

THE ATLANTA REGION'S PLAN

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTATION

Draft September 2020



Atlanta Regional Commission

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INTRODUCTION

ARC establishes local performance standards to ensure local government consistency with The Atlanta Region’s Plan Objectives.

Local governments are critical to the success of The Atlanta Region’s Plan. Their responsibilities of providing infrastructure, land use decisions, and providing services are a key factor in the sustainability of the Atlanta region. The most important thing that a local government can do to implement The Atlanta Region’s Plan is to take this responsibility very seriously.

This requires a local commitment to proactive planning, as well as the right set of planning tools, such as a current comprehensive plan, ordinances and other regulations that are consistent with the comprehensive plan, and trained decision makers who fully understand the impacts of their land use and infrastructure decisions.

Many local governments already do things that support the objectives of The Atlanta Region’s Plan and many have plans and ordinances that are excellent examples of how The Atlanta Region’s Plan can be implemented. These best practices should be promoted and shared throughout the region.

However, there is no “one size” fits all approach to implementing The Atlanta Region’s Plan, and communities should be held responsible to achieve some minimum implementation of The Atlanta Region’s Plan and as such the Georgia DCA rules require ARC to establish Minimum and Excellent standards for local government implementation of The Atlanta Region’s Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

To ensure local government consistency with The Atlanta Region’s Plan Objectives, ARC has established a Minimum and an Excellence threshold. The Minimum Standards are activities that are essential to the implementation of The Atlanta Region’s Plan, while the Excellence Standards are activities that are desirable.

ARC is aware of the different needs and abilities of the local governments within the region, therefore there is a Basic and Advanced Level of Standards. Local Governments that have limited staff and growth plans are exempt from the Advance Level. Local Governments have until July 30th, 2024 to complete the Minimum Standards.

Local Governments who are eligible for the Advanced Standards are required to complete fifty percent of the Advanced Standards in each Goal.

To be considered meeting the Excellence Standards, Local Governments are required to complete fifty percent of the Excellence Standards for each Goal and seventy-five percent of the Advanced Standards. In addition Local Governments can identify up to six innovation credits for either Advanced or Excellence Standards.

Local governments that achieve the Excellence Standard, will be designated as a Regional Leader in Sustainability. Incentives for Regional Leaders in Sustainability are still under development and are not finalized.

Local Governments who met the minimum and excellence standards through the Plan 2040 process will have their approval carried over to The Atlanta Region’s Plan Local Performance Standards Process.

ARC anticipates providing assistance to local governments to meet all of the standards and implementation actions proposed in The Atlanta Region’s Plan. It is the purpose of the planning standards to engage a coordination process with local governments and ensure continued effort to advance the regions planning. ARC is committed to working with local governments to provide technical assistance and support so as to achieve compliance with Minimum Standards in 100% of our jurisdictions.



COMPETITIVE ECONOMY

Objectives: to ensure that our existing and emerging employment centers support innovation and balance job growth and economic development, maintain the region's current successes in existing and emerging employment sectors, and to work with local communities to implement a regional approach to workforce development

GOAL: BUILDING THE REGION AS A GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED HUB OF INNOVATION AND PROSPERITY

MINIMUM STANDARDS - INNOVATION

MIN I.1 Develop or maintain a website and local government contact that provides information related to government information, development requirements, economic incentives, job resources, etc. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN I.2 Develop a process to share information, data and coordinate strategic actions with adjacent local governments, school boards and economic development agencies. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN I.3 Evaluate the need for incentives or regulatory changes to support redevelopment of sites or areas that have good access to infrastructure or existing job centers. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN I.4 Provide maps and locations of economic development opportunities or areas supported for redevelopment on the jurisdictions website. **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS - INNOVATION

EXC I.1 Develop a fiscal impact analysis review as part of the development review process for major development projects.

EXC I.2 Adopt and implement a Tax Allocation District (TAD).

EXC I.3 Develop business incubator space within the community.

EXC I.4 Develop a Local Business Requirement or preferences within purchasing procedures.

EXC I.5 Adopt and implement an Opportunity Zone.

EXC I.6 Develop a business retention and expansion program.

EXC I.7 Develop a process to align the resources and strategic actions of local governments and education and economic development agencies.

