



# PlanFirst

**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 for both, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>). To be selected for PlanFirst designation, a multi-agency review panel will evaluate a number of indicators of community success with plan implementation. 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, attaching additional pages where necessary. Attach letters of support or other evidence of local commitment to successfully participate in this program if selected. Total application length, including support letters, must not exceed 20 pages.

1. Applicant Government Athens-Clarke County
2. Address 120 W. Dougherty St., Athens GA 30601
3. Contact Person Rick Cowick
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5. E-mail richard.cowick@athensclarkecounty.com
6. Application prepared by Rick Cowick

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.

7. Official Signature Nancy B. Denson
8. Date 5-13-14
9. Name (please print) Nancy B. Denson
10. Title Mayor



<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
a. We have a good track record with maintaining our Qualified Local Government status and submitting required reports to DCA. 	A-CC has maintained QLG status since its inception. All required reports are made a priority and have been submitted in accordance with stated deadlines. Last year A-CC provided the mandated 2013 Five-Year Update of the Comprehensive Plan.
<b>Goals</b>	
b. The Goal (or <i>Vision</i> ) section of our Comprehensive Plan is supported by the community and its leadership.	A-CC uses the goals and vision section of the Comprehensive Plan in every analysis of a zoning action. A section within the staff reports specifically addresses relevant goals, visions, and policies of the Comprehensive Plan to be considered with each request.
c. The Goals are both ambitious and achievable for the community. 	Of the 49 items in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program, The 2013 Update noted that 22 were completed and 24 are in the process of being achieved. The 2014-2018 Short-Term Work Plan has 26 items that are proposed to be accomplished in the next five years.
d. The Goals steer local decision-making on a continuous basis.	A-CC uses the goals and vision section of the Comprehensive Plan in every analysis of a zoning action (Future Development Map amendments, Zoning Map amendments, and zoning and development code amendments). Zoning Map amendments are required to adhere to the Future Development Map. The Comprehensive Plan goals are also considered in the annual budget adoption process.
e. Consistent progress is being made at achieving the Goals.	Of the 49 items in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program, The 2013 Update noted that 22 were completed and 24 are in the process of being achieved. The 2014-2018 Short-Term Work Plan has 26 items that are proposed to be accomplished in the next five years.
<b>Leadership</b>	
f. We have effective planning staff or another suitable arrangement for handling community planning matters.	The Planning Department staff consists of 18 full-time employees, many of whom have been with the organization for over a decade. All planners must have a bachelor's degree at a minimum, and our current employees provide a broad range of education insight, including degrees in planning, landscape architecture, historic preservation, geography, political science, business, etc.).

<p>g. We have an active planning commission or similar body to steer local planning decisions.</p>	<p>A-CC has a Planning Commission, which is involved in the consideration of all Future Development Map amendments, Zoning Map amendments, and zoning and development code amendments.</p>
<p>h. We have a regular local plan effectiveness evaluation process (such as annual planning retreats of elected leadership).</p>	<p>The A-CC Mayor &amp; Commission considers the Comprehensive Plan when holding annual retreats to prepare goals for the upcoming fiscal year.</p>
<p>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.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>The most recent A-CC Mayor &amp; Commission annual retreat, at which the Comprehensive Plan goals were discussed, was held on December 9, 2013. All elected and appointed officials are given an orientation associated with their respective duties as they pertain to enactment of the Comprehensive Plan. New members of the Mayor &amp; Commission, as well as members of the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Hearings Board receive training from staff at the beginning of their terms. Periodic training sessions are held with the appointed boards, such as the Historic Preservation Commission on March 27 and May 22, 2013 and the Hearings Board on May 14, 2014. The Planning Commission reviewed and provided comment on last year's Comprehensive Plan Update.</p>
<p>j. Provide up to ten of your best recent examples where the plan steered a key local decision.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p>	<p>Some recent examples where the Comprehensive Plan steered local decisions are the funding of the Oak/Oconee Street and Prince Avenue corridor studies; the hiring of a new Neighborhood Planner staffing position; the funding of a new Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI); creation of the Public Art Advisory Council; adoption of an electric vehicle parking ordinance; creation of a water conservation rate pricing structure; creation of a greenspace acquisition program; adoption of the Outdoor Lighting and Glare Standards ordinance; and adoption of the Complete Streets Policy.</p>
<p><b>Participation</b></p>	
<p>k. Our comprehensive plan was prepared with multiple community input opportunities.</p>	<p>Attached is a list of the various methods by which the community was afforded numerous opportunities to provide input on the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.</p>
<p>l. The community input received during plan preparation influenced the content of the plan.</p>	<p>The various sub-committees for each of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan topics were made-up of individuals within the community who</p>

