

RESOLUTION

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION'S COUNCIL

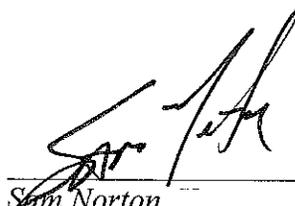
WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires the Georgia Mountains RC to develop and maintain a Regional Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has promulgated certain rules containing the Minimum Standards and Requirements for Regional Planning; and

WHEREAS, the Georgia Mountains RC staff has prepared the 2015 Annual Update to the Regional Work Program portion of the Regional Plan in accordance with the Minimum Standards and Requirements; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Georgia Mountains RC Council does hereby authorize transmittal of the GMRC Regional Work Program Update to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

ADOPTED, this 30th day of April, 2015.



Sam Norton
GMRC Council



REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM

2015 ANNUAL UPDATE

March, 2015

INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is the regional planning and community development agency for a 13 county area in northeastern Georgia. To guide and coordinate special activities, and as directed by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, the GMRC maintains a Regional Plan in accordance with the requirements established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

This document represents the required annual update of the Regional Plan, which consists of four components: 1) A description of the monitoring and evaluation procedures that are undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the Regional Plan; 2) An assessment of the Regional Plan at achieving goals and objectives, and identifying any plan modifications to enhance its effectiveness; 3) A Report of Accomplishments that have occurred in the past year; and 4) A new Regional Work Program for the upcoming five year time frame.

MONITORING ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Progress with the Regional Work Program as a whole is reviewed as part of the annual update process with the GMRC Council. However, monitoring and evaluation of progress with the Regional Work Program is performed regularly throughout the year. This involves several layers of status reports and meetings, and involved input from various committees, local government officials and other stakeholder groups.

- *Staff Project Reports* – Following the approval of each annual update, the Planning Department holds a work session to review the proposed tasks, objectives and strategies and assigns work items to appropriate staff (planning, historic, mapping, environmental, transportation, economic, etc.). The progress of these projects is reported to the Executive Director and the full GMRC Council in monthly Staff Project Reports (SPRs). The SPRs identify the status of each project and is displayed by jurisdiction. The SPRs also provide primary staff contact for each work item and a brief description of progress as needed. Copies of these are found with the minutes of each Council meeting packet.
- *End of Year Review* – The update process begins in earnest in November of each year when the GMRC Planning Department reviews the Regional Work Program to evaluate the status of each project and feasibility of remaining work items. This was done in preparation for the GMRC Annual Meeting held each December, and the results provide the first indication of how priorities may need adjusting going forward. This becomes the basis of the draft update and is circulated to local governments for review and comment, providing the first opportunity for nominating new projects for the coming year.
- *Correlating RC Programs* - Additional review of progress with the Regional Plan includes cross-over work with other regional reporting efforts and projects. Several components of the Regional Work Program must be consistent with the Georgia Mountains Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which includes a copy of the Regional Agenda and is also updated annually. Other documents regularly referenced for coordination include the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, GDOT's

State Improvement Program update, the recently completed Regional Resource Plan and any other regional projects underway at the time.

- *Local Government Interaction* – Copies of the Regional Work Program were also distributed to local communities for review and input on the identified objectives and work items. No new regional projects were added as a result of this effort, with most local governments currently requesting assistance with local planning or plan implementation projects. There were some needs with regards to transportation planning cited but that was in conjunction with ongoing GDOT support for the regional Transportation Investment Act activities.

- *Status of full Plan Update* – Completed and adopted.

RESULTS OF THE 2015 MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

The following is a summary of progress made on several primary GMRC initiatives from 2014:

