

RESOLUTION

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION COUNCIL

WHEREAS, the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 requires a full update of the GMRC Regional Plan every 10 years; and

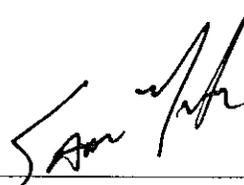
WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has promulgated certain rules containing the Minimum Planning Standards and procedures for Regional Planning; and

WHEREAS, the GMRC staff has prepared the 2013 GMRC Regional Plan in accordance with the Minimum Regional Planning Standards;

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs has reviewed and approved the 2013 GMRC Regional Plan;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Council of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission does hereby adopt the 2013 GMRC Regional Plan as approved by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

ADOPTED this 27th day of February, 2014.



Sam Norton
GMRC Council Chairman

GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL PLAN



Regional Agenda

+

***Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy***

2013

REGIONAL AGENDA + COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

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INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

The Georgia Mountains Region is thriving. The region is a dynamic and beautiful part of northeastern Georgia, a region steeped in Appalachian culture and aggressively pursuing the future. It hosts a mixture of small towns and part of burgeoning metro Atlanta, of strong agrarian economies and cutting edge industry. Even in times where unemployment rates remain high, local governments are investing in their future. The region is a leader in the State of Georgia and strongly involved in transportation, water, renewable energy, broadband, and tourism development for long term economic sustainability and improved quality of life of residents.

This document is the unified planning guide for the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), the regional government office that works with the State and the area's 51 local governments to manage resources and spur community development. It has been designed to serve as both the federally required Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and the State mandated Regional Agenda. Combined, these documents shape the roles, policies and objectives of the GMRC in coordination with local governments, the State and other stakeholders.

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The current theme for the Georgia Mountains region is learning to coordinate and maximize programs that blend economic development with overall community development. Traditionally economic development meant business attraction, business retention, and new business growth. Over the past decade, these have expanded to include other areas like workforce development, entrepreneurship, asset-based economic development, from job creation programs to workforce skill enhancement efforts, and to other quality of life issues.

In today's competitive global environment, economic development success requires effective public policy to attract the knowledge and innovation-based jobs that can raise the quality of life of Georgia's citizens. For business recruitment and retention, a region must be able to provide quality infrastructure and an educated and trained workforce. Business attraction efforts need to be coordinated, planned strategically, adequately supported, and sustained.

People live in the Georgia Mountains for a host of reasons. Quality of life due to an abundance of natural amenities and resources tops the appeal of persons in the community, creating strong bonds to the culture and landscape. For people to stay in the region and prosper the economy must perform at a higher level. The right investments in the arts, recreation, education system, and infrastructure will positively improve the quality of life *and* help attract economic opportunity.

As identified by this and other planning processes the Georgia Mountains Region has a great deal of issues and opportunities that, if addressed properly, will guide the region to greater levels of prosperity and build even stronger cultural ties.

The ability to efficiently and safely move people, goods, and information is a crucial element to the economic health of the Georgia Mountains Region. The region cannot survive without a strong and reliable infrastructure network consisting of transportation, water and wastewater, communication, and energy efficient. The region needs to make sound investments in road, rail, and air transportation that is supportive of economic goals. Broadband capacity – backbone networks, redundancy, and connectivity continue to be a priority for industry recruitment and retention.

Micro businesses and entrepreneurs are very important to the regional economy, particularly in the rural mountain communities. Local communities need to improve the small business environment with business assistance services, access to capital, and market development.

Tourism has been an integral part of the Georgia Mountains economy for several decades and continues to be a significant driver of the regional economy, impacting nearly all geographic areas and many businesses throughout the region. There is an immediate need to improve infrastructure that supports tourism product development, particularly quality roads, hotel facilities, and certain amenities such as road signage, restroom facilities, trailhead parking, etc. There is also a need to develop improved regional organizational capacity through the education of tourism leadership and the community at all levels.

There is a need for value-added product development opportunities encouraging people to “buy local”. Lastly, there is a need to develop sustainable and natural-based tourism opportunities, which take advantage of the region’s natural resources, including agri-tourism products.

Research has shown that regions with a highly educated workforce also experience economic growth in terms of business attraction and development, as well as higher income levels. Obtaining a college degree or returning to school for advanced training is important to assure that skills match the needs desired by employers and to ensure that jobs remain in the Georgia Mountains Region. The region needs to work to raise the attainment levels of adults, increase the skill base of the workforce, and create opportunities within growth sectors of the economy.

Another priority issue for the region is the need for affordable housing for not only the workforce. A housing strategy will be critical to meeting the housing needs to today and in years to come.

A new requirement of the CEDS document is disaster mitigation. Disaster resiliency can best be defined as the ability to anticipate threats, reduce the impact of these threats by taking preemptive action, respond appropriately and efficiently when these threats materialize, and have a plan in place for recovery. These threats can be natural events or man-made threats (hazardous material accidents, pandemic diseases, etc.) and can greatly disrupt or collapse a community. The Georgia Mountains Region’s resilience will be determined by the magnitude and severity of such threats and the region’s capacity to contend with them based on its inherent vulnerabilities and available resources.

Major community development issues facing the Georgia Mountains Region need to be addressed at the regional level, such as allocation of scarce financial resources, the location of critical infrastructure, and business retention and attraction efforts. The ability to collaborate and share resources will yield positive investments for the region. This document is a collaborated, bottom up approach to community and economic development that will apply this knowledge help the Georgia Mountains Region grow and prosper now and in the years to come.

Purpose

This document serves a dual purpose for the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC), acting as the joint regional planning document required for both federal and State directives: The Regional Agenda, which is the final element of the Regional Plan mandated by the State of Georgia, and the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) addressing a requirement of the GMRC in its capacity as a federal Economic Development District (EDD).

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 authorizes the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to establish specific rules and procedures for local and regional planning. The rules require that the GMRC, with the involvement of stakeholders, prepare a comprehensive *Regional Plan* to identify and coordinate remediation measures for issues and opportunities that impact multiple communities within the region. This plan must be consistent with other corresponding regional and local initiatives, including the Regional Resource Plan (for environmental and historic resource management), the various local comprehensive plans for communities within the region and related State efforts. The resulting document then provides a forward-thinking work program for the GMRC that will better coordinate support services for local governments and direct State activities for the region.

In accordance with the rules established by DCA, the Regional Plan consists of two primary parts: The Regional Assessment and Stakeholder Participation Program, and the Regional Agenda. The purpose of this document, the Regional Agenda, is *"to lay out a road map for the region's future, developed through a very public process of involving regional leaders and stakeholders in making key decisions about the future of the region. (I)t includes the region's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities it chooses to address during the planning period, and its implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. The Regional Agenda is intended to generate pride and enthusiasm about the future of the region..."*

The GMRC is also designated as an EDD by the United States Department of Commerce – Economic Development Administration (EDA). As a requirement of this designation, the GMRC must develop and maintain an approved CEDS. The CEDS document serves as the region's vision and plan for economic growth and development in advancing the region's economic prosperity, (merged) and collectively sets forth a comprehensive economic development strategy for all 13 counties in the Georgia Mountains Region. Through a consensus building forum the CEDS aims to establish a unified economic development roadmap for the Georgia Mountains Region. Intended to ensure the long-term economic vitality of the Georgia Mountains Region, the CEDS is the result of a strategic economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation.

Requirements

The *Minimum Standards and Requirements for Regional Planning* indicate that Regional Agenda must include the following components (as paraphrased from DCA):

Regional Vision

This is intended to paint a picture of what the region desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged. It includes the 1) General Vision Statement, 2) the Regional Development Map and 3) a Defining Narrative.

Regional Issues and Opportunities

This is the final list of issues and opportunities to be addressed in the plan. It is based on the list of *Potential Issues and Opportunities* identified in the Regional Assessment then modified based on stakeholder knowledge of the region and interpretation of the Regional Assessment. Each of these issues or opportunities must be followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Program.

Implementation Program

The implementation program is the overall strategy for achieving the Regional Vision and for addressing each of the Regional Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the regional leaders to implement the plan and provides guidance to developers, local governments, and other public agencies for helping achieve the Regional Vision. The Implementation Program must include the following components:

- A listing of *Guiding Principles* used to help shape overall efforts,
- A set of *Performance Standards* that will be used to help coordinate assistance with the local governments
- A list of identified *Strategies* the GMRC will use to pursue near and long-term goals
- The *Regional Work Program* listing specific activities the Regional Commission will undertake to implement the regional plan during the upcoming five year period.

Evaluation and Monitoring

Identifies the process and activities which the GMRC will undertake to ensure the regional plan is accomplishing the desired results.

The CEDS is a requirement set forth by the Economic Development Administration of the US Department of Commerce. The standards for this document are established to ensure each regional EDD follows a defined planning process to identify the priorities and issues for the member governments. Required elements for the CEDS include:

- *Background* (or a brief community profile)
- *Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities*– The CEDS Committee assessed the state of the regional economy and identified its external trends and forces using a SWOT Analysis
- *CEDS Goals and Objectives* - Each sub-committee for the strategic focus areas identified a broad goal and working strategies and objectives to establish an action plan for the region.
- *Community and Private Sector Participation*

- *Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities* - The CEDS Committee prioritized a list of projects and programs relevant to the strategic focus areas that would enable the region to meet its economic development goals.
- *CEDS Plan of Action* - Using the goals and strategies for the focus areas, an implementation plan was formulated to identify activities and to determine who will implement the projects, when the projects will be implemented, how much the projects will cost, and what are the sources of funding.
- *Performance Measures* - The CEDS Committee chose performance measures to track the implementation of the CEDS and benchmark regional project successes

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

The GMRC is one of 12 regional government offices within Georgia working to foster economic development and to provide community planning and information services. The GMRC provides services and technical assistance directly to its 13 counties and 38 municipalities as well as developing regional initiatives and supporting the programs of various State Departments. Originally founded as the Georgia Mountains Area and Planning Development Center in 1962, the GMRC has evolved in the common services provided but continually works to assist its member governments in efforts that preserve local character, encourage sustainable resource management and progressive economies, and contribute to improving the overall well being of the region and its communities.

Currently the GMRC employs 13 staff in the realms of planning, economic development, information technology, human resources and general administration. The Council for the GMRC consists of two representatives from each county, one from the County Commission and one mayoral representative from all the cities within that county, as well as 5 appointees from the State legislature.

Stakeholder Participation

The full updates for the GMRC Regional Plan and CEDS documents were done in consecutive series and featured a variety of stakeholder participation measures including committees, surveys and direct outreach. The intent throughout was to solicit input from a wide range of stakeholders, developing the best possible guidance in shaping objectives and priorities for the region. Regional partners included public officials, community leaders, economic development professionals, representatives of workforce development boards and institutions of higher education, minority and labor groups, and private individuals.

As part of the process GMRC staff reviewed the goals and objectives from every current local comprehensive plan in an effort to ensure the Regional Agenda would primarily reflect the interests of our member communities. The GMRC also engaged in a month-long campaign visiting every local government office with various staff, directly soliciting their thoughts on critical issues and concerns. These efforts provided a base for the regional goals and objectives as well as identifying some very specific needs and action items.

The CEDS planning process enabled leaders to articulate a vision and define a set of goals for sustaining economic growth, identified strategic focus areas for the region to focus its limited resources on to achieve economic health, recognized the vital projects and programs deemed critical for future growth, and established an action plan geared towards achieving the CEDS vision. After the strategic focus areas were identified, the CEDS committee pursued a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities,

and Threats) of the region and progressed toward the development of the Action Plan and identification of priority programs and projects.

It is important to note that the issues addressed in this document are not an exhaustive list of the many issues and concerns regarding economic development for the region. This document, specifically its goals and objectives, should be viewed by all residents in the Georgia Mountains Region as a blueprint for and snapshot of economic development in the region.



REGION PROFILE

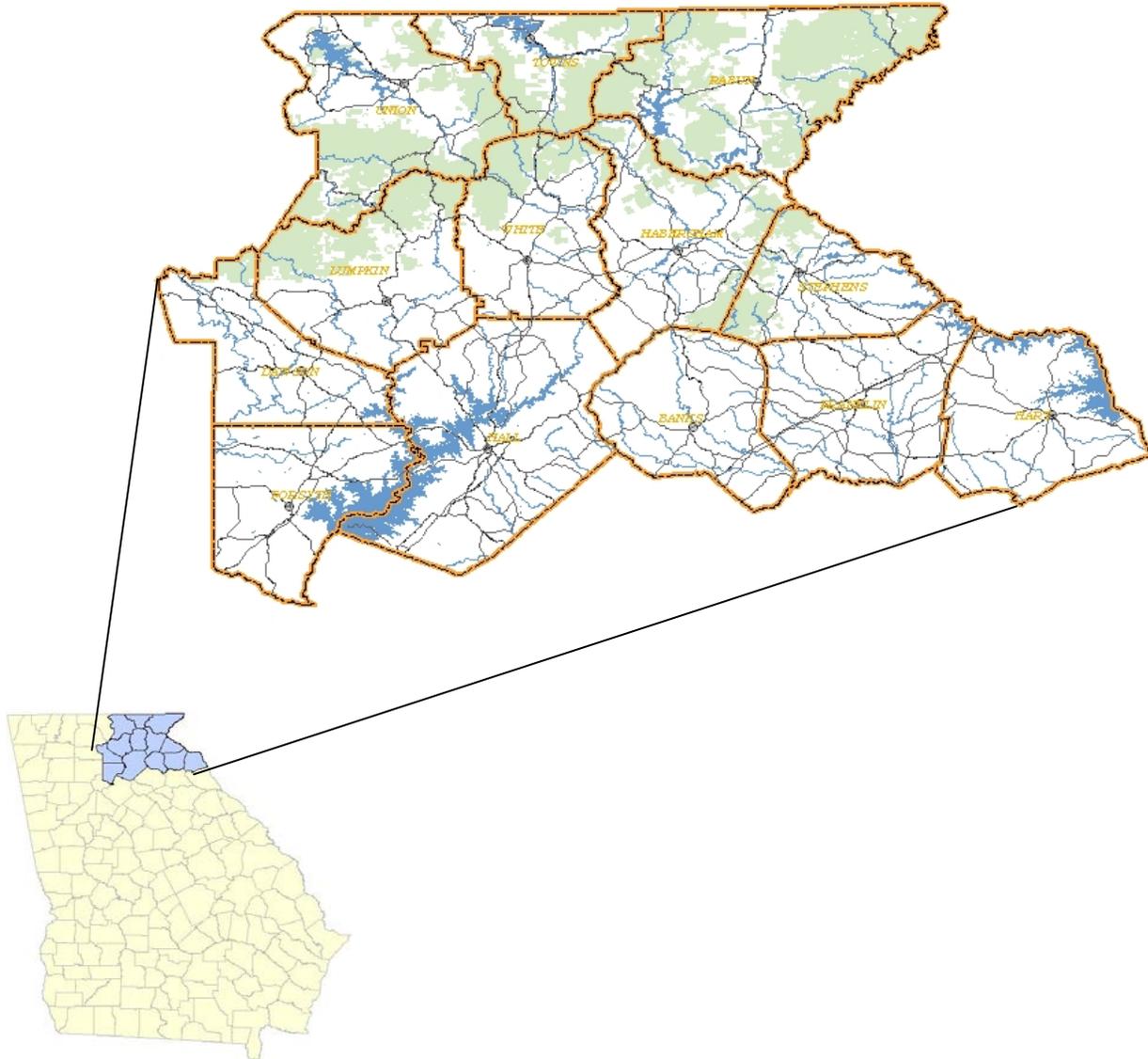
The Georgia Mountains region is comprised of 13 counties within the extreme northeast corner of Georgia, bordered by North Carolina to the north and South Carolina to the east. Eleven of the counties are classified as rural, while Forsyth County is included as part of metropolitan Atlanta and Gainesville/Hall County are their own urban unit for metropolitan transportation planning purposes. Taken all together, the Georgia Mountains region covers approximately 3,500 square miles and a current population just over 620,000 people.