	either volunteered or were appointed to develop the visions, objectives, issues, and policies stated therein.
m. Our steering committee that guided development of the plan included local leaders and elected officials.	Attached is a list of the various steering committee members. Although no elected officials directly served on the committee, each member was selected and appointed by the Mayor & Commission.
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.	A-CC uses a variety of means in support of outreach efforts within the community, including various neighborhood meetings at places of public gathering, legal notices, mailings, website, and sign postings, and the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI). The NNI process was adopted by the Mayor and Commission in May of 2005 with the goal of improving communication between neighborhoods and developers about construction projects proposed in or adjacent to the neighborhood's boundaries. Once an application is submitted to the Planning Department and placed on the appropriate agenda for review, a notice is emailed to people registered to receive NNI notices for the Neighborhoods, Overlay Areas and Commission Districts the project falls within.
o. We have active advocates for plan implementation (such as activist citizens, organizations or neighborhood groups) that are listened to by community leaders.	A-CC is long considered a very proactive community and includes a large number of groups who advocate for certain causes. These include CAPP (Community Approach to Planning Prince Avenue), Federation of Neighborhoods, registered neighborhood associations, Athens Land Trust, Athens Area Home Builders, Chamber of Commerce, and Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation.
<b>Implementation</b>	
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.	Attached is a copy of the FY2014-2018 Short-Term Work Plan.
q. Our Work Program action items clearly address local needs or Goals identified in the plan.	Both a copy of the FY2014-2018 Short-Term Work Plan and the Guiding Principles and Objectives of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan have been included for your comparison.
r. We have a good track record of accomplishing most of the action items included in past plan Work Programs.	Of the 49 items in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan Short-Term Work Program, The 2013 Update noted that 22 were completed and 24 are in the process of being achieved.

<p>s. Our local capital budget is consistent with, and is designed to implement, the comprehensive plan.</p>	<p>The completed and ongoing FY2011 SPLOST projects and the proposed FY2015 budget, to be considered for adoption next month, are consistent with, and are designed to implement, the Comprehensive Plan. A list of the SPLOST projects and a summary of the draft FY2015 budget are attached.</p>
<p>t. Provide up to ten best of your best recent examples of important projects carried out as a result of the plan.</p>	<p>Some recent examples of important projects carried out as a result of the plan are the Oak/Oconee Street and Prince Avenue corridor studies; a downtown master plan; the creation of the Milledge Avenue and Buena Vista Historic Districts; the Oconee Street Park &amp; Ride location; the Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (ChaRM) facility; a greenway master plan; Pulaski Creek Greenway &amp; Park; and expansion of the Classic Center.</p>

## **2008 Comprehensive Plan Community Input Opportunities**

### **Kick-Off Public Meeting**

Athens-Clarke County hosted a kick-off meeting to announce officially the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders. Government officials were invited to introduce the process and the community participated in the viewing of presentations covering the project purpose and general plan approach. Initial opinion surveys and volunteer sign up forms were available at the meeting.

### **Steering Committee Meetings**

The Steering Committee and subcommittees provided guidance and feedback throughout the planning process. Meetings were scheduled at appropriate benchmarks to coincide with project deliverables and in advance of all public meetings.

