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. “No’s” may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

This initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns as governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective, it may consider a “yes” to each statement a benchmark toward achievement. This assessment is an initial step. Local governments striving for excellence in quality growth may consider additional measures to meet local goals.

Development Patterns		
Traditional Neighborhoods		
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.	X	
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development "by right" so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.	X	
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		X
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in the summer.		X
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X	
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X	
7. In some areas several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X	
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.	X	
9. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.	X	

- Several zoning districts are classified as mixed use (mixture of commercial, residential, institutional, and/or residential uses). However, the majority of zoning districts allow for a single use only.
- Neo-traditional development is currently allowed only in Planned Unit Developments (PUDs)
- The existing tree ordinance does not prevent total land clearance (and tree removal) of a developable site. Incentives and/or requirements for land developers to retain significant shade trees and native species on site should be included in the tree ordinance, in addition to requirements for planting new trees.
- Many of the city's main thoroughfares do not possess shade trees or other types of ornamental street trees.
- Keep Bulloch Beautiful operates regular beautification programs and organized clean-ups within the city.

- Many streets and public rights-of-way outside of the downtown and the surrounding residential areas lack pedestrian amenities.
- Downtown and the areas surrounding GSU are the only districts area where several errands can be, and frequently are, carried out on foot.
- Several, but not all, schools are located near the students that they serve. Elementary schools located in residential neighborhoods can be accessed safely on foot or bicycle. However, the majority of the student population and school staff commute by bus or car.

School Name	Location
Julia P. Bryant Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Langston Chapel Elementary	Rural roadway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity
Langston Chapel Middle	Rural roadway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity
Mattie Lively Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Mill Creek Elementary	Suburban roadway, adjacent to residential areas
Sallie Zetterower Elementary	Residential neighborhood
Statesboro High School	Suburban roadway; adjacent to residential areas
William James Middle School	Rural highway (Bulloch County); no residential proximity

Infill Development		
Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.		X
2. Our community is actively working to promote brownfield redevelopment.		X
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		X
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road).		X
5. Our community allows small lot development (5,000 square feet or less) for some uses.		X

- The Downtown Statesboro Development Authority is compiling a list of vacant sites and other properties available for development that are located within its boundaries. A similar inventory is not available for the entirety of the jurisdiction.
- The city does not have a large amount of brownfields.
- Small lot development is allowed downtown only, by approval of the City Council.

Sense of Place		
Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where he or she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	X	
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage, and have taken steps to protect those areas.		X
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.		X
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X	
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X
6. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X

- Downtown Statesboro has a distinct sense of place that needs to be maintained and enhanced.
- The majority of areas outside of downtown and GSU, particularly commercial districts along the city's highway corridors, lack a sense of place.
- The city has identified numerous historic districts and neighborhoods within its jurisdiction. However, there are currently no local ordinances in place to protect historic buildings or to preserve the context and integrity of the historic districts and neighborhoods.
- The city is considering a restriction on metal siding on commercial buildings.
- The city has a signage ordinance that it enforces.

Transportation Alternatives		
Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have public transportation in our community.		X
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.	X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X	
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		X
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible.		X
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X	

- GSU operates a bus system for faculty, students and staff which could serve as the backbone for a community-wide public system.
- Sidewalks in new developments are only required along arterial and collector streets.

Regional Identity		
Each region should promote and preserve a regional “identity,” or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.	X	
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.	X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal, etc.).	X	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development’s regional tourism partnership.		
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.	X	

6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment and education.	X	
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- In terms of architectural quality and context, Statesboro has many buildings and historic districts from the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that are representative of the styles and heritage of south Georgia.
- The city recently inaugurated a farmers market.
- Statesboro serves as the economic and cultural hub of the region, providing surrounding communities with business, entertainment and education opportunities. This role needs to be thoroughly embraced and marketed to the surrounding region.
- For a community of its size, Statesboro has exceptional access to cultural events, activities and performances through its association with GSU. The city also promotes the arts by sponsoring the Averitt Arts Center, which has become a cultural center for the downtown district.

Resource Conservation		
Heritage Preservation		
The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.	X	
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		X
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure this.		X

- Historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, but are not locally designated or protected.
- To prevent loss of or irrevocable alteration to the city's valuable historic resources, preservation needs to be seen as an important issue and championed by an appointed historic preservation commission.
- Development within downtown is required to be compatible with its surroundings, but specific design guidelines do not exist.