Georgia Mountains Region Counties and Cities (*County Seat)

Banks County Homer* Maysville	Towns County Hiawasse* Young Harris	Franklin County Carnesville* Canon Franklin Springs	Hall County Gainesville* Clermont Flowery Branch
Dawson County Dawsonville*	Stephens County Toccoa* Avalon	Lavonia Royston	Gillsville Lula Oakwood
Forsyth County Cumming*	Martin	Habersham County Clarkesville* Alto	White County Cleveland* Helen
Lumpkin County Dahlonega*	Rabun County Clayton* Dillard Mountain City	Baldwin Cornelia Demorest	Hart County Hartwell* Bowersville
Union County Blairsville*	Sky Valley Tiger	Mt. Airy Tallulah Fall	

The natural scenic beauty of the Georgia Mountains area is one of its most important resources. Approximately 463,013 acres of the Chattahoochee National Forest lies within nine of the thirteen Georgia Mountain counties. Nine state parks in the area provide for visitors who wish to hike, camp, canoe or enjoy wildlife, while the region also harbors access to the Appalachian Trail and the Bartram Trail within the Blue Ridge Mountains. Visitors may also glimpse life of the early settlers and their relationship with the Georgia mountains through attractions like the Northeast Georgia History center, Travelers' Rest in Toccoa or the Gold Museum in Dahlonega.

Topographically over half of the area is mountainous with the remainder being rolling land and hills. Seven of the thirteen counties (Dawson, Habersham, Lumpkin, Rabun, Towns, Union and White) are either totally or partially located in the Blue Ridge Mountains province, which includes the highest mountain in the State (Brasstown Bald, elevation 4,784 feet) and several other prominent peaks rising above 4,000 feet. This part of the region is defined by steep slopes and mostly narrow valleys with many streams. The southern half of the region is predominantly part of the upper Georgia Piedmont, where there are many broad, fertile, level bottom valleys such as the Nacoochee, the Sautee, the Chestatee, the Chattahoochee, the Soque, and the Etowah. Mount Yonah, with an elevation of 3,173 feet, is the highest peak on the Georgia Piedmont.



The prevailing topography means the region is also known for streams and rivers and, through human intervention, many reservoirs. The largest body of water in Georgia is Lake Lanier located on the southwestern corner of the region along the Hall-Forsyth County line. The 38,500 acre lake was created during 1954-57 by damming the Chattahoochee River at Buford and currently boasts over 20 million visitors each year, making it among the most visited lakes in the United States. Another sizable reservoir is 56,000 acre Lake Hartwell, created on the Savannah River near the city of the same name. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates both lakes to provide flood control, electrical power, recreation and water supply in the GMRC area. Additional reservoirs within the region include Lake Chatuge and Lake Nottely (operated by the Tennessee Valley Authority), and Lakes Burton, Rabun, Seed, Tallulah, Tugaloo and Yonah (all operated by the Georgia Power Company). Taken all together these lakes bring tourism, provide recreation and have bolstered housing for the region.

This natural beauty has contributed to the tremendous growth experienced by the region over the past three decades. Some of these counties are among the fastest growing in the United States, and all have experienced continued positive growth, with most at rates higher than the state average. Much of the

growth can be attributed to migration resulting from economic factors, retirement populations and the spillover from metropolitan Atlanta.

A major economic factor in the Georgia Mountains Region is tourism. Visitors are attracted by the history, outdoor activities, museums, mountain arts and crafts, antiques, natural scenic beauty and unique cuisine. Numerous festivals throughout the year, such as Oktoberfest in Helen, White County or the Georgia Mountain Fair in Hiawassee, Towns County, draw hundreds of thousands of visitors from many places. Outlet trade centers located in Banks County and Dawson County attract a heterogeneous mixture of shoppers/visitors year round. The tourism industry is nearly a billion dollar a year industry in the Georgia Mountains area.

Land use in the Georgia Mountains region is primarily rural in nature, the exceptions being Forsyth and Hall Counties. The majority of land is undeveloped or used for agriculture or forestry. Most residential land use is concentrated around the small towns located throughout the region, with some retirement communities located in the mountain areas of the region. Commercial and industrial development tends to be located where necessary infrastructure is in place (ie., along major transportation corridors and where water and sewer amenities are available). Because of its rural character, there are very few local land use regulations in the Georgia Mountains counties. Those regulations that do exist tend to be weak not because of the regulations themselves, but due to lack of enforcement. However, the recognition of the need for land use regulations or guides is being expressed by local governments and citizens as they observe the fast paced growth taking place within their communities.

Trends and Community Highlights

The following notes reflect the very general trends, issues and key talking points that were considered at the outset of this planning process. These have been recognized here for their overall value and/or impact on the character of the region and will be addressed throughout the process.

- The Georgia Mountains Region is known for its State Parks, water resources like Lake Lanier, national forests and wildlife management areas. The prevailing topography defined by the Appalachian Mountains has produced many scenic areas, picturesque valleys and ridgelines that have become the defining traits of the area. The rural character of the communities and the quality of life associated with each city and town has become directly related to the natural landscape and terrain of the region, giving high priority to the preservation of these areas.
- The amenities that have attracted so many people to the area have also lead to a change in the predominant demographics of the population. In the metro areas of Forsyth and Hall Counties the mass influx of employment opportunities has brought with it a higher ratio of minority and Latino households. Conversely, the rural counties to the north and surrounding the reservoirs has attracted a high volume of retirees and seasonal residents.
- The recent economic trends of the region have been marked by a decline of the goods production sectors and an increase in the commercial and medical services sectors. While this means the employment rates have been generally steady overall, and the volume of amenities and retail options have increased with the number of residents, the loss of manufacturing jobs has hampered the growth of household revenues.

- The one sector that has prospered has been that of tourism. Overall population growth of the surrounding metropolitan areas has increased the number of prospective visitors to the region, and tourism to the Georgia Mountains has increased dramatically over the past two decades. This includes visitors to the parks and national forests as well as visitors to the many towns, festivals and regional attractions (like the two outlet malls). Going forward most of the regions counties and municipalities have ambitions of sustaining or growing their regional tourist appeal.
- Surface water is the predominant source for public water in the Georgia Mountains area, and this dependence is expected to increase due to population growth within and outside the region. It is anticipated more regional reservoirs will be developed within the 13 county area in the next 10-20 years. Not only will this require additional investments in infrastructure, but it will necessitate greater scrutiny with regards to environmental management.

REGIONAL VISION

General Vision Statement

A community vision is defined as something “... *intended to paint a picture of what the community desires to become, providing a complete description of the development patterns to be encouraged within the jurisdiction.*” Visioning provides communities with an opportunity to pause and consider the big picture as well as to attempt to clearly define their ideal future. Developing a vision means that community has at least tried to identify current values, describe how they are to be realized in the future and use that image as a foundation for short and long-term planning. As a process, this also requires the community to develop a consensus on what conditions to change or to preserve.

The vision for the Georgia Mountains Region captures the elements most commonly represented within local comprehensive plans plus those themes frequently cited by stakeholders as vital characteristics of the area. The result is a diverse but fitting portrait of our 13 counties, 38 cities and everything in between.

“The Georgia Mountains Region shall be...”

***A region that thrives**, that both invites and inspires entrepreneurial spirit and industrial prosperity*

***A region of beauty**, that celebrates and preserves its natural resources*

***A region of culture**, sharing and honoring our Appalachian and rural heritage*

***A region for family and friendship**, steep in traditions of hospitality and respect*

***A region poised for the future**, investing in innovation and planning for growth*

***A region of dynamic places**, from urban centers to small town squares and scenic forests*

***A region of values**, with tremendous opportunities for living, working and recreation*

Regional Development

Land use management policies and programs represent guidelines for shaping development patterns that provide for efficient growth while also protecting sensitive social and environmental areas. This section presents an inventory of existing land use patterns and development trends for the region, helping the local governments to produce the most effective policies needed to manage the demands from projected development.

Existing Land Use

The most prevalent land use within the region is Parks/Recreation/Conservation. While the region is blessed with large amounts of land designated for conservation of recreational use that contributes economically and to the local quality of life, it does limit the potential for additional economic development opportunities. Thus, these areas are not contributing to the tax base as they potentially could, consolidating and multiplying the tax burden on the citizens in the impacted areas. On the other hand, many citizens have expressed that the quality of life these areas offer is well worth more than the additional economic development, which could take away from the rural, leisurely nature of the region.

Approximately 26% of the region is dedicated to Agriculture/Forestry. It is understandable why such industries as poultry and timber are so important to the economies of the counties in the region.

TYPE OF LAND USE	SHARE
Residential	15.60%
Commercial	1.70%
Industrial	1.50%
Public/Institutional	0.60%
Transportation/ Communications/ Utilities	0.60%
Parks/ Recreation/ Conservation	26.50%
Agriculture/Forestry	26.00%
Undeveloped	18.30%
Lakes	3.80%
<u>Incorporated Areas</u>	<u>5.40%</u>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>2,251,136 acres</i>

The other dominate existing land use in the region is Residential, growing in proportion with the influx of residents seeking employment within the region and in metro Atlanta. Much of this area is concentrated in and around the municipalities and amenity areas that are linked by transportation corridors. But it is quickly to areas where land is simply affordable and away from the problems associated with growth and urban or suburban areas.

Commercial and industrial use make up humble shares but exist in notable concentrations around population centers and incorporated areas. This gives the region pockets of urbanity, even at smaller scales, throughout the metro Atlanta area and around select cities in the region. The prevailing topography has helped concentrate these more intense developments but some suburbanization is occurring as roadway accessibility improves in the Piedmont province. Those trends, combined with growing cultural shifts based around commuting to work and regional shopping centers has also marked the increase in land use dedicated to transportation infrastructure and utilities.

Regional Development Patterns

Management of land use and development is ultimately a local government power and practice that communities employ to ensure coordination between growth and the cost effective implementation of utilities, infrastructure and civic services. Often these policies can guide the character of land use and development, as well, in an effort to build on identified traits and elements considered vital to the economy or well-being of the local community.

The development patterns presented here are representative of the general future development strategies employed by the region's member governments. The GMRC strives to complement and enhance the objectives of the local governments, and as such will use this map to guide coordination of multi-jurisdictional efforts or ways the GMRC can support local initiatives.

Based on the summation of local development priorities and goals identified throughout the Regional Plan, this map illustrates targeted, generalized land use patterns in the region for the next 10-20 years. This is a rudimentary guide for assessing the impacts and opportunities of land use and development issues, based on information culled from the Regionally Important Resource Map for the region and the Future Land Use Maps from local comprehensive plans.

Local land use plans feature a great variety of land use and development types, coordinated with regulations and management measures to help balance growth pressures and demands. Regional planning in Georgia utilizes a simpler scale based on the following four categories: Conservation, Rural, Developed and Developing.

The map also incorporates areas targeted for specific monitoring and mitigation going forward, called Areas Requiring Special Attention. Those areas cited throughout the planning process for the Georgia Mountains Region have been included in the Regional Development Patterns assessed here.

Developing	
<p>These are areas that will likely become urbanized and require provision of new urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) during the planning period. This anticipation of growth and development means these areas must balance accommodation of change and density while sustaining existing character and viability for current residents and activities.</p> <p>Within the Georgia Mountains region the developing areas are those around Metro Atlanta and within select growth corridors such as I-85 and 365. These areas already feature clusters of employment and commercial centers as well as direct access to health care facilities and established, developed urban areas.</p> <p>The aspiration for these areas is to grow as organic extensions of existing suburban or rural forms. Higher density is encouraged adjacent to urbanized areas, and forms should maximize efficiency of utility and infrastructure service.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <p>Low-to-Med Density Residential Institutional Agricultural Parks and Recreation Context appropriate commercial or industrial</p> <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <p>Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Heritage Preservation Open Space Preservation Environmental Protection Growth Preparedness Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Housing Choices Educational Opportunities Regional Cooperation</p>
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation subdivision design • Pedestrian accessibility • Mixed use forms and village-like nodal patterns • Transit services • Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. 	

Developed	
<p>Areas exhibiting urban type development patterns and where urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) are already being provided at the time of plan preparation.</p> <p>This is essentially the existing municipalities and the metro Atlanta area, where agricultural uses are at a minimum and residential lots the most prevalent use. Density levels for people, automobiles and impervious surfaces provide a landscape defined almost exclusively by human activity.</p> <p>These areas are nodes for commerce, education, health care, employment and civic activity. They serve as economic generators and social nodes, and they should mature into stronger forms of urbanity by accepting taller structures and pockets of greater density.</p> <p>Retaining/expanding the pedestrian relationships will be critical if these centers are to achieve optimum use and appeal going forward.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <p>Med-to-High Density Residential Institutional Parks and Recreation Commercial or office use Industrial Mixed use Incorporation of sidewalks Minimum/No cul-de-sacs</p> <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <p>Traditional Neighborhoods Infill Development Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Growth Preparedness Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Housing Choices Educational Opportunities</p>
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infill development ● Traditional neighborhood forms ● Pedestrian accessibility ● Mixed use urban centers ● Urban employment centers ● Transit services ● Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. 	