### **Community Agenda Survey**

The visioning process was accomplished through preference web-based surveys conducted over the internet. The Athens Regional Library had internet access available for the Community. Results were announced through the use of print media and the Athens-Clarke County website.

### **Public Hearing**

The Draft Comprehensive Plan Update was presented at a public hearing held near the end of the planning process. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the public of the findings and information contained within the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

### **Maintain Project Website**

Athens-Clarke County had a special link on the home page of the Athens-Clarke County website that provided information on the progress of the planning process. Throughout the process, information was updated and questionnaires continually revised to solicit well-focused comments. A dedicated e-mail address was assigned to the Comprehensive Plan project and was managed by Athens-Clarke County staff.

### **Public Information Outreach Plan**

The Athens-Clarke County Public Information Office and the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department staff coordinated the development of an effective media plan to publicize information on the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders. The following methods were used to inform the citizens and media about the plan progress.

**Media Education:** Media outlets (e.g. print, radio, or television) were educated about the plan. The development of creative press releases, feature stories, columns, and interviews were used to better inform the public.

**Public Information Materials:** Outreach materials were created and used to help the public understand the Comprehensive Plan. These materials were distributed at public meetings and other geographical locations to educate and establish visible, continuous public feedback (for example: fact sheets, comment forms, notices, and a stakeholder database for mass mailing or mass e-mailing).

### **Required Public Hearings**

Athens-Clarke County advertised all public hearings in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification for initiation of the Planning Process, review and adoption of the Community Participation Plan, and review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan involved input from groups within Athens-Clarke County, including, but not limited to, the Planning Commission, applicable staff, development professionals, the general public, and the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission.

## 2008 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Name	Represented
John Ahee	Arts
Vivian Alford	Education
Jonathan Biron	Planning Commission
Jenn Burnell	Health (alt)
Katie Calkin	Health
Shane Dekle	Development
Kathryn Fowler	Social Services
Charlie Gluodenis	Housing
David Hamilton	Neighborhoods
Amy Johnson	Transportation
Elizabeth Little	Environment
Julie Prough	Disability
John Rogers	Business
John Shealy	Agriculture
Rachel Sleppy	Historic Preservation
Danny Sniff	UGA
Scott Weinberg	Planning Commission

**Short Term Work Plan (2014-2018)**  
**Athens-Clarke County Unified Government, 2014-2018**

Description	Begin Date	Complete Date	Remaining Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Identify methods by which Athens-Clarke County can economically capitalize on the opportunities for medical research, training, and health care services.	FY14	FY18	TBD	N/A	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Develop and evaluate a regional economic plan in partnership with other area governments.	FY14	FY18	N/A	N/A	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Establish a formal data measurement process to evaluate the effectiveness of economic-development incentives.	FY14	FY18	TBD	N/A	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Additional support is needed for local artists and musicians. Investigate programs to support opportunities that promote self-sustainability for members of the local arts and music community.	FY14	FY18	TBD	N/A	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore incentives for fuel-efficient private vehicles.	FY14	FY18	TBD	N/A	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Consider amendments to strengthen the environmental areas ordinance that address vegetation and allowable structures so as to maximize floodplain function in a natural fashion.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Collaborate with state agencies to explore the feasibility of a maintenance and monitoring ordinance for onsite wastewater management systems and to educate the public on the proper use and maintenance of septic systems.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

Description	Begin Date	Complete Date	Remaining Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Research, create and submit restrictions to reduce the use of plastic bags at points of sale and the sale of plastic bottles.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
The Athens-Clarke County government will pursue the creation of a committee of urban church representatives and officials in charge of public buildings and parking to create innovative ways to share space for uses that operate on different days / hours.	FY14	FY18	~ \$5,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Consider an ordinance or policy to protect historic architectural materials, urban archaeology and historic landscapes.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Perform periodic renter/home ownership survey—rents, new home prices, resale values, condos vs. real property, etc.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Investigate standards whereby accessory dwelling units may be integrated with owner occupied housing in Single Family (RS) zones.	FY14	FY18	~ \$50,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Continue to review codes and regulations affecting new development to ascertain if they present challenges to the attainment of mixed use, neo-traditional development.	FY14	FY18	~ \$50,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore opportunities to amend Athens-Clarke County Code to enhance the protection of natural environmental features such as topography, mature forests, rock outcrops, historic sites and streams.	FY14	FY18	~ \$10,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore the desirability of using Form Based Codes within our development regulations.	FY14	FY18	~\$25,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