Open Space Preservation		
New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		X
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace, either through direct purchase or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		X
3. We have a local land conservation program, or we work with state or national land conservation programs, to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.		X
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		X

- Conservation of the city's remaining agricultural and forest land needs to be seen as a priority. Green spaces and open agricultural are a part of the city's unique heritage.

Environmental Protection		
Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.		X
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.		N/A
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and taken steps to protect them.		X
4. Our community has passed the necessary "Part V" environmental ordinances, and we enforce them.		X
5. Our community has a tree preservation ordinance which is actively enforced.	X	
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.	X	
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.		X
8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.).		X

- Forests, agricultural lands, wetlands, streams, and other natural resources within the city are increasingly being encroached upon and/or replaced by new development.
- The city follows state and federal requirements for defining and protecting its natural resources.
- The city uses conventional best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater, but recent advances in stormwater management are not currently reflected in these practices. Recent BMPs include reduction of impervious surfaces, on-site stormwater retention in the form of bio-swales, and residential and commercial re-use of graywater.

Social and Economic Development		
Growth Preparedness		
Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.		X
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X
3. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community.	X	
4. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently, and believe that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.		X
5. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X	
6. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth, and these areas are based on a natural resources inventory of our community.		X
7. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.	X	
8. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.		X
9. We have procedures in place that make it easy for the public to stay informed about land use issues, zoning decisions, and proposed new development.	X	

10. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.	X	
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- The city has access to recent population studies which city officials feel underestimate the actual population growth.

Appropriate Businesses		
The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets and weaknesses, and has created a business development strategy based on them.	X	
2. Our economic development organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit businesses and/or industries that will be compatible.	X	
3. We recruit firms that provide or create sustainable products.		X
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple our economy.	X	

- The largest employers in Statesboro include GSU, East Georgia Regional Medical Center, and several industries and corporations, with no particular sector of employment being overemphasized.
- The presence of locally- and regionally-based businesses (smaller business operations are often referred to as “mom and pops”) has diminished in recent years due to competition from national chain retailers and restaurants. Local businesses in the community need to be supported in order to maintain a vibrant and diverse business culture that retains economic ties with Statesboro and Bulloch County.

Employment Options		
A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.	X	
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X	

3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X	
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X	
Housing Choices		
A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.		X
2. People who work in our community can also afford to live in the community.	X	
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate and above-average).	X	
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and maintaining small setbacks.		X
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.	X	
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.	X	
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X	
8. We support community development corporations that build housing for lower-income households.	X	
9. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.	X	
10. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.		X

- Public housing, provided by the Statesboro Housing Authority, is at capacity and has a continuous wait list of families who need affordable housing. This indicates that more units need to be provided for the neediest residents.
- The community has an active Habitat for Humanity program.

Educational Opportunities		
Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. Our community provides workforce training options for its citizens.	X	

2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.	X	
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X	
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X	

- Workforce training and adult education are provided by Ogeechee Technical College (OTC) and the Continuing Education Center at GSU.
- GSU and OTC provide excellent higher education opportunities for students within the region. Proximity to colleges and universities in the Savannah area (50 miles away) significantly increases the available options.

Governmental Relations		
Regional Solutions		
Regional solutions to needs shared by more than one local jurisdiction are preferable to separate local approaches, particularly where this will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We participate in regional economic development organizations.	X	
2. We participate in regional environmental organizations and initiatives, especially regarding water quality and quantity issues.	X	
3. We work with other local governments to provide or share appropriate services, such as public transit, libraries, special education, tourism, parks and recreation, emergency response, E-911, homeland security, etc.	X	
4. Our community thinks regionally, especially in terms of issues like land use, transportation and housing, understanding that these go beyond local government borders.	X	
Regional Cooperation		
Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.		
Statement	Yes	No
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for comprehensive planning purposes.	X	
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategy.		X

3. We initiate contact with other local governments and institutions in our region in order to find solutions to common problems, or to craft regionwide strategies.	X	
4. We meet regularly with neighboring jurisdictions to maintain contact, build connections, and discuss issues of regional concern.	X	

- The City of Statesboro and Bulloch County are preparing their respective comprehensive plans separately. However, they are currently collaborating on a countywide transportation plan.
- City officials meet as needed with neighboring jurisdictions; has regular meetings with GSU.