GOAL: DEVELOPING A HIGHLY EDUCATED & SKILLED WORKFORCE, ABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF 21ST CENTURY EMPLOYERS

MINIMUM STANDARDS - EDUCATION

MIN E.1 Provide a venue for public access to technology, such as computer terminals, internet, educational software, etc. **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS - EDUCATION

EXC E.1 Develop a Main Street or a Downtown Development Authority within an established town center, or support the creation and/or continued operation of a Community Improvement District within a major employment center.

EXC E.2 Coordinate with large employers to implement employer-assisted housing programs and incentives to encourage residents to live near where they work.

WORLD CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

Objectives: to maintain and operate the existing transportation system to provide for reliable travel; improve transit and non-single occupant vehicle options to boost economic competitiveness and reduce environmental impacts; strategically expand the transportation system while supporting local land use plans; foster the application of advanced technologies to the transportation system; and promote an accessible and equitable transportation system

GOAL: ENSURING A COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK, INCORPORATING REGIONAL TRANSIT AND 21ST CENTURY TECHNOLOGY

MINIMUM STANDARDS - TRANSPORTATION

- MIN T.1** Participate in the development and updates of local Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP). **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.2** Evaluate options of funding sources for local government transportation construction programs. **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.3** Evaluate zoning and development regulations at existing rail station communities and adopt supportive transit oriented development (TOD) requirements. **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.4** Identify appropriate land uses for areas adjacent to future transit station locations in the city or county comprehensive plan based on the station location areas in the ARC Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), where applicable. **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.5** Identify future transit station locations in the city or county comprehensive plan based on the station location areas in the ARC Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), where applicable. **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.6** Adopt regulations that require developers to construct pedestrian accommodations internal to the development and along the street frontage of the project. **(REQUIRED)**
- MIN T.7** Participate in ongoing training through ARC's Community Planning Academy (CPA) on transportation related topics, including Lifelong Community principles and design guidelines, access management planning, etc., or equivalent trainings provided by GDOT, APA, etc. **(ADVANCED)**
- MIN T.8** Evaluate the need for access management regulations for priority transportation corridors in the jurisdiction, where warranted. **(ADVANCED)**
- MIN T.9** Evaluate community-wide bicycle and pedestrian transportation needs particularly for access to existing transit services. Determine priorities for future local projects. **(ADVANCED)**
- MIN T.10** Develop a Capital Improvement Element (CIE) and include in the Comprehensive Plan. Undertake management procedures to prioritize, fund and enact the capital investments identified. **(ADVANCED)**
- MIN T.11** Adopt clean fuel fleet policies consistent with Georgia Clean fuel Fleets Program standards. **(ADVANCED)**
- MIN T.12** Adopt Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) transition plan for the jurisdiction (per federal requirements). **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS - TRANSPORTATION

- EXC T.1** Develop a dedicated funding source and programs for transportation system maintenance and improvements.
- EXC T.2** Adopt policies and regulations to implement access management plans for transportation corridors.

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS - TRANSPORTATION, CONTINUED

EXC T.3 Adopt parking facility design guidelines that require shared parking, parking maximums, pervious surface materials, and / or trees and landscaping, or other innovative parking policies that protect environmental quality. Include placement of parking behind buildings to encourage walkability.

EXC T.4 Adopt a community-wide bicycle and pedestrian transportation plan consistent with the 2016 Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation & Pedestrian Walkways Plan.

EXC T.5 Participate in transportation demand management programs offered through regional Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), Employer Service Organizations (ESOs), and/or the Clean Air Campaign to provide travel options for employees to and from work.

EXC T.6 Adopt and implement a complete streets policy.

EXC T.7 Adopt ordinances or regulations to provide for and enhance roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and adjacent land uses to promote improve access and mobility.

EXC T.8 Develop and implement a transit access plan, including sidewalks, street crossings, bus shelters, etc. along with identifying priority areas for retrofitting existing roadways to meet minimum standards for providing accessibility to transit.