Rural	
<p>Areas not expected to become urbanized or require provision of urban services during the planning period;</p> <p>This district is a catch-all designation lands outside the urbanized areas or populated transitional zones. Many lots are simply large residential lots with most of the property left undeveloped. These properties primarily feature a house with one or more storage or agricultural structures. Most are long established properties of 30 years or more. In a couple cases there residence is substantially improved and indicative of a high economic class. Others are simply modest homes on lots retained purely for their scenic, rural value.</p> <p>Prime agricultural land should be preserved as best as possible for both economic and environmental purposes. Development that dramatically alters the character of rural areas should be discouraged.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Density Residential Institutional Agricultural Parks and Recreation Context appropriate commercial or industrial Use of Conservation design <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Open Space Preservation Environmental Protection Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Housing Choices Regional Cooperation
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation subdivision design • Village-like nodal patterns • Conservation lands and easements • Agricultural preservation • Restriction of utility and infrastructure intrusion 	

Conservation	
<p>Areas to be preserved in order to protect important resources or environmentally sensitive areas of the region. Areas shown as conservation must correspond to the Regionally Important Resource (RIR) Map for the region.</p> <p>This district comprises currently established woodland reserved for commercial forestry, some parks and conservation land. As established in the RIR document these are those lands managed and preserved with the intention of maintaining their mostly undeveloped state in perpetuity.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural Parks and Recreation Undeveloped Silviculture Wildlife Management Areas Use of Conservation design <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of Place Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Open Space Preservation Environmental Protection Growth Preparedness Educational Opportunities Regional Solutions Regional Cooperation
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation lands and easements • Managed silviculture • Restriction of utility and infrastructure intrusions 	

I-85 Corridor	
<p>The I-85 Corridor is one area projected to receive increased growth and demand for utilities, potentially beyond local capacity. As the arterial between large and growing metropolitan centers this roadway is drawing more through traffic and attracting more residents and businesses tying in to the metropolitan expansions. Lavonia has prospered as a commercial and industrial node as part of this growth, but the Interstate is now at risk of congestion beyond functional preferences.</p> <p>The aspiration for this corridor is the managed growth into an economic and employment area that retains viability as a throughway for all traffic.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <p>Institutional Parks and Recreation Industrial Office/ Service Facilities</p> <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <p>Infill Development Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Environmental Protection Growth Preparedness Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Educational Opportunities Regional Solutions Regional Cooperation</p>
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate industrial and service uses • Efficient traffic levels along I-85 • Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. 	

North-South Arterials	
<p>The region features several arterial roadways that serve multiple purposes and are at risk of over-congestion. Highways 129, 365 and 17 in particular provide critical access for local and through traffic, particularly tourists traveling into the Georgia Mountains Region. As local communities grow and rely on these roads for commercial and industrial destinations, the congestion levels can increase dramatically at critical points when through traffic is added to the mix. Further, these corridors have historically been rural roads free from suburban development forms, signage and other elements detracting from the scenic beauty. Now the same communities relying on these roads to house auto-oriented uses are looking for ways to preserve the free-flow of traffic and the scenic appeal of these rural arteries.</p> <p>The aspiration for these areas is softer development that is context sensitive and reinforces the region’s scenic mountain or rural character. Commercial and other uses are welcome but densities should be marginal and structural forms should be designed for the area and not auto-oriented.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional Agricultural Parks and Recreation Context appropriate commercial or industrial <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Open Space Preservation Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Educational Opportunities Regional Solutions Regional Cooperation
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation subdivision design • Pedestrian accessibility • Mixed use forms and village-like nodal patterns • Transit services • Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. • Management of signs and billboards 	

Town Centers	
<p>These are developed, urbanized areas but with specific architectural forms that require special attention as they mature. These classic town squares and central business districts help define local culture and foster social forms and patterns.</p> <p>Some older town centers and neighborhoods should be improved through redevelopment programs. Cities with higher volumes of vacant building within their downtown could use support with economic development, while some older, established neighborhoods with higher shares of smaller housing have proven susceptible to economic poverty and should be addressed.</p> <p>The objective for these cities is to see the classic urban form retained and expanded as the cities grow. Where possible the urbanity surrounding the square should expand outward, with infill and new development featuring mixed uses, taller structures and comparably pedestrian scaled and oriented blocks.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Med-to-High Density Residential Institutional Urban parks Urban scale commercial or office use Mixed use Incorporation of sidewalks Pedestrian scale blocks/ connectivity Minimum/No cul-de-sacs Emphasis on retail and dining <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional Neighborhoods Infill Development Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Growth Preparedness Appropriate Businesses Employment Options Housing Choices Educational Opportunities Regional Solutions
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infill development • Traditional neighborhood forms • Pedestrian accessibility • Mixed use urban centers • Urban employment centers • Transit services • Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. • Architectural design guidelines 	

Agricultural Transition	
<p>These area cross-over with the Developing category, but consists of select counties along the projected high-growth I-85 corridor that also lack the mountainous terrain to naturally stifle development. Likewise, the demand for agricultural activity remains high in the region so the viability of these uses within this corridor remains equally attractive.</p> <p>The counties along the I-85 corridor are managing transition from their historic agricultural base, but there is land within their communities to absorb new growth. With appropriate management measures these counties could handle significant in-migration with minimal impact on natural resources, provided potential land use conflicts are mitigated. As a collective these communities have not only the land but access to water, utilities and sound infrastructure.</p> <p>The objective for this area is to minimize the promotion of suburban development within the corridor, concentrating newer development as it comes and honing the character as it evolves.</p>	<p><u>Preferred Land Uses/ Development</u></p> <p>Low-to-Med Density Residential Institutional Agricultural Parks and Recreation Context appropriate commercial or industrial</p> <p><u>Quality Community Objectives</u></p> <p>Sense of Place Transportation Alternatives Regional Identity Heritage Preservation Open Space Preservation Environmental Protection Growth Preparedness Appropriate Businesses Housing Choices Educational Opportunities Regional Solutions Regional Cooperation</p>
<p><u>Implementation measures</u></p> <p>Promote, and assist with the development of, policies that support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservation subdivision design • Village-like nodal patterns • Transit services • Sustainable utility and infrastructure mgmt. 	

Regional Issues and Opportunities

The planning process asks regions to assess the information to identify issues and opportunities that should be considered when trying to plan for the future. In doing so the regions can more effectively define their objectives and actions to as to better achieve the desired vision.

Population

1. Impact of population growth for demand on facilities and services
2. Impact of population growth for impact on rural character
3. Impact of changing demographics, specifically the growing volume of retirement age residents and growing numbers of households with Hispanic/Latino ethnicity

Housing

4. Shortage of specialty housing to accommodate retirement age population
5. Need to ensure sustainable quality of workforce housing
6. Slow/limited responsiveness to issues of the housing and development industry
7. Need to monitor long-term impacts and sustainability of the second-home market

Economic Development

8. Comparably limited support for agribusiness, especially agri-tourism
9. Potential for continued growth within tourism sub-markets
10. Need to assist with economic development in more remote, but pro-growth, communities
11. Lack of diversity within economic base
12. Demand for expansion of goods-production industries
13. Strong potential in health service industries, particularly around existing/ proposed hospitals
14. Potential within existing cities to nurture small business and entrepreneurship

Natural & Cultural Resources

15. Some local communities lack regulations that meet State minimum standards
16. Lack of awareness about conservation design and best management practices
17. Lack of education about all types of environmentally sensitive areas
18. Out-of-date parcel data, NFIP maps or resource inventories at select communities
19. Potential to develop land banks and pull support from stakeholder groups
20. Lack of local greenspace plans
21. Decreasing funds for State parks and wildlife management areas
22. General habitat degradation caused by growth and development

Public Facilities and Services

23. Growing demand for water supply sources, from both within and outside the region
24. Growing demand and environmental need for public sewer services
25. Strong need for, and great potential with, health care services and facilities
26. Increasing demand for high quality education facilities and programs

Transportation

27. Impact of growth and changing demographics on transportation needs
28. Several State arterials struggle to sustain efficiency in serving both local and through traffic
29. Growing need for bike trails and on-road bike lanes
30. Lingering potential for 2nd commercial passenger service airport to support metro Atlanta
31. Potential support for revenues through the Transportation Investment Act of 2010
32. Demand for improvements to I-85 and intersection arterials

Intergovernmental Coordination

33. Potential, and the need to coordinate implementation of, the three Water Planning District management plans developed for the region
34. Lack of coordination among local governments, the State and other stakeholders in managing new water supply sources
35. Confusion about new planning standards and the future of community development

Land Use

36. The rapid transition of land use from farms and forest to residential and commercial
37. The lack of adequate and innovative land use planning tools and lack of enforcement of existing land use regulations
38. Insufficient infrastructure for the demands of changing land uses
39. Lack of/limited capacity for identification and protection of sensitive areas (environmentally and historically) as the population grows
40. Land use conflicts (i.e. Poultry and livestock operations vs. residential development, or high density development occurring in sensitive areas.)
41. Insufficient land use regulations (do not consider impacts and consistency beyond jurisdictional boundaries)
42. Volume of public land reducing the amount of land available for development
43. The deterioration of downtown area, buildings and infrastructure, and loss of economic activity as suburbanization occurs in the region
44. The eroding downtown tax base of the cities throughout the region resulting from suburbanization

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Guiding Principles

This is a listing of the policies and values necessary to provide ongoing guidance and direction to regional leaders for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision or addressing Regional Issues and Opportunities. These policies may include locational factors as well as design and impact considerations, and may range from very general statements to specific directives. These principles should be considered anytime a local, state, or federal governmental agency is making decisions regarding investments or development policies within the region.

For the purposes of this document, the principles recommended for the Georgia Mountains Region are represented in the series of Goals, Strategies and Performance Standards shown the next two sections. Together these comprise the set of values, ambitions and guidelines reflected throughout the GMRC Regional Plan, and form the basis of proposed decisions and actions needed to achieve the overall Vision. As various local governments, State agencies and other stakeholders are considering actions within the region, they should weigh those actions against the principles and objectives represented by these statements.

Coordinated Performance Standards

As part of the State's regional planning standards the GMRC must establish two achievement thresholds for local governments. These standards, rated as Minimum and Excellence Standards, identify specific ordinances, programs, or requirements that may be implemented by local governments in order to realize the Regional Vision and/or address the Regional Issues and Opportunities. The Regional Commission may choose to establish multiple tiers for both standards in order to accommodate the varying size and capacity of local governments in the region, or it may choose to establish a schedule for local governments to comply with these measures during the 3 year timeframe.

In establishing these standards for the GMRC, the approach was to create a framework that works with the current level of planning requirements expected of local governments, then encouraging each community to pursue their own higher standards for community development. In this regard the Minimum is something every local government can readily achieve by simply maintaining their existing level of obligations, and for which the GMRC is available to assist. To achieve the Excellence Standard communities must then employ/adopt a certain volume of policies and practices from the list included here. Communities achieving the Excellence Standard will be eligible for extra assistance from the GMRC and DCA.

Going forward these performance measures will be used to help a) evaluate the effectiveness of the GMRC's Regional Plan implementation efforts, and b) to help identify the various levels of planning and community development desired by the local communities. When the Plan is updated in 5 years these measures will be reviewed, assessed and amended as necessary.

Minimum Standard

Items included here are considered essential activities for local governments to undertake for achieving their own planning ambitions and for consistency with the regional plan. The intent is to ensure a consistent and predictable basic level of local requirements across the region. All local governments in the region will be expected to attain the Minimum Standard within three years of adoption of the regional plan, or risk losing Qualified Local Government status.

- Maintain a local Comprehensive Plan, approved by DCA and adopted by the local government
- Maintain and be compliant with all necessary Service Delivery Strategies
- Maintain and participate in a local Hazard Mitigation Strategy
- Maintain and participate in a Local Emergency Operations/Response Plan
- Maintain compliance with State requirements for solid waste management and reporting
- Adopt the necessary minimum rules established by the DNR Part V Environmental Planning Criteria

Excellence Standard

Items within the Excellence Standard are considered desirable activities for local governments to undertake for achieving their own planning aspirations and for consistency with the regional plan. The intent is to lay out a menu of recommended best practices for local governments to select for implementation. Each recommended best practice a local government implements will count toward achieving the Excellence Standard threshold established by the Department.

The Excellence Standard will be awarded to any community employing any 20 of the standards listed below and practicing at least 1 standard in each element. The GMRC will annually survey local governments regarding these practices, inviting demonstration/evidence of the standards applied. Any local government that attains this threshold will then be eligible for the Regional Steward Incentives Package identified and publicized by the Department.

Housing

- ✓ Implement the latest design standards for manufactured housing
- ✓ Allow and promote conservation design for subdivisions
- ✓ Maintain policies enabling and promoting compatible infill development
- ✓ Maintain policies enabling and promoting residences in mixed use developments where appropriate
- ✓ Maintain a plan and process for eliminating or fixing dilapidated/substandard housing
- ✓ Include goals and strategies specifically for senior and special needs housing within your comprehensive plan
- ✓ Include goals and strategies specifically for neighborhood revitalization/preservation within your comprehensive plan
- ✓ Include goals and strategies specifically for affordable housing within your comprehensive plan
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of housing objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Transportation

- ✓ Adopt and implement policies that promote connected streets and sidewalks
- ✓ Maintain a transportation plan (alone, in your comprehensive plan or with an MPO) that specifically identifies, based on demand and maintenance concerns, needs and priorities for road improvement, sidewalks and pathways
- ✓ Participate in the Coordinated Transit Program administered by DHS
- ✓ Adopt land use policies that minimize curb cuts and intersections along arterial roads
- ✓ Adopt a Complete Streets policy
- ✓ Participate in the Safe Routes to School Program
- ✓ Have a policy that identifies urban areas with heavy pedestrian traffic and dictates employ traffic calming measures for such areas
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of transportation objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Community Facilities and Services

- ✓ Maintain a Capital Improvements Plan (alone or within your comprehensive plan) for police, fire suppression, public works or parks and recreation that specifically identifies, based on demand and maintenance concerns, the needs and priorities for new equipment, facilities, vehicles or personnel advancement for the next 5 years
- ✓ Maintain a Water or Wastewater Utility Improvement Plan (alone or within your comprehensive plan) that specifically identifies, based on demand and maintenance concerns, the needs and priorities for line repair and service area expansion for the next 5 years
- ✓ Create and maintain a strategy for improving your community's ISO rating
- ✓ Maintain a site selection policy and long-term growth strategy with the local school board
- ✓ Provide a recycling program and centers
- ✓ Annually review and assess the health care needs for your community
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of public facilities and services objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Intergovernmental Coordination

- ✓ Participate in county-wide intergovernmental forums (City-County Managers meetings, joint retreats, etc.) at least twice per year
- ✓ Annually review and assess intergovernmental contracts and Service Delivery Agreements
- ✓ Adopt policies establishing training standards for all elected and appointed officials
- ✓ Outline coordination of land use and transportation policies, either alone or in comprehensive plan

Economic Development

- ✓ Maintain a designated economic development professional or support a local development authority
- ✓ Support/Participate in Quick Start, Georgia Work Ready, Workforce Investment or other economic development programs
- ✓ Maintain a targeted marketing strategy (alone or within your comprehensive plan) that specifically identifies the top three specific industries targeted for local expansion or recruitment, and outlines specific measures to foster such expansion
- ✓ Maintain a strategy for support of agriculture and/or agri-tourism
- ✓ Maintain a tourism strategy that features collaboration with the State Department of Economic Development and at least one other jurisdiction

- ✓ Annually review and assess your community based on the GMRC CEDS performance criteria
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of economic development objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Land Use Management

- ✓ Maintain and enforce soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution control policies complying with Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Service standards
- ✓ Maintain specialized land use policies designed to preserve/foster agricultural use
- ✓ Maintain residential land use policies that favor urban lot sizes (< 1 acre) and rural lot sizes (≥ 3 acres)
- ✓ Enable and promote mixed use development
- ✓ Enable and promote parking standards that encourage minimal space counts, pervious surfaces, incorporated pedestrian access and/or shade trees
- ✓ Maintain and promote design guidelines for new development
- ✓ Maintain and promote signage standards and landscape and maintenance standards
- ✓ Require sidewalks of new development
- ✓ Adopt policies establishing training standards for all elected and appointed officials
- ✓ Maintain policies enabling and promoting compatible infill development
- ✓ Annually share notice of development trends and statistics with the GMRC and neighboring jurisdictions
- ✓ Designate, and maintain through policy, Gateway corridors, Scenic Byways and tourist corridors
- ✓ Annually review and assess planning, zoning and permitting actions by your community for consistency with the comprehensive plan, past precedence and across staff and official levels
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of land use objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Natural and Cultural Resources

- ✓ Include in your comprehensive plan remediation measures for all 303(b) and 305(d) listed waters within your community
- ✓ Maintain an open space/greenspace strategy
- ✓ Maintain support for Adopt-A-Stream, Keep America Beautiful or other environmental programs
- ✓ Maintain compliance with the NFIP program
- ✓ Maintain a Historic Resources Commission
- ✓ Maintain historic district preservation ordinances in line with HPD guidelines
- ✓ Maintain Certified Local Government status through HPD
- ✓ Promote and support Main Street and Better Hometown programs
- ✓ Develop annual report summarizing compliance with your respective River Basin Management Plan (as designated by DNR)
- ✓ Annually review and assess implementation of natural and cultural objectives within your local comprehensive plan

Goals and Strategies

NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOAL: To conserve, protect and promote the environmental, natural and cultural resources of the region.