Description	Begin Date	Complete Date	Remaining Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Continue to develop the sidewalk network emphasizing connectivity and accessibility.	FY14	FY18	~\$1,675,000	ACC General Funds / SPLOST / Georgia State Funds / Federal Funds	Athens-Clarke County (Transportation & Public Works / Engineering)
Create design guidelines for compatible infill development.	FY14	FY18	~\$50,000 - \$150,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Review Commercial Zoning Classifications (e.g. Commercial Neighborhood and Commercial General) and Future Development categories (e.g. Corridor Business) as they relate to one another.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Investigate rezoning of properties that are incompatible with the Future Development Map and/or existing uses.	FY14	FY18	~\$25,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore the possibility of using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the review of proposed development projects.	FY14	FY18	~\$25,000	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Protect working agricultural lands through various means which might include zoning, tax policies, easements, acquisition, and promotion of small-scale local farming.	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore opportunities for increased participation, including but not limited to the creation of neighborhood planning units or the expansion of the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI).	FY14	FY18	TBD	ACC General Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Athens-Clarke County will continue to connect new and old sidewalk systems.	FY14	FY18	~\$1,675,000	ACC General Funds / SPLOST / Georgia State Funds / Federal Funds	Athens-Clarke County (Transportation & Public Works / Engineering)
Athens-Clarke County in collaboration with the Clarke County School Board, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (NEGRDC), and the Safe Routes to Schools Task Force will develop a Safe Route to Schools program at selected schools.	FY14	FY18	~\$360,000	ACC General Funds / SPLOST / Georgia State Funds / Federal Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

Description	Begin Date	Complete Date	Remaining Cost	Funding Sources	Responsible Parties
Map existing and proposed rights of way to determine the suitability and funding feasibility of each for inclusion in a connected system of bicycle and pedestrian pathways.	FY14	FY18	~\$4,325,000	ACC General Funds / SPLOST / Georgia State Funds / Federal Funds	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government
Explore the potential for expanding Athens Transit System into adjoining counties in order to promote movement among population, commercial and employment centers	FY14	FY18	~\$200,000	Federal Transit Administration / Transit Development Revision	Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

# **Guiding Principles & Objectives of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan**

The following Guiding Principles and Objectives were adopted by the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission. The Guiding Principles are broad, community-wide “need statements,” designed to encompass a variety of related issues. These related issues are referred to as Guiding Objectives, which are specific items that need to be addressed.

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Guiding Principle: To include the community in an open process of public decision making.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. We will actively encourage and facilitate citizen involvement in the planning and decision-making processes of our government.
- B. We will take pro-active steps to coordinate various public sector agencies with the Comprehensive strategies and policies of Athens-Clarke County.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Guiding Principle: To preserve the beauty of our community and act as responsible stewards of the natural environment.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. We will be responsible stewards of the natural environment
- B. We recognize the importance of ensuring adequate supplies of quality water through the protection of ground and surface water sources.
- C. We will protect environmentally-sensitive corridors and utilize appropriate spaces to create a community-wide system of greenways and open spaces.
- D. We consider as critical importance to our community the preservation and protection of flood plains, wetlands, stream corridors, wild life habitats, tree canopies and unique topography.
- E. We will develop and manage our land and transportation network to ensure the quality of our air and water.
- F. We will support enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

## GROWTH AND ECONOMY

Guiding Principle: To support growth that protects community resources and sustains the high quality of life we want in Athens-Clarke County.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. We will adopt measures to manage and control the growth of our population as much as possible.
- B. We will adopt measures that will enhance the future profile of our population.
- C. We will actively participate in and support regional growth planning in the twelve counties of Northeast Georgia.
- D. We will enhance Athens-Clarke County as the commercial, tourist, educational, medical, arts and recreation center of Northeast Georgia.