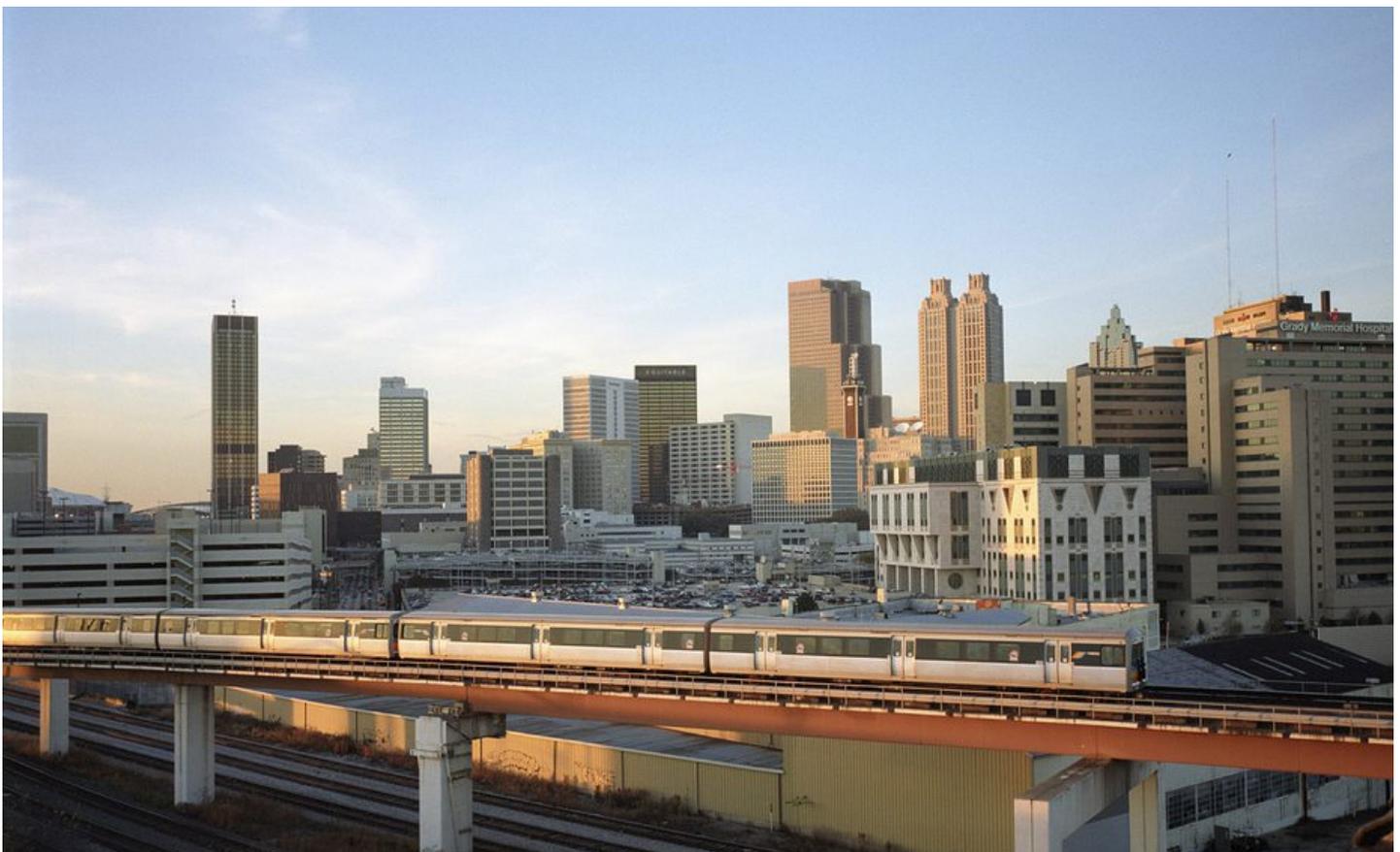
EXC T.9 Adopt a development review process to evaluate traffic impacts, design and accessibility issues, and compatibility with locally adopted land use and complete streets policies.

EXC T.10 Adopt a community-wide freight plan consistent with the 2016 Atlanta Region Freight Plan .

EXC T.11 Provide parking at city/county facilities for alternative vehicles such as Zip Car, scooters, bicycles, carpools and electric vehicles (including re-charging spaces).

EXC T.12 Coordinate with school districts to develop or maintain a "Safe Routes to School" program.

EXC T.13 Take steps to become Electric Vehicle ready.