Strategy NR1: *Promote conservation design ideas and other best management practices for new development.* There is a need to produce and share more material illustrating options and recommendations that promote environmentally sensitive designs for new development.

NR1.1 - Develop catalog of best management plans and resources and distribute to local governments.

NR1.2 - Facilitate workshops offering education on conservation design

Strategy NR2: *Improve and promote the knowledge of existing historic resources and preservation programs.* The purpose of this is to recognize the need to update the inventory of resources and programs within the region, and to increase awareness of these resources among local governments and stakeholders.

NR2.1 - Update files and GIS records of historic resources; Update reference material promoting all available preservation related programs.

NR2.2 - Annually distribute and promote information about preservation programs

NR2.3 - Restart GMRC's Historic Preservation Advisory Committee to facilitate communication among area stakeholders

Strategy NR3: *Support efforts to implement the State's River Basin Management Plans.* This includes efforts by the GMRC to work with local governments and water suppliers in addressing the action items and issues cited in the 3 River Basin Management Plans applicable in the region.

NR3.1 - Maintain involvement with the Coosa-North Georgia River Basin, the Upper Savannah and the Metro North Georgia Water Councils.

NR 3.2 - Develop a county-level survey that assesses each jurisdiction's progress with implementing items from the Management Plans.

NR3.3 - Support and assist local programs and projects designed to facilitate compliance with the River Basin Management Plans and other EPD clean water initiatives, including TMDL planning and 319 grant projects.

Strategy NR4: *Promote tighter coordination between land use planning and water supply management.* This recognizes the need for more current data and updated procedures for assessing the impact of development on water supply demands.

NR4.1 - Develop tool/process that will facilitate review of impacts new development will make on local water systems.

LAND USE GOAL: To promote and coordinate land use planning and management that supports the other goals and ambitions for the region.

Strategy LU1: *Promote development patterns that maximize existing utilities and infrastructure.* The purpose of this strategy is to support and expand programs and policies that help local governments enable and foster infill development and adaptive reuse of properties.

LU1.1 - Develop resources that help communities identify and assess properties available for infill or capable of sustaining higher densities.

LU1.2 - Promote annual reviews coordinating utility and infrastructure capacity with land use and development trends

Strategy LU2: *Support communities looking to preserve and expand their historic town centers.* This is in recognition that many communities feature traditional, small-town urban centers which are considered vital to the region's cultural heritage and tourism appeal, and as such new growth should complement these spaces and forms where possible.

LU2.1 - Develop regional growth and tourism strategy specifically for historic downtowns

LU2.2 - Develop and promote individual downtown development plans.

LU2.3 - Initiate GMRC downtown association consisting of DDAs, Better Hometown and Main Street communities.

Strategy LU3: *Promote coordinated land use management along critical arterials, supporting both local needs and the demands of through traffic critical for tourism and industry.* This is in response to the identification of several State roadways serving multiple interests, and the need for the local governments to work together to optimize traffic conditions and retain efficient levels of service.

LU3.1 - Develop long-range management plans for targeted corridors in conjunction with GDOT and local stakeholders

LU3.2 - Produce/collect land use management tools and guides for communities for implementation of corridor management plans

Strategy LU4: *Promote neighborhood scale planning.* The purpose of this strategy is to encourage and assist with communities striving to build thriving neighborhoods that feature a mix of uses, expansive sidewalks, park space and other elements that support the notion of live-work-play communities.

LU4.1 - Develop template for comprehensive neighborhood plans and standards

Strategy LU5: *Support efforts that preserve rural and agricultural uses where desired.* This is in recognition that several communities wish to protect established agricultural operations from encroachment by suburban sprawl.

LU5.1 - Collect and distribute materials and resources that illustrate how to preserve and promote agriculture, such as the Centennial Farm program. Facilitate workshops as needed

LU5.2 - Work with the Farm bureau and other stakeholders in developing an updated concept for, and inventory of, primary agricultural areas within the region

Strategy LU6: *Support advanced development practices within in the metropolitan areas.* In recognition of the region's burgeoning southern communities, this strategy calls for assistance and promotion of policies that support higher densities, urban forms and other design elements that will allow the region's metropolitan areas to grow strong as they fully transition from agrarian economies.

LU6.1 - Facilitate regular meetings with stakeholders from Dawson, Forsyth and Hall Counties to review and assess development trends

LU6.2 - Develop growth strategy for managing land development within the metro counties and corridors. Identify specific projects and issues with which the GMRC and partners can assist

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES GOAL: *To provide adequate facilities and infrastructure in all areas to support existing business and industry, enable expansion, and recruit new business, and to support efficient growth and development patterns that will protect and enhance the region's quality of life.*

Transportation Goal: *Enhance all segments of transportation networks in the region to promote economic development and personal safety.*

Strategy CFS1: *Utilize existing inventories of current roadways, air, and rail needs to support economic development.* The purpose of this strategy is to review and update inventories of capital improvement projects that could possibly be developed regionally. This method will also help the region to learn how to utilize developed databases of transportation needs.

CFS1.1 - Identify and update a database of transportation needs from each entity in the region. The objective of a database of transportation needs is to assemble the individual community need and priorities of each city and county and identify costs, timeliness, and duration of projects. The plan would reference Georgia Department of Transportation submitted projects from the region as well as utilize information provided by the comprehensive plans. Another objective is to identify the existing airport and rail system in the region cataloging current and future activity levels. This inventory would classify the airport or railway's functional role within the system network. This inventory will allow for the identification of the deficiencies within the system and allow for estimates of future development costs.

CFS1.2 - Utilize the created databases. GMRC would utilize the database to present possible funding options for projects. GMRC will also utilize the inventory to identify regional programs.

CFS1.3 - Conduct a truck route inventory and develop an improvement list to provide better access to interstates and highways and encourage growth and development. GMRC can assist with the inventorying and researching of routes and develop a series of improvements to route truck traffic away from congested areas and provide better access to the region's industrial areas. Improved or easy transportation routes for exporting products will encourage industrial growth and development.

CFS1.4 - Support local government and private efforts to improve and enhance air service to the region. Airports proximity to the regional areas offers great opportunities for industries in which direct access to either air cargo or passenger flights is important. Research shows that

airports facilitate commerce; they also serve as economic engines, and their direct, indirect and induced benefits accrue throughout the rest of the community as well. The region's airports should work closely with one another to meet the needs of industry and the region by promoting the benefits of the airport to residents and businesses. Another consideration should be to bring light rail to the airport.

CFS1.5 - Coordinate airport master plans with GDOT communities. Airport systems are essential to the state's transportation and economic infrastructure, supporting its diversified industries such as manufacturing, distribution, tourism and agriculture. Airports connect citizens and businesses to the rest of the state and the global economy and serve as a vital transportation link. The region will assist GDOT in airport planning for economic and transportation growth.

Strategy CFS2: *Improve current transit, local public transportation systems, and encourage green methods of transportation.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide a method of collaboration between cities and counties in the region on public transportation issues and to explore and implement successful energy efficient modes of transportation.

CFS2.1 - Conduct an inventory of active public transit systems in the region including communities' Dial-A-Ride Programs and those with established routes. Working with GDOT and local governments, the GMRC will identify programs which could be developed regionally. GMRC staff can provide training, technical assistance, funding, and networking for various systems with links across the region for potential development opportunities. GMRC staff will also coordinate the region's transportation investments with economic development opportunities so that residents and workers have enhanced transportation options for work and travel.

CFS2.2 - Inventory and develop plans to improve local and regional airports. Plans will include methods for industry and small business to utilize airports for transporting their workforce and mobilizing their product. GMRC will work with communities in seeking funding through the Air Georgia Program for grant funding for improvements of regional airports.

CFS2.3 - Inventory of green transportation options and provide models for region. The region will also identify actions to optimize the utilization of existing transportation infrastructure. High occupancy vehicle lanes, improving airports, railways, and bicycle and pedestrian transportation networks as potential areas to improve transportation efficiency. High occupancy vehicle lanes can potentially reduce congestion and vehicular demands on roadways by reducing single occupancy vehicle use. Commuters using multiple occupancy means of travel, from carpools and vanpools to commuter buses, are encouraged by the travel time advantages provided. The introduction of high occupancy vehicle lanes will be further examined by local public transportation systems. The region will also research the possibility of creating and utilizing park and ride lots.

CFS2.4 - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities serve as an integral element of a multi-modal transportation network. Improved systems for bicycle and pedestrian transportation will also be studied to provide a reduction in congestion and vehicular use on roadways.

The region will identify roadways that could potentially be converted to sign shared roadways. Sign shared roadways provide an opportunity to provide preferred routes for cyclists, with

relatively little financial burden. The physical improvements to an existing road include bicycle safe drainage grates, bridge expansion joints, smooth pavements, signal timing, and detector systems that respond to bicycles, and signage to alert motorists that bicycles are likely to be sharing a travel lane.

CFS2.5 - Coordinate the region's transportation investments with economic development opportunities in unincorporated and redevelopment areas with the goal of addressing economic distress and providing residents with enhanced transportation options.

Work to support the reclamation and redevelopment of brownfields and hard hit industrial areas and help raise awareness of successful projects that can be duplicated elsewhere in the region.

Water Goal: *Provide adequate water supply and promote conservation.*

Strategy CFS3: *Support the development of water supply to ensure stable infrastructural support for businesses and residents.* The purpose of this strategy is to ensure investment in water, which is necessary for residents' quality of life and economic growth. Investment in water infrastructure is needed to ensure affordable and reliable water supplies.

CFS3.1 - Encourage development of water planning. GMRC staff will review and utilize existing water master plans as appropriate. In addition, an evaluation of potential partnerships in meeting future water supply needs, such as reservoir planning, and potential regional or multi county water sources. Other steps will evaluate cost-benefits of various water resources. GMRC will also verify that a written emergency water supply plan exists for the region and assesses the needs for interconnections to meet reliability.

CFS3.2 - Expansion of existing infrastructure. GMRC staff will review existing water planning councils or local entities and identify safe yields of current sources for the region. The need to identify where gaps between available supply and demand will occur will also be conducted. Staff will also assist in a process to permit new water supplies for region. Work with member governments to review capital improvement plans and help seek grant or loan funding for project needs.

CFS3.3 - Consider development of new groundwater wells. GMRC staff will review the region's existing water plans to evaluate potential for groundwater and assist with permitting process as needed. The development of new groundwater sources where wells will supplement the existing surface water supplies will also be considered.

CFS3.4 - Encourage source water protection. GMRC will utilize the region's water plans to identify existing water supply watersheds. GMRC staff will coordinate with local governments on watershed education and protection. Planning for additional water storage that will help drought-proof and extend existing sources will also be reviewed and considered.

CFS3.5 - Encourage good water management practices. GMRC staff will assist with mapping water systems. Local communities will also coordinate and manage leak detection programs. The provision of an example inspection and maintenance program and staff certification programs and staff training will be coordinated.

CFS3.6 - Encourage indirect potable reuse. Plans should include the returning of highly treated wastewater to water supply reservoirs and or rivers. Plans will also encourage the planning and study of inter-basin and transfer basin issues.

Strategy CFS4: *Improve water quality and wastewater planning to ensure stable infrastructural support for businesses and residents.* The purpose of this strategy is to evaluate the water needs of the region and have the planning structure in place to accommodate the needs of residents and the businesses. This strategy will urge the local governments to consider water conservation, water reuse, and public education as part of their water planning efforts.

CFS4.1 - Review the region's wastewater treatment plans to evaluate disposal options and treatments to meet future needs. GMRC staff will evaluate future wastewater needs of the region by reviewing capacity needs and evaluate options to treat and dispose of wastewater. The region should consider opportunities for reuse. The region should plan for additional water storage that will help drought-proof and extend existing sources. Lastly, communities should invest in sewer improvements within county or city boundaries, industrial parks, etc. for industrial growth and expansion.

CFS4.2 - Develop and implement a wastewater education and public awareness program. GMRC staff will inventory current wastewater education programs being utilized in region and develop and implement a regional public education program. GMRC staff will also coordinate within the region, public education and outreach activities.

CFS4.3 - Promote proper septic system management. GMRC will inventory current education methods and develop a regional septic system business and homeowner education program and disseminate information throughout the region. The need to develop short and long term policies for transitioning non sewer areas to sewer system areas in the region will also be addressed.

CFS4.4 - Promote septic system inventory and mapping. GMRC will encourage and provide assistance to local governments to implement sewer system mapping strategies. Staff will utilize mapping technologies to prioritize capital improvement and operation and maintenance, as well as emergency response.

CFS4.5 - Encourage pollution prevention and good practices for storm-water education. GMRC will continue the region's implementation of existing public education programs to prevent pollutant runoff, identify illicit discharges, promote better agricultural practices and business and industry treatments and encourages site design practices that minimize environmental impacts. Staff will encourage local governments to work together to develop regional best management plans and to construct regional best management plan facilities such as storm-water ponds and greenway networks for buffer restoration and protection.

Strategy CFS5: *Develop water conservation education and public awareness program to promote water conservation and reuse.* The purpose of this strategy is to assess existing water conservation and public awareness programs to determine their effectiveness and to promote successful programs in other areas of the region.

CFS5.1 - Review existing education programs in the region and build on readily available examples from within Georgia to have a region-wide program. This program can be regionally implemented and should be evaluated every year to determine effectiveness.

CFS5.2 - Assess and reduce water system leakage. GMRC, in coordination with local governments, will develop a method to assist in leak detection and provide technical assistance. Developing a regional leak response plan with training materials on practices will also be a priority for the region.