E. We will encourage the retention, expansion and creation of businesses that enhance our economic well being.

F. We will encourage the development of Downtown as a vibrant center for culture, government, dining, residential and retail diversity.

G. We will protect and capitalize on the historical heritage of the community as a major economic development tool.

H. We will promote and support the growth of the “Arts Industry.”

## LAND USE

Guiding Principle: To enact land use policies that avoid urban sprawl.

Guiding Objectives:

A. Our community will use land effectively to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.

B. We will preserve the rural character and the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of our community.

C. We will develop a recognizable transition from the urban to the rural areas of our community.

D. We will support urban and suburban development where it can be adequately served by public facilities as designated in the Comprehensive Plan.

E. A higher level of urban services (sewer, water, fire, police, recreation, etc.) will be provided to areas of our community that we want to develop at urban-level densities.

F. We will be committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas located within our community.

G. We will encourage developments that provide a mix of shopping, housing and jobs.

H. We will support opportunities for residential and non-residential in-fill development that positively impacts the character of existing neighborhoods.

I. Recreation and greenspace will become an integral facet of our community's land use.

## LIFE-LONG LEARNING

Guiding Principle: To establish Athens-Clarke County as a community that supports life-long learning for its citizens.

Guiding Objectives:

A. We will recognize the importance of providing life-long learning opportunities for ...

- Cultivating the strengths of our citizens
- Enhancing our job skills
- Understanding the environment
- Increasing our cultural enjoyment
- Exploring retirement interests
- Affording personal enrichment

B. The neighborhood public school concept is the foundation of our community's long-term prosperity.

C. University and vocational education will continue to be life-long learning opportunities for our residents and visitors.

D. The long term prosperity of our community will be supported by the educational function of our parks and recreational services, public libraries, museums and other cultural amenities.

## MOBILITY

Guiding Principle: To support transportation policies that offer viable alternatives to the automobile.

Guiding Objectives:

A. Land use policies shall encourage transportation corridors that support multiple modes of transportation and enhance the aesthetics of the community.

B. The multi-modal transportation network will be used to support efficient land use, minimize traffic congestion and facilitate community-wide and regional mobility.

C. We will ensure that urban density will be located in areas that are conducive to walking and biking and are served by transit.

D. We will coordinate high density land use with public transportation.

E. The greenway corridor will be expanded and connected to support individual transportation needs.

F. Transportation and greenway corridors will be supported by the community standards of aesthetics, urban design and environmental stewardship.

G. We will take measures to ensure that vehicular traffic will not harm the residential nature of our neighborhoods.

H. Traffic calming features that slow the speed of traffic and enhance safety and aesthetics without creating congestion will be a part of our street network design.

## NEIGHBORHOODS AND HOUSING

Guiding Principle: To assure that neighborhoods reflect standards that respect the history and character of the community.

Guiding Objectives:

A. Our neighborhoods will be interactive communities where people have easy access to schools, parks, residences and businesses through walkways, bike paths, roads and public transportation.

B. Our neighborhoods shall be strongly linked to the neighborhood public school concept.

C. Our growth strategies will continue to provide resources that support revitalization of neighborhoods and effectively address the physical environment of the disadvantaged.

D. We will adopt measures to increase the percentage of owner-occupied housing.

E. We will accommodate our diverse population by encouraging a harmonious mixture of housing types and uses.

F. Neighborhoods will adhere to design standards that respect the community's historic character.

G. "Classic and traditional" neighborhood development ideals will be used in our land use regulations to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Guiding Principle: To reflect both a strong legislative and financial commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Plan.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. We will make a strong commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. We will identify the necessary financial resources to implement the Comprehensive Plan.
- C. We will ensure that proposed zoning decisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

UNIVERSITY RELATIONS

Guiding Principle: To recognize that The University of Georgia and Athens-Clarke County will work in concert to address mutual needs.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. We will work jointly with the University in developing strategies to address student, university and community issues of mutual concern.
- B. We will integrate land use and infrastructure planning efforts of Athens-Clarke County with the University of Georgia and develop mutual implementation strategies.