- Though this Regional Work Program Update is being submitted in accordance with the annual requests of DCA, the GMRC has proposed shifting the update process to the fall, to comply with the process and submittal schedule for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) update. That process will begin in earnest during 2015, beginning with the annual CEDS committee meetings and with the implementation of the new CEDS standards outlined by the Federal Economic Development Administration.
- The GMRC is now two years into implementation of the Department of Human Services (DHS) Coordinated Transit program, and as a result there is now a request from both the State and the local governments to update individual transit plans for each County. This will be done for each county in the region on a rotating three year basis beginning with 3 plans in FY16 plus a regional overview, followed by four county plans each of the next two years, with the cycle beginning over again in FY19.
- Environmental projects for Mud Creek and Coldwater Creek were/will be closed out in FY15. As these projects move to close the GMRC has been working with Habersham and Hart County respectively to draft material for amending their local comprehensive plans to reflect the latest status of these watersheds. Mud Creek is on pace for formal testing to have the watershed removed from the State 303(d) list. A watershed management plan has also been completed for the Upper Chestatee River in Lumpkin County, clearing the way for proposals of implementation projects under DNR funding, while a comparable watershed plan for the Towns/Testnatee Creek watershed in White County is now awaiting formal issuance of DNR funding. Preliminary work on that project has begun with the identification of stakeholders and collection of past testing data.
- The GMRC's downtown assessment projects have been formally initiated with three cities scheduled for completion in FY15: Dawsonville, Cleveland and Hartwell. These projects will formalize each community's plans and proposals for downtown revitalization projects, as guided by the Main Street 4 point approach and other recommendations. Three more communities will be tapped for FY16 and the process will

continue until each County seat and several other prominent cities have a development strategy for the long-term sustainability and economic viability of their urban cores. This is a part of the GMRC's economic strategies based on the growing appeal of these small town centers as part of the region's tourist appeal.

- The GMRC is now seeing requests come in for local plan updates in accordance with the new Planning Standards provided by DCA. Hartwell and White County are underway with comparable measures for 4 other communities under proposal.
- The GMRC's effort to collect/develop a regional master map/dataset for water and sewer lines within the region has been met with some resistance on the part of service providers. Competing plans and interests regarding service delivery and system expansion has left several providers with a desire to withhold information. Others are still updating their GIS-compatible data. The GMRC is still working to collect the data available for purposes of gauging long-term utility capacity and to monitor the extent of septic system use within the region. (This is a FY15 Regional Plan implementation project.) Pending progress and results this project may need to be extended into FY16.
- More Counties within the region are exploring new or more land use management measures. White County has held forums about a proposal for the County's first land use regulation policy. Habersham County is exploring a shift away from the current land intensity district model to more formal land use regulation. The GMRC is assisting with each effort as needed.
- The GMRC's Regional Bike/Ped Plan is being updated in FY15. This includes a new approach regarding the Safe-Routes-to-School program. In the absence of implementation funds there has been little interest from local schools, so the GMRC has instead moved to rank the schools by density of districts and begun moving down the list performing lay assessments of pedestrian accessibility for each campus. Eventually the goal is to have this assessment done for each elementary and middle school, laying the groundwork for their potential formal SRTS implementation projects when funds become available, and/or identifying ways some projects can be pursued through other funds.
- Current levels of web or multi-media based interaction among regional government entities remains very low. Part of this is based on limited needs, especially as small customer bases mean direct emails work best for project sharing and communication. However, there is a desire among various offices to explore ways local and regional governments offices can and should feature more hi-tech applications for project development and possible services.

~

GMRC REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM – 2013 LIST OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Work Item	Status	Comment
Develop a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources; Place on the web	In Progress	
Develop single-map redev. plans for historic downtowns	In Progress	3 due completed in FY15
Develop Regional Rural Transit Plan	Postponed	GDOT priority for FY16
Encourage local governments in the SR 17 corridor to adopt and implement standards and guidelines.	Complete	
Create growth mgmt. programs that provide developer incentives and guidelines as well as methods of increased responsibility and accountability to the local community.	Postponed	Models available; local staff considering; Currently set for FY17
Develop in-house service for calculating cost-benefit analyses for new development & utility improvements	In Progress	
Develop Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan	In Progress	
Develop regional development build-out scenario	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Develop regional growth and tourism strategy specifically for historic downtowns	Postponed	Moved to FY16
Develop a metro-area growth strategy to support urbanizing communities	Postponed	Moved to FY16
Develop regional water infrastructure map.	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Establish a local food guide and local assessments.	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Inventory and map agri-tourism assets of the region.	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies.	Complete	
Education re: environmental impacts of various materials and products placed in landfills	Postponed	Moved to FY17
Develop Highway 441 Tourism Study	In Progress	
Develop Commuter Traffic Study	In Progress	
Update and redress GIS database to improve regional analyses and for faster EIP assistance	Complete	
Develop conservation design guidebook	Complete	
Initiate GMRC Downtown Association	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Develop wastewater edu. and public awareness program.	Complete	Done, with CCRC&D
Inventory and assessment of local water service rates	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Develop a hi-tech strategy for the region	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Develop inventory of parks and rec. plans in the region.	Complete	
Develop a plan for using social media technologies to further promote the region.	Complete	
Expand scope of the Camera Ready program.	Complete	
Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources.	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries	In Progress	To be completed in FY15
Create a regional industry roundtable.	Complete	
Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders.	Postponed	Moved to FY17
Provide educational seminars and workshops on housing programs and services.	Postponed	Moved to FY17