CFS5.3 - Assist in development of a regional outdoor watering plan. GMRC will assist with a plan to allow use between certain hours with defined exemptions and to develop an educational program to promote to the public. The development and promotion of better agricultural practices will also be a priority.

CFS5.4 - Encourage conservation rate studies. The GMRC will review the region's existing rate structures and highlight working and acceptable rate structures for residential and industry. A region-wide survey will also be disseminated to see what would be acceptable to various counties.

Telecommunications Goal: *Ensure new telecommunication networks for needed accessibility and reliability.*

Strategy CFS6: *Prepare to meet industry and business telecommunication needs by assisting with fiber optic network development.* The purpose of this strategy is to support, develop, and provide educational opportunities regarding telecommunication systems in the region.

CFS6.1 - Support the creation of regional broadband network. The GMRC will provide organizational, research, and data collection along with grant writing assistance to all PPP ventures within the region that seek to expand, infill, or interconnect general trunk fiber core networks within the region.

CFS6.2 - Develop a usable information database for technology development. The GMRC will develop a useable database of statistical information, enterprise contacts, and viable grant program information designed to support the counties in their efforts to understand the current broadband systems, capacities and utilizations; to provide meaningful application data and statistics for grant applications, develop baseline and incremental performance benchmarks, and to utilize in leverage of regional and local economic marketing efforts.

CFS6.3 - Provide incumbent support for the creation of telecommunication opportunities. The GMRC will establish contact with all regional incumbent service providers to understand their needs, requirements, and long-range goals within the region and incorporate those findings into the Community Economic Development Strategy and any broadband regional initiatives that may be surfaced by those incumbents and/or new PPP ventures.

CFS6.4 - Provide support for enterprise opportunities for technology. The GMRC will work to establish both private and not-for-profit enterprise relationships within the region where new or greater broadband capacity could result in expansion, job creation, improved market penetration, or improvements in communications for the entities involved. The GMRC will

surface any and all opportunities to promote the high-tech capacities of the region through these relationships.

CFS6.5 - Promote broadband education. The GMRC will promote greater education of the capabilities, utilizations, and future needs of broadband within the region. This will be accomplished through formal programs, partnering, social and educational networking, and issuance of information streams through normal and newly developed communication tools.

CFS6.6 - Develop and promote intra-state initiatives. The GMRC, through its connection with other similar organizations throughout the state, including the Appalachian Regional Commission, State Commissioners, and all other interactions will seek to promote broadband capabilities within the GMRC region and look for any and all areas where mutual cooperation might benefit the region and where potential funding streams that might prove advantageous to the region might surface.

Healthcare Goal: *To foster community-based wellness initiatives and increase the availability of affordable high-quality health care services.*

Strategy CFS7: *Encourage and support multi-jurisdictional approaches to provide health services for economic development purposes.* The purpose of this strategy is to encourage regional partnerships in promoting preventative and wellness measures which support economic growth in the region.

CFS7.1 - Utilize public forums to demonstrate the potential economic development impact of a healthy and well-educated workforce. Local governments in cooperation with public health officials, medical providers, etc. shall promote the benefits of healthy lifestyles throughout the region by radio advertisements, newsletters, public bulletins, etc. Having a healthy community will yield private investments from both existing industries and those with expanded opportunities. Healthy kids tend to be better students, thus leading to a better and skilled workforce.

CFS7.2 - Work regionally when opportunities exist for overcoming identifiable deficiencies in service delivery. Communities should work across county boundaries to promote and extend health related services to residents, especially elderly. Targeted services included mental health and substance abuse centers, senior care, health transport, disease and obesity prevention, local clinics, pharmacies, etc.

CFS7.3 - Promote the development of safety, well-being, and resilience on a regional level. Strengthen the capability of hospitals and health care systems to plan for, respond to, and recover from natural and man-made emergency events through public forums, newsletters, and trainings. All of these efforts will help the region be prepared for an emergency. Counties and cities should also work toward completing a regional plan for disaster mitigation that erases county boundaries.

CFS7.4 - Expand and support infrastructure to regional hospital and facilities. As evidenced by the growing population and elderly population and the increased need for medical services, local governments should adapt plans and policies for the future growth of medical campuses to ensure that the infrastructure needs are in place or planned to be in place for future growth in

the health service industry. The GMRC can provide member governments technical assistance in design guidelines, grant application development, and community workshops.

Strategy CFS8: *Support efforts to improve community-based prevention and wellness.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide the region with preventive resources for an active, healthy, and resilient community.

CFS8.1 - Expansion of specialty medical services. While hospitals and other medical office buildings continue to flourish throughout the region, special attention should be given to the health service industry. With the new opening of the Ty Cobb Regional Medical Center in Franklin County and the proposed new South Hall Campus of Northeast Georgia Medical Center, ancillary medical and specialty services will ultimately result that will lead to private investment and job creation. Local governments should work toward making investments for new services. In addition, specialty services in the region will keep residents in the area and reduce travel times for patient services. A region that can offer specialty services for its residents will see a healthier and sustainable community.

CFS8.2 - Creation of wellness parks. Community health is as strong of a priority for many local governments. Strong individuals, strong families, and communities are the building blocks for a stable region. Wellness parks and trails offer residents a stress free environment and help to promote healthy life styles for families and children.

CFS8.3 - Increase the emphasis of Community Health Centers on providing preventive services and linking in with Public Health Services. Community Health Centers play an important role in both health care delivery and improved neighborhood economic activity, especially in rural and medically underserved areas. As a result of the commitment to provide care for all, community health centers also serve a disproportionately high percentage of poor and uninsured patients. Working with local health departments, communities should consider Community Health Centers as a means of generating economic activity in the region and delivering consistent and comprehensive health care.

Strategy CFS9: *Promote and support the use of health information technology (IT).* The purpose of this strategy is to encourage local partnerships between health providers and local leaders in using telecommunications and other information technology to improve care to patients and lower health costs.

CFS9.1 - Encourage innovation, promotion, and adoption of tele-health. Support and develop pilot projects that demonstrate health IT reform that will enable the appropriate reuse of information to support quality public health and research. Further efforts should be aimed at endorsement and support of active participation of consumers in accessing and engaging with their health information.

CFS9.2 - Provide access to modern technology. Efforts should be aimed at promoting and supporting modern technology practices and health care specialty resources for rural areas. The need for rapid sharing and transfer of medical data is critical and often times, a matter of life and death.

CFS9.3 - Public awareness campaign. Enhance communication and support a public awareness campaign about the value of health information technology for outreach to all health care stakeholders, including providers, payers, and consumers of care. Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about the basics, benefits, and privacy implications of health information technology for multiple audiences, including health care providers, other business professionals, and families.

CFS9.4 - Technical assistance. Local leaders should encourage widespread adoption and use of health IT through incentives, grants, and other technical assistance. Efforts should also be aimed at working with health practitioners to establish a baseline needs assessment.

Waste Management Goal: *Provide adequate waste management for domestic and industrial usage.*

Strategy CFS10: *Update and improve the region's waste management plans to ensure availability for current and future economic growth.* The purpose of this strategy is to evaluate the region's ability to accommodate increasing residential and industrial demand for waste disposal and to identify possible programs for waste reduction and recycling for the region.

CFS9.5 - Assist the Georgia Environmental Protection Division in maintaining an accurate list of permitted waste disposal sites in the region. The state requires that every quarter solid waste landfills and construction debris landfills submit tonnage reports from their areas. This information can be utilized in providing data to potential businesses and industries looking to locate in the region. An inventory can also be kept for disposal costs of each area.

CFS9.6 - Assist the State in their update of the characterization of waste disposal within Georgia. This effort can also assist the region in planning for existing and future needs of waste disposal.

CFS9.7 - Work with the counties and cities to establish waste reduction and recycling goals that utilize their area's waste characterization study. Highlight existing public education (Keep Georgia Beautiful Programs), recycling efforts, and composting programs to determine if such programs could be utilized regionally or be presented as models for other areas.

CFS9.8 - Work with the state to encourage new technologies to improve waste reduction. The region can work with the State of Georgia to emphasize the need for quality local solid waste management planning. Local governments should carefully monitor the remaining permitted disposal capacity throughout region and work with the state to encourage new and improved waste reduction and energy efficient programs.

CFS9.9 - Assist existing businesses and industries that have an interest in recycling and waste reduction. Improving and promoting Georgia's recycling and organics collection and processing infrastructure is basic economic development. Local collection infrastructure fuels regional manufacturing: Georgia has the second-largest end-use markets for recyclable material in the nation. Some 40% of what enters local landfills could be purchased for use by these companies. *Georgia 2011 Solid Waste Management Annual Report.*

CFS9.10 - Ensure that local hazard mitigation plans include plans for industrial and residential waste disposal. Just as recession and decreased disposal can prolong remaining capacity,

economic expansion, regulatory rule changes, storms and debris-generating disasters can rapidly consume landfill space. All of these factors serve to underscore the need for sound solid waste planning. Hazard Mitigation Plans need to include steps for handling hazardous waste removal, storm debris removal, and added construction debris removal.

Energy Goal: *Ensure adequate energy supplies for the region and promote environmental standards in all infrastructures.*

Strategy CFS11: *Support the development of low-cost energy and maintain energy reliability.* The purpose of this strategy is to assist the region in planning for low-cost energy methods and support projects that promote energy reliability.

CFS11.1 - Provide energy data and benchmarking. GMRC will assist with organizational, research, and data collection to determine a total energy footprint of the region. This information on electrical, gas, gasoline, diesel, and alternative energy consumption, generation, growth and emissions profiles will provide a full detailed energy picture of the region. An inventory of renewable energy projects that are currently in place within the region will also be conducted.

CFS11.2 - Assist in the development of guidelines and plans for energy-efficient sites and building methodologies in the region. Even though information about solar energy and other renewable energy sources is available, and demonstration sites and buildings have shown the potential for significant savings in energy use, these methods are still not part of mainstream design and construction. Buildings continue to be built that rely entirely on mechanical heating, lighting, and cooling systems regardless of environmental conditions. Development of plans and rules that allow and encourage energy-efficient and environmentally sensitive design of buildings will have the potential to lower energy costs and reduce the region's dependence on foreign energy sources.

CFS11.3 - Encourage energy support. Work with established power providers within the region to understand their needs, requirements, and long-range goals within the region and then incorporate those findings into the CEDS. Any broadband regional initiatives that may surface by those incumbents and/or new private partnership provider ventures should also be included.

CFS11.4 - Promote energy education. There are many programs aimed at reducing energy consumption, such as EnergyStar Rating Programs, energy leakage tracking programs, smart technologies, and hybrid or electric vehicles. Incentives or legislation at the local level for more efficient use of energy can greatly promote the awareness and use of these programs. Many states have public benefits programs that direct ratepayer dollars into efficiency and renewable energy incentives programs. At the federal level there are a number of programs that can benefit communities. Information about energy programs can be publicized by sponsoring programs, partnering, social and educational networking, and issuance of informational streams through normal and newly developed communication tools.

CFS11.5 - Promote intra-state initiatives. The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission through its connection with other state Regional Commissions, the Appalachian Regional Commission, State Commissioners, Department Heads, and all other interactions will seek to promote energy

programs within the region, look for any and all areas where mutual cooperation might benefit the region and where potential funding streams.

Strategy CFS12: *Promote environmental standards in the development of businesses and industries.* The purpose of this strategy is to encourage awareness of the region's natural resources and promote good stewardship of these resources during the construction of new businesses and industries.

CFS12.1 - Encourage eco-industrial development, encourage design, and construction of facilities to go beyond minimum standards for energy efficiency. Provide education and guidance on LEED category levels and measures to obtain these levels. GMRC will assist in locating funding for projects that follow LEED designs or those that incorporate these measures into design and building guidelines.

CFS12.2 - support regional planning and economic development that includes good stewardship of the area's natural resources. GMRC will work to encourage planning and development that is aware of the region's natural resources and promotes preservation of the area's surface and ground water, air quality, and other natural resources.

CFS12.3 - Assist the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in providing training and leveraging support of the reclamation and redevelopment of brownfield sites. Provide assistance with identifying, planning, and re-development of brownfield sites. Raising awareness of and assisting in the leverage support for the redevelopment of brownfield sites will enhance the region and protect the area's natural resources. Areas that are aesthetically pleasing also encourage future economic development.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY GOAL: *To stimulate and strengthen the regional economy through a collaborative effort embracing global trends resulting in job creation and retention, capital investments, and thereby enhancing the tax base and quality of life in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

Tourism Goal: *Promote awareness of the Georgia Mountains Region as a tourism destination by fostering viable and sustainable initiatives.*

Strategy ED1: *Develop a master database of tourism assets in the Georgia Mountains Region.* The purpose of this strategy is to identify, categorize, and acquire a spatial reference point all of the natural and man-made attractions within the Georgia Mountains Region to promote the tourism industry.

ED1.1 - Inventory of tourism assets in the Georgia Mountains Region. GMRC staff, in close coordination with member governments, will assess each individual community to identify tourism assets and create a digital database. The database can then be used to promote and market these attractions either individually or collectively. The database will need to be updated and maintained on either an annual basis or semi-annual.

Relate each tourism asset to a GPS coordinate for mapping purposes, categorize as either Agri-tourism, Natural Resources, Cultural/Heritage Tourism or Outdoor recreation in accordance with State defined standards.

Strategy ED2: *Develop promotional and educational materials for the Georgia Mountains Region*
The purpose of this strategy is to raise visibility and awareness of the region's tourism attractions and destinations and to encourage local leaders to make strategic investments to yield private investment in the region.

ED2.1 - Utilize the inventory database for marketing initiatives of tourism in the Georgia Mountains Region, including the development and distribution of print materials and point of purchase promotions.. By cooperatively marketing the Georgia Mountains Region and packaging attractions together without "county boundaries", it will significantly reduce costs that tourism-related businesses would spend on advertising, and will also heighten awareness and visibility of the opportunities for leisure, recreation, or vacation. The goal is to improve customer awareness and knowledge and attract additional visitors for economic impact through increased local and state revenues and the creation of jobs.

ED2.2 - Develop a plan for using social media technologies to further promote the region. The internet has changed communication and has the capability to serve as a marketing tool to drive investments in a community. There is a need to identify and establish emerging technologies and incorporate the use of social media into the promotion of the Georgia Mountains Region.

ED2.3 - Expand the scope of the Camera Ready program through education and awareness. The Georgia Department of Economic Development has identified the entertainment industry as an important potential revenue stream for the state to pursue. The Georgia Mountains Region's aesthetic beauty and scenery is an ideal setting for television and film producers looking for great shooting locations. These producers will work with the region's 13 county liaisons to acquire local expertise and support during production.

Strategy ED3: *Foster regional partnerships to create and grow tourism product(s).* The purpose of this strategy is identify and create a forum for tourism partners to work together across country boundaries to further enhance products and places to promote the Georgia Mountains Region as a destination.