URBAN DESIGN & AESTHETICS

Guiding Principle: To use sound design standards to govern development.

Guiding Objectives:

- A. Landscaping, lighting, signage, underground utilities and building design will be used to add value to our community.
- B. Green space will be a major component within our neighborhoods, along our streets, parking lots and within commercial and industrial developments.
- C. We will encourage mixed-use development and design standards that are more humanoriented and less auto-oriented.
- D. Design standards will guide development in order to contribute to our community's character and sense of security.
- E. Our gateways and corridors will have design standards that add visual value thus creating a "sense of place" to our community.
- F. We will apply design standards that reduce the adverse visual impact of the automobile in both commercial and residential areas of our community.
- G. Civic buildings will be located, designed and accessible to public transportation in a manner that enhances the community.
- H. We will apply urban design and aesthetic standards to neighborhoods and other developments as they are retrofitted.
- I. We will encourage historic designation for eligible sites and neighborhoods.

# SPLOST 2011 Project Status

## Project 6: Bicycle Transportation Improvements

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### Project Description

The Bicycle Transportation Improvements project will provide capital improvements to expand the bicycle route system identified in the Bicycle Master Plan approved, and from time to time amended, by the Mayor and Commission. Improvements may include additional roadway bicycle lanes, roadway pavement markings, off-road bicycle paths, and related signage.

### Budget

- SPLOST 2011 Budget: \$4,500,000

## Project 12: Pedestrian Safety & Safe Routes to Schools Program

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### Project Description

The Pedestrian Safety and Safe Routes to Schools program will provide for sidewalk improvements, including the construction and/or installation of pedestrian safety devices such as stamped and colorized crosswalks, flashing crosswalks, radar speed check signs, pedestrian countdown timers, associated signage, and other safety equipment. These are meant for the development of safe routes to schools, which are intended to promote connectivity to neighborhood schools, and are in support of the Sidewalk Improvement Program as approved by the Mayor and Commission.

### Budget

- SPLOST 2011 Budget: \$5,200,000

## Project 21: Public Art Program

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### Project Description

Funding for a public art program will provide for the selection and placement of public art within designated areas to include parks, city entrance corridors, greenways, and government buildings.

### Budget

- SPLOST 2011 Budget: \$410,000

## Project 25: Center for Hard to Recycle Materials

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### Project Description

Funding for the Center for Hard to Recycle Materials (CHaRM) will provide improvements and equipment to establish a recycling center for Athens-Clarke County that can accept designated recycling materials and household hazardous materials that cannot be accepted through other disposal methods, and properly reuse and/or dispose of such materials.

### Budget

- SPLOST 2011 Budget: \$193,000

## **Goals and Objectives for the FY15 Budget**

Goals and Objectives reviewed by the Mayor and Commission on February 11, 2014 and adopted on March 4, 2014, helped to guide the development of the FY15 Budget. Resources have been set aside for some of the objectives. However, many of the objectives are operational and will be achieved with the resources established in this budget.

### ***Goal A: Engage the Community in Visioning the Future of Athens-Clarke County.***

#### *Short Term Strategy:*

*– In FY15, assess the status and progress of past visioning efforts to glean lessons learned. Investigate how the upcoming Comprehensive Planning process might be utilized to achieve a broader vision.*

FY15 Budget: No funds are designated for this strategy in FY15. Staff will work with the Mayor and Commission to develop plans for future consideration.