MINIMUM STANDARDS - WATER

MIN W.1 Identify Regionally Important Resources (RIR) in the jurisdiction and depict as Areas Requiring Special Attention, Conservation Areas, or similar classification on the Future Development Map in the local comprehensive plan. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN W.2 Prepare an inventory of priority community green infrastructure resources that identifies, at minimum; passive parks, trails, forest and agricultural lands, water bodies stream buffers, and environmentally sensitive areas. The inventory should include a map of these areas. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN W.3 Adopt a tree ordinance, forest conservations ordinance or equivalent legislation that requires minimum tree retention standards for developments of a certain size. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN W.4 Prepare a code audit of local ordinances and development regulations to identify barriers to activities that would promote energy savings. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN W.5 Identify projects within the Short Term Work Program of the local Comprehensive Plan that improves conservation and preservation of resources that contribute to the community's green infrastructure network. **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS - WATER

EXC W.1 Develop and maintain a comprehensive community Greenspace/Green Infrastructure Plan.

EXC W.2 Participate in mitigation activities that reduce potential disaster losses through FEMA's HMA programs or other sources.

EXC W.3 Identify all impervious surfaces within the community using GIS or similar method.

EXC W.4 Implement projects, policies, design criteria, ordinances, or other tools that mitigate the negative impacts of impervious surfaces. This should include guidance for grading and landscaping.

EXC W.5 Implement optional local management measures described in the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD) Watershed Management Plan.

EXC W.6 Develop and maintain a Community Forest Master Plan.



HEALTHY LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

Objectives: to equitably and strategically focus resources in areas of need and importance in partnership with local communities, and invest in equitable and improved access to a variety of safe, quality housing, including options for aging in place

GOAL: DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL WALKABLE, VIBRANT CENTERS THAT SUPPORT PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

MINIMUM STANDARDS - CENTERS

MIN C.1 Prepare and support small area studies (e.g. LCI) for priority redevelopment areas within the jurisdiction. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.2 Evaluate the jobs-housing-balance in Regional Centers, Regional Employment Corridors and Community Activity Centers as identified on the Unified Growth Policy Map (UGPM). Identify strategies and incentives aimed at increasing housing types and satisfying the desired jobs-housing balance. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.3 Conduct code audit to identify regulatory barriers to construction of housing to meet the forecasted community needs and the attainment of the desired jobs-housing balance as identified in the comprehensive plan. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.4 Coordinate housing program staff, land use planners, private and non-profits within the county to discuss best practices and actions to overcoming foreclosures. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.5 Develop a coordination program or MOU with senior service providers or other entities regarding coordination of senior transportation, senior center location and programming, senior housing and other senior focused services. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.6 Analyze the relationship between existing senior center locations, senior focused housing and other senior focused services to existing transportation options, land use plans and health and supportive services. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN C.7 Assess the demographic and socio-economic data in the community in relation to existing senior center locations, senior focused housing and other senior focused services, and potential future locations. **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS -CENTERS

EXC C.1 Develop bilingual or multilingual services provided in key government operations.

EXC C.2 Implement an ongoing public engagement process with business leaders and owners and the general public, to sustain continued support and dialogue regarding comprehensive planning goals and objectives.

EXC C.3 Develop a program to mitigate the effects of property tax increases on existing residents in transit-enabled areas. The program should offer protection to existing residents if new development or increase valuations pose a threat.

EXC C.4 Locate government and civic buildings in existing communities.

EXC C.5 Adopt regulatory changes to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) in single-family neighborhoods.

EXC C.6 Implement actions to facilitate more workforce housing near major job centers and rail station communities.

EXC C.7 Develop or support a Housing Trust Fund to incentivize the construction of workforce housing.

EXC C.8 Provide better education or incentives that promote barrier-free housing options for individuals of all ages and abilities.

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS -CENTERS, CONTINUED

EXC C.9 Provide or offer support to programs that support multi- or single-family housing landlords' improvement of existing structures to preserve existing affordable housing.

EXC C.10 Implement a plan to eliminate barriers to housing construction and other development that seeks to meet forecasted community needs uncovered in a code audit.

EXC C.11 Leverage government owned properties for affordable housing and needed neighborhood amenities by identifying properties and working with partners to understand options.