ED3.1 - Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources. There is a need to develop regional organizational capacity through the education of tourism leadership, area businesses, and the community. A database of resources and contacts will be established and maintained and includes, but not limited to: Convention and Visitor's Bureaus, Chambers of Commerce, Arts Councils, Better Hometowns and Main Streets, Historical Societies, Northeast Georgia Travel Association, Georgia Department of Economic Development – Tourism Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, etc.

ED3.2 - Continue to educate regional leaders, state legislators, business owners about tourism and the impacts on the economy of our region.

Strategy ED4: *Improve infrastructure that supports tourism development.* The purpose of this strategy is to identify needed infrastructure improvements which will further strengthen tourism in the GMRC Region.

ED4.1 - Critical facilities and Infrastructure improvements. Establish an action plan for funding of these needed improvements. The need for infrastructure improvements, particularly quality roads and a viable transportation network, broadband/wi-fi, hotel facilities, bikeways/bike paths, trail head facilities, single and multi-use trails, and other amenities, such as interpretive signage, picnic areas, restroom facilities, etc. are all critical components.

Entrepreneurship Goal: *To focus on creating new small, high-growth companies in the Georgia Mountains Region.*

Strategy ED5: *Provide the Georgia Mountains Region's residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start a new business.* The purpose of this strategy is to integrate the education system with the business sector to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship in the Georgia Mountains Region.

ED5.1 - Start a school mentor program or Junior Achievement program in every junior high and high school in the region. This program will invite and encourage local business owners to talk to students about why they started their own business, what they enjoyed about it, and the steps they took to accomplish this. It is important to raise students' awareness of self-employment as a career option.

ED5.2 - Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers. Working together with local technical or community colleges and private businesses, junior high and high schools, the development of a training program for use in classrooms by incorporating entrepreneurship in its curriculum to further educate students on the benefits of entrepreneurship. By fostering a strong small business and entrepreneurial environment, the region will attract and retain young workers and provide opportunities to others who have been displaced.

ED5.3 - Career Days. The region should encourage schools to host "Career Days" from elementary school through secondary schools and focus on both traditional and non-traditional careers. This will help to promote entrepreneurial education in schools and support learning opportunities in successful local businesses.

ED5.4 - Technical Colleges. Link elementary and secondary schools with the local Technical Colleges throughout the region to showcase successful programs, such as culinary, information services, etc. that has resulted from assistance of technical college curriculum.

Strategy ED6: *Better connect venture capital, investors, and entrepreneurs within the Georgia Mountains Region.* The purpose of this strategy is to improve collaboration between business investors and entrepreneurs.

ED6.1 - Identify and create a database of available resources from each entity in the region. Several groups within the Georgia Mountains Region provide services for small businesses and entrepreneurship with programs ranging from training, technical assistance, funding, and networking. The GMRC will work in close coordination with the local governments to identify each entity within the Georgia Mountains Region to obtain information to understand their respective services, primary sources revenue, and primary target clients and catalog this information into a streamlined document for distribution. (Small Business Development Center (SBDC), Community Development Finance Institutions (CDFI), Universities and Technical

Colleges, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce, and the GMRC Workforce Investment Board)

ED6.2 - Creation of an entrepreneurial network. The objective of an entrepreneurial network is to provide a forum in which business executives and people who seek to become executives of their own companies can share ideas, do business together, and build relationships. The action item for this objective will be to develop a survey of small business owners, entrepreneurs, and investors to identify their perspectives on the effectiveness of current programs and services that support small business and entrepreneurs.

ED6.3 - A need exists for targeted market research to identify innovation opportunities that correspond to the assets of the Georgia Mountains Region. The creation of quality new business opportunities in the region will be based upon the existing needs and development of a customer base that can be sustained. Focus groups will be assembled and surveys conducted to determine the market needs of the region. The survey developed will be targeted to economic developers, elected officials, technical colleges, and business leaders. Identifying these markets will ensure that new start-ups and small businesses can create innovative projects needed for the region and become self-sustaining.

ED6.4 - Seek outside forms of equity financing and possible venture capital opportunities. Using the information collected from Objective 2.1, local government leaders will encourage small businesses and potential start-up companies to seek funding through an RLF program, bank financing, Community Development Finance Institution or another financing entity.

ED6.5 - Building and expanding of incubator facilities. Work with local governments and development authorities in setting up small business incubators throughout the region to allow companies to share resources and space and enable tools, training, and infrastructure to create financially stable companies.

Strategy ED7 *Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.* The purpose of this strategy is to increase access to capital and technical assistance to entrepreneurs from the early stages of conceptualization to product development for positive success and economic growth.

ED7.1 - Identify and market existing regional loan programs and other resources that are available to start-up businesses and small businesses. Promote state and federal programs that offer resources to new or expanding companies through marketing initiatives, workshops, seminars, etc. Access to Capital for Entrepreneurs is a regional Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) that can help new start-ups with new credit programs. Work to promote the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's RLF program.

ED7.2 - Provide local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start-up companies. Host informational workshops or seminars promoting state programs, such as the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) that will help align banks with funding to lend small businesses and new start-ups.

ED7.3 - Link in to regional venture capital and angel investor networks.

Strategy ED8: *Promote successful entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial practices in the region.* The purpose of this strategy is to identify successful entrepreneurs and small business owners and assist them with development services.

ED8.1 - Encourage and support growth of small business development centers and smaller micro-enterprise organizations. Conduct regional quarterly or semi-annual meetings with resource networks to discuss plans for enhancing entrepreneurship in the region. A component of this objective will also encourage the development of management teams that can assist start-ups and middle stage entrepreneurs in succeeding.

ED8.2 - Encourage policy initiatives that support business growth and the enhancement of the Georgia Mountains Region as a viable location to doing and/or growing business.

Entrepreneurial policy for the Georgia Mountains Region will include the development of small business, tax relief for small business owners, access to debt and equity capital, access to venture capital, business training, technical assistance, and strategic planning.

ED8.3 - Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Universities.

Using an extensive network of resources, such as the universities, financing institutions, business leaders, SBDC, etc., a regional informational seminar will be conducted with topics such as how to write a business plan, small business finance, and marketing. Participants in the workshop will also hear from individuals who have started their business and methods used for achieving their goals.

ED8.4 - Develop and distribute educational and/or promotional materials. The key to entrepreneur success in the region is to make all information about starting or expanding a small business centralized. The region should develop a regional electronic newsletter for those involved in education, economic development, small business development, and entrepreneurship. The newsletter should announce networking events, training programs offered throughout the region, business plan competitions, and highlight recent small business and entrepreneur successes throughout the Georgia Mountains Region.

Agri-Business Goal: *To foster the development of sustainable agriculture by creating and/or retaining jobs and private investment within the agricultural sector and by adding value and developing new products and niche markets.*

Strategy ED9: *Encourage and support the development of community supported agricultural cooperatives to sustain small and mid-sized producers.* This strategy is to create regional support to advance agricultural growers and specialty food producers and products.

ED9.1 - Creation of a regional food hub. A food hub is a new model that looks to provide a physical place where produce or meat products can be brought together in quantities that are useful for institutional and/or wholesale markets, so small and midscale farmers can access new markets. USDA defines a food hub as “a centrally located facility with a business management structure facilitating the aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, and/or marketing of locally/regionally produced food products”. The first step is to assess potential barriers to food hub development and to evaluate the infrastructure needed to support these hubs. The next step will be to identify partners and producers.

ED9.2 - Increase partnerships. In an effort to generate revenue for the region, the need for partnerships on both local and regional levels should be supported. Based on increased interest in agricultural production of local commodities, farmers should seek partnerships with local government officials, local County Extension Agents, United States Department of Agriculture, Georgia Department of Agriculture, and local technical colleges and public universities.

ED9.3 - Establish a local food guide through local food assessments. The need to have a comprehensive list of the needs of farmers and producers is critical to expanding product or in development of a food hub. A survey tool will be created to establish the needs and deficiencies facing each producer in the region. It should also be noted that the completed assessment will help local farmers work together to support a regional food network capable of sustaining outside forces and threats.

Strategy ED10: *Expand opportunities for production based on the byproducts of value-added processing.* The purpose of the strategy is to support the need for value-added product development opportunities and encouraging people in the region to “buy local”.

ED10.1 - Assist agricultural producers enter into value-added activities. GMRC, in partnership with local government leaders will provide technical assistance to producers in generating new products, create new or expanding marketing opportunities, and increase producer income for economic development. Priority will be aimed at assisting new farmers or socially-disadvantaged farmers.

ED10.2 - Promote and expand farmer’s markets and canneries. Efforts will be aimed at assisting local communities to set up either a canning operation or local farmer’s market. Access to fresh, local food is also a key to meet gaps in food security throughout the region and improve the health of low income families in the region. Relationships with local farms can open the door for access to additional sources of low-cost produce.

ED10.3 - Enhance educational training opportunities for both the producer and consumer. Priority will be given to enhancing the knowledge of existing food processing techniques and food safety expertise of the region. Working in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), local County Extension Agents, the University System of Georgia, and local businesses and schools; classes in preserving food, food safety, and food preparation should be supported on both a local and regional level. This measure will also provide support for developing regional food hubs. Other training possibilities could include farming techniques, crop management, nutrition, and produce management.

Strategy ED11: *Expand and upgrade infrastructure to support farms.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide water, sewer, road, or broadband infrastructure to grow agri-business in the region.

ED11.1 - Invest in physical infrastructure to support growth and development.

Based on findings from the local food assessment data outlined above, infrastructure needs for producers and farmers should be supported. Georgia has faced many drought conditions over the years, which is critical to the livelihood of farmers; therefore, water quality and supply investments will be given priority. Transportation infrastructure is critical to moving products

and goods for wholesale distribution and packaging, and efforts aimed at improving rail, road, and air modes of transportation will be supported.

ED11.2 - Expand and support technology-based infrastructure. Utilizing the data from the local food assessment, investments in technology-based software for marketing and promotion of goods and services should be supported. Broadband infrastructure and other telecommunication related technology will also serve an important role in moving goods and services, as well as marketing efforts.

ED11.3 - Support new “green” infrastructure practices. As a means of good environmental stewardship, local communities should support and adopt new “green” methods of agriculture production.

Strategy ED12: *Support efforts to expand agri-tourism in the region.* The purpose of this strategy is to support and promote agri-tourism assets in the region.

ED12.1 - Inventory and map agri-tourism assets of the region. The identification of assets will include, but not be limited to: vineyards and wineries, distilleries, corn mazes, farmer’s markets, individual farm stands, pumpkin patches, and other locally produced commodities. After identification of the assets, a comprehensive database of these findings will be produced and a GPS coordinate will be obtained from marketing, mapping, and packaging of attractions.

ED12.2 - Support of the grape growing/wine industry. The Georgia Mountains Region is earning international acclaim for the wines produced by its vineyards. Cities and counties in the region will identify and pursue marketing opportunities to promote these award-winning vineyards. GMRC will provide assistance at the request of the region’s member governments (city and county) with grant opportunities and planning needs.

ED12.3 - Support new distilleries. The Georgia Mountains Region is generating a reputation for distilleries that produce high-quality liquor sold in other parts of Georgia and around the United States. Cities and counties housing these distilleries will identify and pursue marketing opportunities promoting these products. GMRC will provide assistance at the request of these member governments with potential grant opportunities and planning needs.

Existing Business and Industry Goal: *Increase expansion and retention of the region’s existing businesses and industries.*

Strategy ED13: *Promote regional leadership and collaboration.* The purpose of this strategy is to promote cooperation among leadership in the region for a thriving economic base.

ED13.1 - Commitment. Local leaders must strongly commit to economic development both in policy making and resource allocation to support existing business. Chambers of Commerce are strong supporters of the existing industry base and do a great job in promoting existing business and industry.

ED13.2 - Regional Collaboration. Major economic development issues facing the Georgia Mountains Region need to be addressed at the regional level, such as, allocation of scarce financial resources, the location of critical infrastructure, and business retention and expansion

efforts. The ability to collaborate and share resources will yield positive investments for the region.

ED13.3 - Funding. With diminishing federal and state budgets, the need to work together on regional projects allows for priority on grant and loan funding.

Strategy ED14: *Invest in the beautification and revitalization of downtowns.* The purpose of this strategy is to promote and assist in public facilities and infrastructure to support a thriving downtown.

ED14.1 - Incentivize business growth in the region's downtowns. Active downtowns are essential to the economic and social well – being of communities. Incentives come in many forms from financial inducements to developing soft infrastructure, such as educational resources and business incubators. Local governments should utilize state incentive programs like Opportunity Zones, Enterprise Zones, Tax Allocation Districts, and Capital Improvement District resources to assist local business owners.

ED14.2 - Design Standards. The region should create design standards for downtown areas and offer incentives for businesses to comply with standards.

Strategy ED15: *Support new efforts for existing business and industry.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide resources and infrastructure to keep existing businesses in the region and create meaningful jobs and investments.

ED15.1 - Create a regional industry roundtable. While many counties and Chambers of Commerce host an Industry Roundtable within their respective county, priority should be made to bring together large, medium, and small business and industries within the region on an annual or semi-annual basis. Issues facing all businesses today like energy efficiency, taxes, telecommunications, etc. can be discussed and share resources.

ED15.2 - Support Infrastructure. Working with local counties, the GMRC will assist member governments in pursuing funding for infrastructure, machinery & equipment, and other business needs, which will allow the industry to expand and create jobs.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT GOAL: *To attract and retain business and industry by promoting education and workforce development.*

Strategy WD1: *Lower the high school dropout rate.* The purpose of this strategy is to support region-wide efforts to encourage students to stay in school and finish high school.

WD1.1 - The WIB and its Youth Council have authorized that ten (10) required program elements will be provided through the GMRC/WIB program office. The WIB provides services to local youth through program staff including a Youth Program Supervisor and Youth Services Case Manager. Additionally, WIB/GMRC contracts with individuals in different communities who work with WIB to provide services such as tutoring and administration of local programming. WIB youth program and contractor staffs provide the following services in-house:

- Application & eligibility determination
- Case management
- Summer & year-round work experiences
- Tutoring and study skills development
- Supportive services
- Job search placement assistance
- Leadership development opportunities
- Assessments
- Adult mentoring
- Job shadowing
- Workshops in work readiness development
- Follow-up services for 12-months after exit

WD1.2 - To ensure that WIA funds are used as a gap filler rather than a sole funding source, WIB youth program staff adhere to the requirements outlined within the Regional Workforce

WD1.3 - Development Plan when a service is needed to meet a participant's Youth Individual Service Strategy:

Strategy WD2: *Retain graduates and the educated workforce within the region.* The purpose of this strategy is to retain a well-qualified and educated workforce in Georgia Mountains Region.

WE2.1 - Basic Services.