#### *Long Term Strategy:*

*– Engage the community in a visioning process rather than announcing the M&C's plan. Use such a process and initiative to create a long-term plan that has greater community buy-in and shelf life.*

### ***Goal B: Provide infrastructure that is supportive of sustainable growth, is environmentally sensitive, and is fiscally sound.***

#### ***Goal B Objectives:***

##### ***Energy Conservation:***

#### *Short Term Strategy:*

*– By FY15, reduce the Unified Government's use of all forms of conventional energy resources in Unified Government buildings by 7% compared to consumption during FY07 through education, policy changes, and facility modifications.*

FY15 Budget: There are no specific FY15 operating funds in the Central Services Department's budget identified for this goal. However, during routine maintenance and repair (operating funds) and life-cycle replacements (capital funds), energy efficiency measures will be implemented when feasible primarily through the use of newer, more energy efficient equipment and controls. The SPLOST 2011 Program includes funding for Project #23: Energy Sustainability Program.

#### *Long Term Strategy:*

*– Evaluate and implement energy conservation measures where practical in all Unified Government operations in conjunction with life-cycle replacement programs and capital renovations and improvements for the purpose of reducing energy consumption by 15% as compared to FY07.*

##### ***Water Supply:***

#### *Short Term Strategy:*

*– In FY15, educate citizens and constituents on conservation and protection efforts.*  
*– In FY 15, identify additional water supply resources and begin preliminary evaluation of those resources.*

FY15 Budget: The Water Conservation Program initiated in FY09 will continue in FY15.

#### *Long Term Strategy:*

*-- Explore reuse opportunities for commercial and residential users.*

**Solid Waste Management:**

*Short Term Strategy:*

– In FY15, maintain reductions of not less than 40% per capita in the amount (measured in pounds), of Athens-Clarke County community generated solid waste directed toward landfills compared to such volumes in FY06 and continue positive efforts in support of achieving 2018 reduction goals.

FY15 Budget: The FY15 Budget fully funds support for the SPLOST 2011 CHaRM (Center for Hard to Recycle Materials) facility which is anticipated to open in FY15. The FY15 Budget also includes ongoing funding for the commercial recycling program, as well as the residential recycling program.

*Long Term Strategy:*

– Achieve reductions of not less than 60% by 2018, and 75% by 2020 per capita in the amount (measured in pounds) of Athens-Clarke County community generated solid waste directed toward landfills compared to such volumes in FY06.

**Greenway Master Plan:**

*Short Term Strategy:*

– In FY15, approve elements of Task #3 from the Greenway Network Sequencing Plan Flow Chart as part of the Greenway Network Plan for the North Oconee River Greenway (Southern Section) and the Middle Oconee River Greenway. Elements include Corridor Build-Out Concept and establishment of projects and priorities within each corridor.

FY15 Budget: Ongoing SPLOST and grant funded projects currently exist toward this strategy.

*Long Term Strategy:*

– Continue to develop the Greenway Master Plan.

**Sustainability Plan:**

*Short Term Strategy:*

– In FY15, working with community environmental and transportation groups and Unified Government staff, define the major components of a sustainability plan and identify benchmarks for success.

FY15 Budget: No funds are designated in this budget to meet this strategy. Staff will develop a plan for future consideration by the Mayor and Commission.

**Goal C: Enhance and sustain the quality of life in Athens-Clarke County.**

**Goal C Objectives:**

**Healthy Lifestyles and Foods:**

*Short Term Strategy:*

– In FY15, Use Unified Government communication tools to promote Unified Government sponsored community events and amenities (bike lanes, sidewalks) that encourage healthy lifestyles.

FY15 Budget: No funding is included in the FY15 Budget for this objective. The Leisure Services Department will continue to use its marketing and promotion tools (Program Guide, e-newsletter, Leisure Pursuits newsletters to schools and churches, website, press releases) to promote community programs, activities, and events that promote healthy lifestyles.

*Long Term Strategy:*

– Support efforts and partner with other community organizations to build a collaborative network that identifies and shares health resources and other efforts to make Athens a healthy community.

***Reverse the Deterioration of Multi-Family Housing:***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- In FY15, define the problem and inventory where and how it exists.
- In FY15, engage housing partners to develop possible solutions.
- In FY15, ensure effective code enforcement.