GMRC REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM – 2015

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2015					
Develop a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources; Place on the web	8, 11, 43		GMRC	\$15,000	GMRC
Develop single map redevelopment plans for historic downtowns	43, 44		GMRC, HPD, DCA	\$15,000	GMRC, DCA, ARC
Develop in-house service for calculating cost-benefit analyses for new development & utility improvements	1, 23, 24, 38		GMRC, Local Govts, Chambers	\$25,000	GMRC, AppRC
Develop Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan		DM1.1	GMRC	\$50,000	FMEA, GEMA
Develop regional development build-out scenario	22-24, 36, 38, 42		GMRC, DCA, DED, EPD	\$20,000	DCA, GMRC
Develop regional water infrastructure map.	23, 24	CFS3.2	GMRC, Local Govts.	\$10,000	EPD, GEFA
Establish a local food guide and local assessments.	8, 14	ED9.3	GMRC, EDA, DED	\$10,000	EDA, DCA
Inventory and map agri-tourism assets of the region.	2	ED12.1	GMRC, EDA, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DCA
Develop Highway 441 Tourism Study	9, 28		GMRC, GDOT, GED	\$20,000	GMRC
Develop Commuter Traffic Study	27, 28, 31		GMRC, GDOT	\$10,000	GDOT, GMRC
Initiate GMRC Downtown Association	9, 10, 14, 43, 44	LU2.3	GMRC, EDA, DED	NA	
Inventory and assessment of local water service rates	23	CFS5.4	GMRC, Local Govts	\$5,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
Develop a hi-tech strategy for the region	11, 26	CFS6.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources.	8, 9	ED3.1	GMRC, Local Govts, DED	\$10,000	EDA, DED
Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries	2, 8	ED10.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED

2015 Regional Work Program Update

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2015					
Develop comprehensive road improvement plan combining local and State goals	1, 27, 28	CFS1.1	GMRC, Local Govts., DOT	\$15,000	DOT
Develop a freight/ truck route transportation plan	27, 28	CFS1.3	GMRC, Local Govts., DOT	\$15,000	DOT
Develop new template for local water planning	15, 16, 17, 22, 23	CFS3.1	GMRC, DNR	\$10,000	EPD
Inventory and assessment of local water service conservation strategies	1	CFS5.3	GMRC, DNR	\$10,000	EPD
Develop inventory of energy data and benchmarking.		CFS11.1	GMRC, EDA	\$20,000	EDA
Establish an action plan for funding Critical facilities and Infrastructure improvements.		ED4.1	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers.	14, 26	ED5.2	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Create model design standards and incentive programs for downtown areas	43, 44	ED14.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Develop and distribute preparedness and post-disaster recovery material.		DM2.2	GMRC, GEMA	\$5,000	GEMA
Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	H1.1	GMRC, DCA, Local Govts.	\$5,000	DCA
Inventory of septic system management programs.	1, 16, 17, 24	CFS4.3	GMRC, Local Govts.	\$15,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
Assessment of septic system inventory	16, 17, 24	CFS4.4	GMRC, Local Govts	\$10,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
Develop long-range management plans for targeted corridors in conjunction with GDOT and local stakeholders	27, 28, 32	LU3.1	GMRC, Local Govts., GDOT	\$10,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about health information technology	13, 25	CFS9.3	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED

2015 Regional Work Program Update
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2016					
Update Regional Source Water Assessment Plan	1, 16, 17, 23		GMRC, EPD	\$50,000	EPD
Explore potential for increased rural transit services within the region	1, 3		GMRC, GDOT	\$10,000	GDOT
Develop template for comprehensive neighborhood plans and standards	36, 40, 41	LU4.1	GMRC, DCA	\$5,000	DCA
Develop updated concept for, and inventory of, primary agricultural areas	2, 36	LU5.2	GMRC, DNR, DCA	\$10,000	DNR
Creation of a regional food hub.	8	ED9.1	GMRC, EDA	\$15,000	EDA
Develop an I-85 corridor access and multi-modal study.	27, 32		GMRC	\$150,000	GA DOT, GA DCA, Local Govt., GMRC
Assist local governments and business in the development of multi-county tourism task force focusing on Lake Hartwell.	9, 14		GMRC, Local Govts, Local Chambers	\$5,000	GMRC
Start a school mentor / Junior Achievement program in every junior high and high school in the region.	26	ED5.1	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop and distribute educational materials for entrepreneur programs.	14	ED8.4	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Program promoting Career Days in primary and secondary schools.	26	ED5.3	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop program linking local schools with area Technical Colleges.	26	ED5.4	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Universities.	11, 12, 14	ED8.3	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Regional assessment of emergency services			GMRC, GEMA	\$10,000	GEMA, FEMA
Develop Regional Rural Transit Plan	3		GMRC	\$20,000	GDOT, GMRC
Develop regional growth and tourism strategy specifically for historic downtowns	2	LU2.1	GMRC, DCA, DED	TBD	GMRC, DCA
Develop a metro-area growth strategy to support urbanizing communities	5, 23, 32	LU6.2	GMRC, Local Govts.	TBD	DCA

2015 Regional Work Program Update

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2017					
Review regional Future Development Strategy; Amend as needed	36-44		GMRC	\$10,000	DCA
Update NHRGIS, survey of regional historic resources	16		GMRC, HPD	\$30,000	HPD, DCA
Inventory and develop plans to improve local and regional airports.	30	CFS2.2	GMRC, DOT	\$10,000	DOT
Develop inter-regional/state telecommunications strategy	1	CFS6.6	GMRC, EDA, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Targeted market research study to identify innovation opportunities that correspond to the assets of the region.		ED6.3	GMRC, EDA, DED	\$10,000	EDA, DED
Inventory outside forms of equity financing and possible venture capital opportunities.		ED6.4	GMRC, EDA, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Create growth management programs that provide developer incentives and guidelines as well as methods of increased responsibility and accountability to the local community.	37, 41		GMRC, Local Govts, Dev. Authorities	\$25,000	Local Govt., Dev. Authorities, DCA, DNR, Private Development
Education re: environmental impacts of various materials and products placed in landfills	15, 16, 22, 40		GMRC, Local Govt., Regional Authorities	\$1,000/yr	GMRC, Local Govt., DCA, DNR
Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	H1.2	GMRC	\$2,500	DCA
Provide educational seminars and workshops on housing programs and services.	4, 5, 6, 7	H2.1	GMRC, DCA	\$2,500	DCA

2015 Regional Work Program Update

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2018					
Develop a regional strategic housing plan.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	H3.1	GMRC, DCA	\$15,000	DCA
Develop Regional Post-Disaster Response Framework.		DM3.1	GMRC, GEMA	\$15,000	GEMA
Update Regional Bike/Ped Strategy & related work program	29		GMRC, GDOT	\$15,000	GDOT
Develop Regional Plan update			GMRC, DCA	\$50,000	DCA
Develop summary report on housing survey findings	4, 5, 6, 7	H1.3	GMRC	\$2,000	DCA
2019					
Conduct local and regional disaster preparedness workshops		DM2.1	GMRC, GEMA	\$5,000	GEMA
Assessment of energy efficiency standards in local codes			GMRC, DCA, MEAG, Ga Power	\$10,000	EDA
Explore downtown tourism networking with NC and SC			GMRC, EDA, DED	\$5,000	EDA
2020					
Develop inventory of guidelines and plans for energy efficient sites and building methodologies in the region.		CFS11.2	GMRC, EDA, DED	\$10,000	EDA, DED
Identify and create a database of entrepreneur support resources in the region.	14, 26	ED6.1	GMRC, EDA, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Creation of an entrepreneurial network.	14, 26	ED6.2	GMRC, EDA, DED	TBD	EDA, DED