GOAL: PROMOTING HEALTH, ARTS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF A HIGH QUALITY OF LIFE

MINIMUM STANDARDS - QUALITY

MIN Q.1 Provide or support the development of civic spaces (such as park venues and community buildings) for residents in the community. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN Q.2 Identify locally designated historic districts and National Register historic districts in the local comprehensive plan. **(REQUIRED)**

MIN Q.3 Identify Wellness Districts, as defined by the UGPM and Regional Development Guide, in the local comprehensive plan. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.4 Adopt regulation that promotes accessibility and connectivity to health and supportive services. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.5 Adopt policies that incentivize the provision of a mix of basic services and health and support services within a community. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.6 Provide a neighborhood watch program and support creation of neighborhood level programs. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.7 Provide education and outreach efforts that further community awareness of initiatives that promote sustainability. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.8 Prepare a code audit to identify development and activities that are recommended by the adopted Comprehensive Plan versus permissible in a jurisdiction's zoning and regulations. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.9 Develop an infill housing ordinance, or equivalent (e.g. tear downs). **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.10 Adopt mixed-use development regulations that encourage housing choices. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.11 Adopt design regulations that encourage active ground floor retail spaces, pedestrian oriented design and pedestrian amenities in commercial districts. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.12 Prepare an inventory of vacant, underused or abandoned lots and subdivisions. Evaluate these parcels and prioritize infill and brownfield sites for redevelopment. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.13 Prepare an inventory of resources (including identified archaeological sites) that are listed on or qualify for the Georgia Register or National Register of Historic Places, or update a current inventory if prepared prior to 1995. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.14 Develop a program to engage citizen participation in government and planning initiatives. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.15 Provide training for at least 50% of the jurisdiction's planning commissioners by attending the introductory Community Planning Academy (CPA), or provide equivalent training for new planning commissioners within their first 6 months on the planning commission. **(ADVANCED)**

MIN Q.16 Develop a coordination program or memorandum of understanding (MOU) with school boards or system personnel to share information on school siting, forecasts, joint use of facilities, infrastructure plans, bus routes, and safe routes to school. **(ADVANCED)**

EXCELLENCE STANDARDS -QUALITY

- EXC Q.1** For areas identified as Wellness Districts in local comprehensive plans, adopt zoning ordinances and regulatory requirements to allow or require Lifelong Communities Principles.
- EXC Q.2** Develop a process to conduct health impact assessments (HIA) to evaluate government plans or programs (such as comprehensive plans or transportation plans), large-scale developments (including DRIs), and other related projects that may impact community health.
- EXC Q.3** Develop a communication program to distribute health tips, safety training and information on the other health related issues to employees and residents of the community.
- EXC Q.4** Prepare and publish crime statistics or maps.
- EXC Q.5** Develop a coordination program or MOU with organizations such as Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) and neighborhood associations to develop public safety programs.
- EXC Q.6** Amend zoning codes and development regulations to eliminate regulatory barriers that obstruct the support of Lifelong Community (LLC) Principles identified in a code audit.
- EXC Q.7** Adopt regulations requiring all new civic buildings to meet green building standards through certification programs such as LEED, EarthCraft, Energy Star or similar.
- EXC Q.8** Adopt building codes that exceed the requirements of the ICC codes, such as the National Green Building Standard (2008), the ICC Green Construction Cod or ASHRAE 189.1-2009.
- EXC Q.9** Participate in and/or receive recognition through a performance rating system or partnership.
- EXC Q.10** Identify projects within your community that have been recognized through a performance rating system focused on environmental quality in building or site design.
- EXC Q.11** Develop or support the protection and identification of Regionally Important Resources by local partners or community groups.
- EXC Q.12** Develop a distinctive wayfinding and signage system for key areas within the community.
- EXC Q.13** Implement an expedited plan and permit approval process for infill and mixed use projects.
- EXC Q.14** Adopt zoning regulations that support existing Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) Plan(s).
- EXC Q.15** Implement a program to identify, reuse, rehabilitate or dispose of vacant, abandoned and foreclosed properties.
- EXC Q.16** Develop incentives for the provision of underground or structure parking rather than surface.
- EXC Q.17** Develop a program or undertake planning that identifies and considers zoning, regulatory, public investments or other governmental support to convert declining shopping malls or centers and strip commercial corridors into residential, mixed-use or civic spaces.
- EXC Q.18** Become a certified Local Government by the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.
- EXC Q.19** Adopt parking maximums or reduced minimum parking requirements as a part of mixed-use zoning.
- EXC Q.20** Identify areas of active agricultural uses, including equestrian and livestock facilities, forestry uses, and operations that foster community-supported agriculture or other farm-to-market opportunities.

MISCELLANEOUS

Propose an innovative activity undertaken by the local government to further Objectives of the Local Government Plan Implementation Standards (Maximum of 6). **(VARIES)**