FY15 Budget: No funding is included in the FY15 Budget for this strategy.

*Long Term Strategy:*

- *Integrate an improvement strategy into land use planning process.*
- *Work with the state to develop incentives for private solutions.*

***Improve Multi-Transportation Programs in ACC:***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- *In FY15, study local transportation systems to identify potential efficiency improvements.*
- *In FY15, identify additional alternative transportation options that can be accelerated within SPLOST.*
- *Explore options for traffic calming, pedestrian safety measures, and sidewalk projects and sidewalk installations.*

FY15 Budget: The FY15 Capital Budget for Transit includes \$200,000 to study local transportation systems to identify potential efficiencies and improvements.

*Long Term Strategy:*

- *Increase the frequency and scope of transit service.*
- *Seek funding to preserve and protect current transportation infrastructure.*

***Planning Special Works Projects:***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- *Allocate resources for the development and implementation of the planning department special works programs as approved and scheduled (Infill development, Prince and Oak/Oconee Corridor studies, etc.)*

FY15 Budget: No funding is included in the FY15 Budget for this strategy.

***Workforce Housing Assessment:***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- *In FY15, complete a workforce housing needs assessment to identify deficiencies within the existing housing stock and development strategies to encourage housing diversity.*

FY15 Budget: Currently staff is working on a plan and identifying funding sources for future consideration by the Mayor and Commission.

***Goal D: Recruit and retain a workforce with the skills to meet the diverse needs of the Athens-Clarke County Community.***

***Goal D Objectives:***

***Pension Benefits:***

*Long Term Strategy:*

- *Amend the Defined Benefit Pension Plan to provide incentives for retaining longterm employees.*

FY15 Budget: The FY15 Budget continues to fully fund existing pension benefits for all employees and retirees. In addition, the Budget includes an increase of \$50 per month in pension benefits for current retirees beginning in FY15.

***Compensation and Benefits Plan:***

*Long Term Strategy:*

– *Annually adopt, as part of the budget process, adjustments to the Unified Government’s compensation and benefits plan to retain a competitive compensation position with peer communities.*

FY15 Budget: In order to maintain ACCUG’s ability to recruit and retain employees, the FY15 Budget includes funding of \$2.2 million for a pay table and market adjustment of 2.5% for all employees whose work performance meets or exceed job requirements. The FY15 Budget also includes \$920,000 for the Performance Management Program (PMP) to retain and reward employees who meet or exceed performance expectations.

***Goal E: Establish more efficient criminal justice processes.***

*Short Term Strategy:*

– *In FY15, establish a Criminal Justice Coordinating Committee to identify any remaining Criminal Justice Task Force recommendations that should be local criminal justice system; and to seek input from the system’s key agency officials on a quarterly basis to promote continuous process improvements.*

FY15 Budget: No funding is included in the FY15 Budget for this strategy.

***Goal F: Develop and implement corridor plans for areas such as Prince Avenue, Jefferson Road, Lexington Highway, and Atlanta Highway which are expected to experience heavy growth over the next 20 years.***

***Goal F Objectives:***

***Corridor Plans:***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- *Seek ways to implement recommendations of the Mayor’s Atlanta Highway Study Committee’s review of the corridor.*
- *Develop strategies for improving Lexington Corridor.*
- *In FY15, identify and select the next corridors, or business district, for study under ACCUG gateway and corridor program.*

FY15 Budget: No funding is included in the FY15 Budget for this strategy.

*Long Term Strategy:*

- *Identify funding and partnership opportunities to implement corridor study recommendations.*
- *Work with the state to identify tax incentives to retain existing jobs and business along commercial corridors.*

***Goal G: Ensure continued efficiency and effectiveness of ACC Government Departments, Offices, and Agencies***

*Short Term Strategy:*

- *M&C work to fill Auditor’s position and develop work plan for position.*

FY15 Budget: The FY15 Budget includes funding for the Auditor’s Office.