- Researching companies thoroughly, contacting them and noting their workforce needs;
- Networking locally and regionally to identify and target high-growth employers;
- Educating employers about how OJT training works

WE2.2 Business services offered through the WIA system include:

- Recruitment of job applicants
- Screening of job applicants
- Job Postings/Orders
- Job/Employee matching
- Skills Assessments
- Workshops
- Available space for employer interviews
- Labor Market Information
- Census Data
- Unemployment Insurance Information
- Job Fairs
- On-The-Job Training (under development)

Strategy WD3: *Partner with local schools, businesses/industries, and civic organizations to promote the importance of an educated workforce.* The purpose of this strategy proposes to keep an open dialogue with educators, businesses, and civic organizations so that a modernized skilled workforce is ever present in the Georgia Mountains Region.

WD3.1 - Members of the Youth Council and the WIB include representatives from:

- Board of Education
- Job Corps
- Ninth District Opportunity
- YMCA
- Junior Achievement
- Housing Authority
- DFCS
- Council of Juvenile Judges
- 4-H
- Youth Employers
- Technical Colleges

WD3.2 - Encourage youth and students opportunities for paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing. Job Shadowing experiences are offered (1) through a partnership with employers, schools and partner agencies during the school year and (2) through special events offered as part of the summer work experience. The WIB offers opportunities for youth to participate in volunteer activities at local Humane Societies and other organizations. Additionally, all youth are encouraged to participate in clubs, groups and activities offered through local schools.

WD3.3 - Coordinate efforts with the following agencies to ensure that all ten (10) services are available and to maximize use of limited funds. In addition to service agencies, WIB is committed to developing relationships with private businesses that assist in providing supervision and training to youth through work experiences. Several local businesses including J&J Foods in Gainesville and Metro Insurance Agency in Toccoa have participated in WIB youth programming as speakers and as mentors for youth participants. Developing strong relationships with local employers will remain a high priority for the WIB youth program.

- Lanier Career Academy
- DFCS Regional and County Offices
- Family Connections
- Mountain Education Centers
- Alternative Schools
- The Technical College System of Georgia
- County Housing Authorities
- County Boards of Education
- Lanier Technical College
- North Georgia Technical College
- Junior Achievement
- Juvenile Justice
- Hall County Boys and Girls Club
- Library Systems
- County Chambers of Commerce
- School-to-Work
- District 2 Public Health
- University of Georgia

- Rehabilitation Services
- The West Avenue Home
- 9th District Opportunity
- Local Economic Development Organizations
- Jobs for Georgia Graduates – Dawsonville
- Communities-in-Schools (Toccoa and Hartwell)
- Gainesville, Toccoa, and Habersham Career Centers
- Healthy Families – Northeast Georgia Medical Center

WD3.4 - All training must allow the customer to become self-sufficient. The following occupations have been determined to be growth and demand occupations for the area as of May 31, 2012:

Accountant & Bookkeeper	Electrician	Medical Office Worker
Administrative Assistant	Emergency Medical Technician	Medical Records Tech.
Automotive Mechanic	English as a Second Language Instructor	Medical Secretary
Automotive Structural Repairer	General Office Clerk	Motorcycle Repair Tech.
Bill & Account Collector	Hand Packers & Packagers	Occupational Therapist
Brick Mason	Heating/AC Technician	Paralegal
CAD Operator	Home Health Aide	Pharmacy Technician
Carpenter	Hotel/Motel Management	Phlebotomist
Cashier/Sales Clerk	Human Service Worker	Physical Therapist
Child Development Assistant	Industrial Machinery Mechanic	Plumber & Pipefitter
Certified Nursing Assistant	Industrial Truck & Tractor Operator	Quality Assurance Tech.
CNC Machine Operators	Laborer (Warehouse)	Radiological/X-Ray Tech.
Construction Laborer	Large Truck & Tractor Trailer Driver	Registered Nurse (RN)
Correction Officer	Law Enforcement Officer	Respiratory Therapist
Cosmetology	Legal Secretary	Robotics
Culinary	Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	Special Edu. Teacher
Customer Service Representative	Maintenance Mechanic	Surgical Technician
Data Entry Technician	Management Trainee	Surveyor
Delivery & Route Truck Driver	Manufacturing Machine Operator	Teacher
Dental Asst. & Dental Hygienist	Mechanic & Repairer	Truck Driver, Heavy
Dental Laboratory Technician	Medical & Lab Technician	Voc. Ed. Teacher
Drafter	Medical Assistant	Welder/ Cutter

WD3.5 - Continue to distribute information about Occupational Skills Training for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth throughout the Georgia Mountains Region. Sessions are conducted weekly in the Gainesville area and bi-annually in each of the other counties. Present information at local Technical Colleges on New Student Registration Day to inform new students about GMWD. Information sent to partners in the Georgia Mountains Region: 9th District, The Housing Authority, DFACS, Legacy Link, etc. about Occupational Skills Training opportunities.

WD3.6 - GMRC WD will develop an On the Job Training program. GMRC WD will work with businesses to train new employees to meet their skills requirement.

WD3.7 - The GMRC WIB has approved a GED pilot program to work in conjunction with the Hall and Dawson County Courts. GMRC WD will assist five (5) participants from each county that have been court ordered to pursue their GED.

Strategy WD4: *Increase basic and technical skills.* The purpose of this strategy is to form a more prepared workforce in the Georgia Mountains Region. The GMRC has access to data to provide area demographics, needed labor market information, etc. for the region. The WIB is holding public meetings in each county and with each Georgia Department of Labor Career Center Employer Committee to gauge employment and training needs from employers, community members, and partner agencies in the region.

WD4.1 - Maintain scope and parameters of Workforce Development programs assisting Basic Skills Development. Refer to the GMRC Regional Workforce Development Plan for specific details.

WD4.2 - Maintain scope and parameters of Workforce Development programs assisting Basic Skills Development. Refer to the GMRC Regional Workforce Development Plan for specific details

WD4.3 - Expand WD's Basic Skills support programs through coordination with local youth detention centers, enabling at-risk youth to complete their GED under supervised terms.

Strategy WD5: *Help alleviate unemployment and underemployment in the Georgia Mountain Region.* The purpose of this strategy is to generate a better living standard for the citizens of the Georgia Mountains Region. The GMRC can provide core services through the one-stop system, as well as provide intensive training services for program participants.

WD5.1 - Dislocated Workers – Maintain scope and parameters of Workforce Development programs assisting Dislocated Workers. Refer to the GMRC Regional Workforce Development Plan for specific details.

WD5.2 - Veterans – Maintain scope and parameters of Workforce Development programs assisting Veterans. Refer to the GMRC Regional Workforce Development Plan for specific details.

Strategy WD6: *Address lack of family support.* The purpose of this strategy is to assist youth in preparing educational objectives for their future employment.

WD6.1 - For in-school youth, WIB coordinates counseling services through school counselors and social workers. For out-of-school youth, WIB coordinates services for counseling with agencies such as Healthy Families, DFCS and Region 2 District Health. Adult mentoring for youth has a duration of at least twelve (12) months, which may occur both during and after program participation:

- WIB coordinates services with local groups who assign volunteer mentors to work with youth
- WIB staff and contractors serve as mentors to youth participants. Each youth participant has regular contact with a WIB youth program case manager who

provides mentoring and other services. Additionally, youth participating in the summer work experience are mentored by summer counselors and worksite supervisors. Tutors and other contract staff also mentor youth with whom they work.

- Drug and alcohol abuse referrals to counseling, as appropriate, to the needs of the individual youth

HOUSING GOAL: *Facilitate the availability and accessibility of affordable housing and facilitate coordination of housing development with planning for infrastructure and overall community development for long-term sustainability, in every community in the region.*

Strategy H1: *Establish an inventory of current housing supply in the region to identify present and future needs.* The purpose of this strategy is to accumulate the housing inventory for all thirteen counties in the region, analyze the data, and determine the housing needs (if any) for each community. This type of information can be gathered by prominent real estate agencies in the region (e.g. Norton, Coldwell Banker, etc.).

H1.1 - Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community.

H1.2 - Produce survey and distribute to local housing leaders.

H1.3 - Develop summary report on housing survey findings

Strategy H2: *To inform local leaders and citizens on available housing programs and services.* The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that local leaders and their residents are aware of all programs and services offered through federal and state programs that are available to them in the Georgia Mountains Region.

H2.1 - Provide educational seminars and workshops.

H2.2 - Encourage local leaders to partner with public/private housing or historic preservation organizations.

H2.3 - Utilize state and federal housing programs to leverage resources available to housing providers.

H2.4 - To provide an inventory of grants and other financial programs which support housing development.

Strategy H3: *Develop a regional strategic housing plan.* The purpose of this strategy is to get all local governments in the Georgia Mountains Region to meet, identify common housing needs, and create an action plan to put these needs in place with the goal of eliminating homelessness in the region.

H3.1 - Develop a regional strategic housing plan. Create regional “task force” or advisory committee to support development and implementation of the plan at the local level. Utilize inventory to create a digital map database.

PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION GOAL: *Encourage disaster resiliency, extending beyond emergency responsiveness to planning and organizing in advance to address these vulnerabilities, and to enable rebuilding and recovery afterwards in ways that offer healthier, sustainable communities, and more robust regional economies.*

Strategy DM1: *Creation of a Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.* The purpose of this strategy is to assist local government officials, residents of the counties and cities in the Georgia Mountains Region, and public and private sector organizations in pre-disaster mitigation planning to address the risks associated within each jurisdiction of inevitable natural and technological hazards, thereby minimizing human, economic, and structural losses.

DM1.1 - Develop a Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, identifying key stakeholders and creating a regional Technical Advisory Committee. (TAC) The Plan should assess risks and threats in the region, and conduct a baseline assessment and gap analysis of assets, systems, and networks, including *inventories of Critical Facilities, geographic databases, and service providers, culminating in* identification of priority mitigation projects.

Strategy DM2: *Create public awareness of plan/community outreach.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide the public frequent information that is clear, consistent, and appropriate on available assistance, where to go in case of emergency and a designated local point of contact, and any other measures needed to achieve mitigation or recovery.

DM2.1 - Develop and conduct local and regional workshops addressing *Community Preparedness, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan, Governmental Efficiency, Community Wellness, Alert Systems*

DM2.2 - Develop and distribute preparedness and post-disaster recovery material.

DM2.3 - Encourage partnerships with large employers (100 +) and schools for disaster planning.

Strategy DM3: *Establish a regional post-disaster response framework.* The purpose of this strategy is to provide the template for the management of incidents regardless of size, scope, or cause so that emergency management officials and response personnel have a flexible, but standardized system in which a variety of agencies can work together in a cohesive manner.

DM3.1 - Develop Regional Post-Disaster Response Framework outlining framework, utilizing key local support, establishing communication protocols and encouraging regular drills and exercises

DM3.2 - Promote specialty training opportunities for first responders and a common and comprehensive approach to post-disaster recovery at all levels of government.

Regional Priority Projects

Through extensive collaboration and coordination, mitigation projects identified in the planning process will be prioritized on the *Regional Priority List*. The purpose of this section is to guide construction of projects that will protect life and property, especially critical infrastructure, such as bridges, roads, and water and wastewater facilities.

An exhaustive list will ultimately cover all counties and cities within the region and will prioritize each project as to the importance of the preventive measures it will provide. This will help enable counties in the region to apply for both Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds for either mitigation purposes or post-disaster recovery should a disaster occur.

Mitigation projects can be broken down into several categories, such as flood mitigation, wildfire mitigation, wind mitigation and technological mitigation.

During group sessions, examples of flood mitigation projects that were mentioned include: Riprap around riverbanks, retaining walls, erosion and sediment control, sewer backup protection, flood-proofing buildings. Another form of flood mitigation is the enactment of regulations to prevent development in floodplain areas. Examples of regulations might include: Updated changes to planning and zoning, thereby restricting development in floodplain areas, open space recreation through the purchase of easements or acquisition of land in floodplain areas, storm-water management, and drainage system maintenance.

Examples of wildfire mitigation projects might include: Removal of vegetation around buildings, provide fire breaks in the timber, designate and provide fire roads to aid in firefighting, and replace roofing with fire-resistant materials.

Examples of wind mitigation projects might include: provision of higher grade utility poles, provision of emergency back-up generators to critical facilities, clearance of trees from utility poles, and thin trees to reduce wind damage.

Other types of mitigation projects include mass notification systems, warning sirens, and weather advisory signs to name a few. Another project that was mentioned included the distribution of weather radios as a warning tool in locations where there may be concentrated populations, or in locations where personnel may serve to help distribute warnings to the public. Examples include schools, day care centers, factories and large employers, etc.

Other regional projects:

- Updates to each County Local Emergency Response/Operation Plan (LERP) and integration into the Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan
- Development of Citizen Emergency Response Teams (CERT) for each county and/or city
- Mass Notification/Alert Systems
- Specialty equipment (hazmat, etc.)
- Public Awareness Campaign
- Specialized trainings, certifications, etc.
- Updates to facility accommodations to keep with current and updated standards

- Inventory and designation of shelters, equipment
- Transition – people need to know who to contact and where to go
- Work with local large sized businesses

Upon completion of the Regional Mitigation Plan, a comprehensive list of projects specific to each county and city will be identified.

The list of issues and projects outlined below is comprehensive, but by no means exhaustive. The list reflects the participant’s ideas, concerns, and efforts and is expected to be continually updated as new projects emerge and existing projects are completed. The CEDS is meant to be a dynamic and emergent process. The GMRC sees CEDS as a major component of its strategic plan, and through partnerships, expect to achieve many of the key goals and projects.

GOVERNMENT	PROJECT	FUNDING SOURCE(S)	AMOUNT
Banks County			
	Wastewater Treatment	GEFA/USDA/Local	\$5,000,000
	Water System Upgrades	CDBG	\$500,000
	Martin Bridge Sewer Imp.	ARC/EDA/USDA/OneGA	\$3,000,000
	Fiber Infrastructure	ARC/OneGA	\$5,000,000
	I-85 Frontage Road	DOT	\$1,000,000
Town of Homer			
	Wastewater Treatment	EDA/ARC/CDBG/EIP	\$1,500,000
City of Maysville			
	Park & Trail Development	DOT-TE	\$500,000
	Renovation of City Hall	USDA/Local	\$1,500,000
Dawson County			
	Infrastructure Expansion	ARC/Local	\$300,000
	DADC – VITE	ARC/PDG	\$235,000
City of Dawsonville			
	Sewer Expansion	ARC/Local	\$1,000,000
	Sewer System Improvements	ARC/Local	\$600,000
Forsyth County			
	Road Improvements	DOT/Local	\$5,000,000
Franklin County			
	Road Improvements	CDBG-EIP, OneGA	\$1,000,000
	Industrial Park Development	ARC/EDA/OneGA	\$2,000,000
City of Franklin Springs			
	Sewer System Improvements	ARC/Local	\$700,000
City of Lavonia			
	Raw Water Pump Station	ARC/Local	\$800,000
	City Hall Renovation Project	USDA/Local	\$600,000
	Northern Sewer Trunk Line	ARC/EDA/Local	\$1,200,000
	Hwy 59 North Sewer Line	ARC/EDA/Local	\$750,000
	Lake Hartwell Increased	ARC/GEFA/Local	\$1,000,000

	Water Allocation Project		
City of Royston			
	Depot Renovations	ARC/Local	\$1,000,000
	Rural Transit	DOT/Local	\$500,000
	Tornado Siren/Mass Notification	GEMA/Local	\$45,000
Habersham County			
	Infrastructure – Industrial Park	ARC/Local	\$620,000
City of Clarkesville			
	Greenway Development	LWCF	\$400,000
	Streetscape	DOT-TE	\$750,000
	Downtown Parking Lot	USDA – RBEG	\$99,000
	Water Improvements	CDBG-EIP	\$250,000
City of Cornelia			
	Phase III – Water Improvements	CDBG/Local	\$840,000
City of Demorest			
	Sewer System Improvements	ARC/Local	\$600,000
Hall County			
	Transitional Housing	CDBG/Local/Private	\$800,000
	IMS Gear Expansion	OneGA	\$200,000
	Energy Grant	ARC/Local	\$110,000
Hart County			
	Land Purchase	USDA REDLG	\$3,024,750
	Water Expansion	ARC/Local	\$300,000
City of Hartwell			
	Wastewater Treatment	CDBG-EIP/ARC/USDA	\$1,000,000
	Sewer Expansion	CDBG-EIP/Local	\$500,000
Lumpkin County			
	Water Improvements	CDBG/Local	\$550,000
	Water & Sewer Improvements	ARC/Local	\$350,000
	Historic Cemetery	DNR	\$100,000
Rabun County			
	Business Park Improvements	ARC/OneGA/EDA	\$2,000,000
	NEGA Food Bank – Food Hub	ARC/OneGA	\$2,500,000
	US 441 Widening	DOT/ARC/Local	\$10,000,000
	US Highway 441 Interchange Improvements	DOT/ARC/Local	\$3,000,000
	Potable Water Plant – Rabun Business Park	ARC/GEFA/USDA/Local	\$3,000,000
	Sewer Line Sky Valley to	ARC/GEFA/USA/Local	\$1,000,000

	Sewer Plant @ Rabun Business Park		
	Water line distribution system in & around Dillard	GEFA/ARC/Local	\$1,500,000
	Water & Sewer Improvements	ARC/GEFA/Local	\$2,500,000
City of Mountain City			
	Drainage Improvements	CDBG	\$500,000
Stephens County			
	Wastewater Treatment Plant	CDBG-EIP/OneGA	\$2,500,000
	High School Road Project	OneGA/Local	\$1,000,000
	Lake Hartwell Bruce Creek	DNR	\$600,000
	New platform at train depot	ARC/DOT/Local	\$1,000,000
	Memorial Drive Upgrades	DOT/ARC/Local	\$500,000
	New Road from Veteran's Parkway to High School	Local/DOT	\$2,000,000
	Natural Gas Expansions	USDA/Local	\$2,500,000
	Water Supply and expansion of distribution system	ARC/GEFA/EDA/Local	\$1,500,000
	Wastewater Collection and Treatment Upgrades	ARC/GEFA/Local/USDA	\$2,000,000
	Broadband Connectivity	OneGeorgia/USDA	\$6,000,000
	Industrial Park Development	OneGeorgia/EDA/ARC	\$3,000,000
City of Toccoa			
	Infrastructure Upgrade	CDBG-EIP/ARC	\$2,000,000
	Wastewater Treatment	CDBG-EIP/ARC/OneGA	\$2,000,000
	Gas line extension	ARC	\$100,000
Towns County			
	Sewer Improvements	Local/Private	\$4,000,000
City of Hiawassee			
	Water & Sewer Improvements	EDA/ARC/OneGA	\$500,000
City of Young Harris			
	Sewer Improvements	ARC	\$600,000
Union County			
	US 129 Expansion	DOT	\$10,000,000
	Airport Connector Road	DOT	\$750,000
	BHR – Amphitheater	OneGA	\$1,000,000
	Senior Center	CDBG/Local	\$325,000
	Infrastructure Improvements	CDBG-EIP/OneGA	\$500,000
White County			
	Water Line Extension	CDBG/Local	\$125,000
	Water & Sewer Expansion	EDA/ARC/OneGA, EIP	\$2,000,000

Regional Work Program

The Work Program lists the specific activities the Regional Commission will undertake to implement the regional plan during the upcoming five year period. Additionally, items will be separated into the following categories:

- *Planning and Coordination.* Activities performed by the Regional Commission to assist local governments and other regional actors to act consistently with the regional plan.
- *Review.* Items by other actors in the region that require review and comment by the Regional Commission.

Throughout the Work Program, items that are considered *Reviews* are displayed in *italics*.

Also included in the Work Program are columns linking the action items to previously cited Issues and Opportunities (I/O) and/or previously cited Goals and Strategies (Goal). Some projects do not list either due to their inclusion as a carry-over from previous work programs or because they were recommendations after the listing of Issues, Opportunities and Strategies had been established but were still considered worth future consideration.

GMRC REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM – 2013

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2013					
Develop a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources; Place on the web	8, 11, 43		GMRC	\$15,000	GMRC
Develop and maintain citizens-based partnerships in the five river basins to assist with public education.	17, 19, 33		GMRC, Local Govts, Water Authorities	\$2,500/yr	Local Govts, Water Authorities
Develop single map redevelopment plans for historic downtowns	43, 44		GMRC, HPD, DCA	\$15,000	GMRC, DCA, ARC
Complete update of Regional Plan			GMRC, DCA	\$50,000	GMRC
Develop Regional Rural Transit Plan	3		GMRC	\$20,000	GDOT, GMRC
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
<i>Encourage the development of necessary supporting infrastructure along GA 59 to serve industry.</i>	10, 23, 24, 38		Local Govts, GMRC	\$5,000/yr	GMRC, Local Govts, GA DOT, GA DCA, ARC, EDC, GEFA
Develop a model stormwater ordinance for the developed and developing areas of the region.			GMRC	\$5,000	GMRC
<i>Encourage local governments in the SR 17 corridor to adopt and implement standards and guidelines.</i>	34, 37, 41		GMRC	\$2,000/yr	GMRC
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
Work with local governments to address interstate sign and billboards	36, 39, 41		GMRC	\$1,000/yr	GMRC
Develop for Georgia Workforce Area 2, an Adult and Dislocated Worker Strategic Plan.	10, 11, 14		GMRC	\$50,000	GDOL
Develop planning standards education material	35		GMRC	\$1,000	DCA

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2013					
Develop in-house service for calculating cost-benefit analyses for new development and 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 a county-level survey that monitors progress with implementing the Basin Mgmt. Plans.	15-19, 33	NR 3.2	GMRC, EPD	\$5,000	EPD, DCA
Develop means to facilitate review of impacts new development will make on local water systems.	23, 24, 33	NR4.1	GMRC, Local Govts., EPD	\$10,000	EPD
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
Develop regional water infrastructure map.	23, 24	CFS3.2	GMRC, Local Govts.	\$10,000	EPD, GEFA
<i>Review and update the list of permitted waste disposal sites in the region</i>	1, 17, 22	CFS10.5	GMRC, EPD	\$1,000	EPD
Provide local banks with resources that educate them on the best way to support small and start-up companies	2	ED7.2	GMRC, EDA	\$2,000	EDA
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
<i>Expand WD's Basic Skills support programs through coordination with local youth detention centers</i>	12, 13, 26	WD4.3	GMRC, WD	\$25,000	WD
Inventory local housing programs, leaders and policies in each community.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7	H1.1	GMRC, DCA, Local Govts.	\$5,000	DCA
2014					
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

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2014					
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
Update and redress GIS database to improve regional analyses and for faster EIP assistance	17, 18, 20, 22		GMRC, EPD, DCA, DED	\$20,000	DCA, EPD
Develop conservation design guidebook	2	NR1.1	GMRC, DNR, DCA	\$5,000	DNR, DCA
Initiate GMRC Downtown Association	9, 10, 14, 43, 44	LU2.3	GMRC, EDA, DED	NA	
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 wastewater education and public awareness program.	15, 16, 23, 24	CFS4.2	GMRC, EPD	\$10,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
<i>Inventory of septic system management programs.</i>	1, 16, 17, 24	CFS4.3	GMRC, Local Govts.	\$15,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
<i>Assessment of septic system inventory</i>	16, 17, 24	CFS4.4	GMRC, Local Govts	\$10,000	DCA, DNR, GMRC
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 inventory of parks and recreation plans in the region.	1, 20, 21	CFS8.2	GMRC, Local Govts	\$10,000	
Develop and implement a public awareness campaign about health information technology	13, 25	CFS9.3	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Develop a plan for using social media technologies to further promote the region.	8, 9, 12	ED2.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Expand the scope of the Camera Ready program through education and awareness.	9	ED2.3	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop an inventory of tourism industry resources.	8, 9	ED3.1	GMRC, Local Govts, DED	\$10,000	EDA, DED

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2014					
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
Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Universities.	11, 12, 14	ED8.3	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop and distribute educational materials for entrepreneur programs.	14	ED8.4	GMRC, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
Develop promotional material for area farmer's markets and canneries	2, 8	ED10.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
Create a regional industry roundtable.	10, 12	ED15.1	GMRC, DED	NA	EDA, DED
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
Conduct local and regional disaster preparedness workshops		DM2.1	GMRC, GEMA	\$5,000	GEMA
2015					
<i>Develop comprehensive road improvement plan combining local and State goals</i>	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

Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2015					
<i>Program promoting Career Days in primary and secondary schools.</i>	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
Create model design standards and incentive programs for downtown areas	43, 44	ED14.2	GMRC, DED	\$5,000	EDA, DED
<i>Develop summary report on housing survey findings</i>	4, 5, 6, 7	H1.3	GMRC	\$2,000	DCA
Develop and distribute preparedness and post-disaster recovery material.		DM2.2	GMRC, GEMA	\$5,000	GEMA
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
2017					
<i>Review regional Future Development Strategy; Amend as needed</i>	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 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



Action	I/O	Goal	Responsibility	Costs	Funding Sources
2017					
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
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
<i>Inventory outside forms of equity financing and possible venture capital opportunities.</i>		ED6.4	GMRC, EDA, DED	TBD	EDA, DED
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

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

To ensure the Regional Plan is both being used properly and making progress toward identified goals, the GMRC must establish a process for evaluation and monitoring of plan implementation. In accordance with DCA standards, these activities must include at least 1) periodic Quality Growth Effectiveness assessments of each local government in the region, to determine if they are achieving prescribed performance standards, and surveys of 2) regional leaders and of 3) changes and developments in the region to determine whether the plan is being effectively implemented and if it is having the desired impact on regional development patterns.

Progress with the Regional Agenda 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 Agenda 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, providing 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 Agenda must be consistent with the Georgia Mountains Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which 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.
- *Regional Plan Promulgation* – Copies of the Regional Agenda 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.

Local Community Achievements and Compliance

The GMRC will annually survey and assess communities to monitor their progress toward implementing the Regional Agenda, and to regularly review the Regional Agenda against updated issues and trends.

Using a monitoring tool that outlines the Coordinated Performance Criteria and the CEDS Performance Metrics, GMRC staff will annually survey local governments in an effort to ascertain the progress with plan implementation as well as an understanding of any results from these efforts. A monitoring tool will be developed during FY'14 and shared with local governments as part of the initial monitoring effort. This will be a simple document for tracking progress with appropriate performance measures, with the results presented to the GMRC Council for gauging the general success of regional planning efforts.

As best as possible, this will be done in conjunction with comparable local plan monitoring efforts and in advance of the annual Regional Plan update process, so that the information gathered can contribute to annual budgeting, work program prioritization and Plan updates.

Results of the 2012 Monitoring And Evaluation Process

The following is a summary of progress made on several primary GMRC initiatives from 2012:

- The failure of the region to pass the TIA resolution meant the Georgia Mountains region would NOT be collecting the 1¢ regional transportation sales and use tax. This meant the cancellation of 2 items from the work program.
- Efforts regarding historic resource surveys and designations along the Hwy 441/ Old Federal Road corridors lost local support in lieu of more generalized overlay protections and possible Scenic Byway designations.
- Investigations into solid waste matters lead to the request for a regional scale plan to identify long-term waste storage capacity within the region.

2012 List of Accomplishments

Work Item	Status	Comment
Develop a region wide downtown economic database that includes historic resources; Place on the web	In Progress	8 of 16 cities inventoried; Developing web site format
Perform a survey of significant historic and scenic resources within the U.S. 441 Heritage Corridor.	Complete	
Consider other types of waste disposal programs rather than landfills.	Complete	Options reviewed with DNR and DCA staff
Educate consumers on the environmental impacts of various materials and products placed in landfills and encourage alternatives that increase environmental safety.	Postponed	Developing Regional Solid Waste Plan in 2014
Assist local governments in the development of land use standards and guidelines within the SR 17 corridor.	Complete	
Assist, where possible, in the development and transfer of new technologies from small business to the existing industries in the region.	Cancelled	No feasible opportunities for GMRC
Encourage elected officials to participate in RAC workshop to learn how to make their communities “entrepreneur friendly.”	Complete	
Assist local governments in the development of a farmland preservation program.	Complete	Model regulations available
Establish Old Federal Road as a multi-county preservation district and adopt ordinance for protection.	Cancelled	Local support favoring Scenic Byway option
Develop and maintain citizens-based partnerships in the five river basins to assist with public education.	In Progress	
Assist local governments with implementation of their respective Regional Watershed Mgmt Plans.	Complete	
Develop single map redevelopment plans for historic downtowns	In Progress	Template still being developed
Help local communities develop transportation plans for discretionary TIA revenues	Cancelled	TIA measure not passed locally
Develop RPO report assessing progress with TIA projects (if approved by voters in 2012)	Cancelled	TIA measure not passed locally
Develop a youth program that will involve troubled youth in the renovation and improvement of historic buildings, structures and properties.	Cancelled	Lack of resources at HPD

CEDS Performance Metrics

An important component of the implementation of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's CEDS is a monitoring system to track regional performance in the future as a result of this Strategic Plan. Several data sets have been identified that local governments can showcase good measures of economic performance. This will serve to be a good indicator of the overall economic health of the region's communities and citizens.

Many regional economic development organizations already use performance metrics, known as "benchmarks" and should make this process very easy for local communities to adapt to. The metrics provided in this plan provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the positive results of the CEDS efforts and policies and help build confidence among citizens that the economy is headed in the right direction for the Georgia Mountains Region.

The following lists the Performance Metrics for each strategic CEDS focus area:

Infrastructure

- Existence and creation of business parks and sites
- Available developable acreage with utility services
- Expansion and improvement of regional roadways and total miles constructed
- Development of a regional public transportation system with routes across the region
- Accessible water infrastructure throughout the region
- Implemented plan for water management and water protection for the region
- Suitable wastewater capacity to meet future growth of region
- Available broadband access across the region
- Adequate waste disposal and recycling abilities in the region

Business and Industry

- Number of new start-up businesses or business expansions
- Job creation and retention
- Increase in capital investment
- Number of new tourism venues
- Increase visitation, overnight stays, and capital expenditures spent on tourism in the region
- Access to affordable healthcare and other health related services
- Value added production in niche agriculture markets

Workforce Development

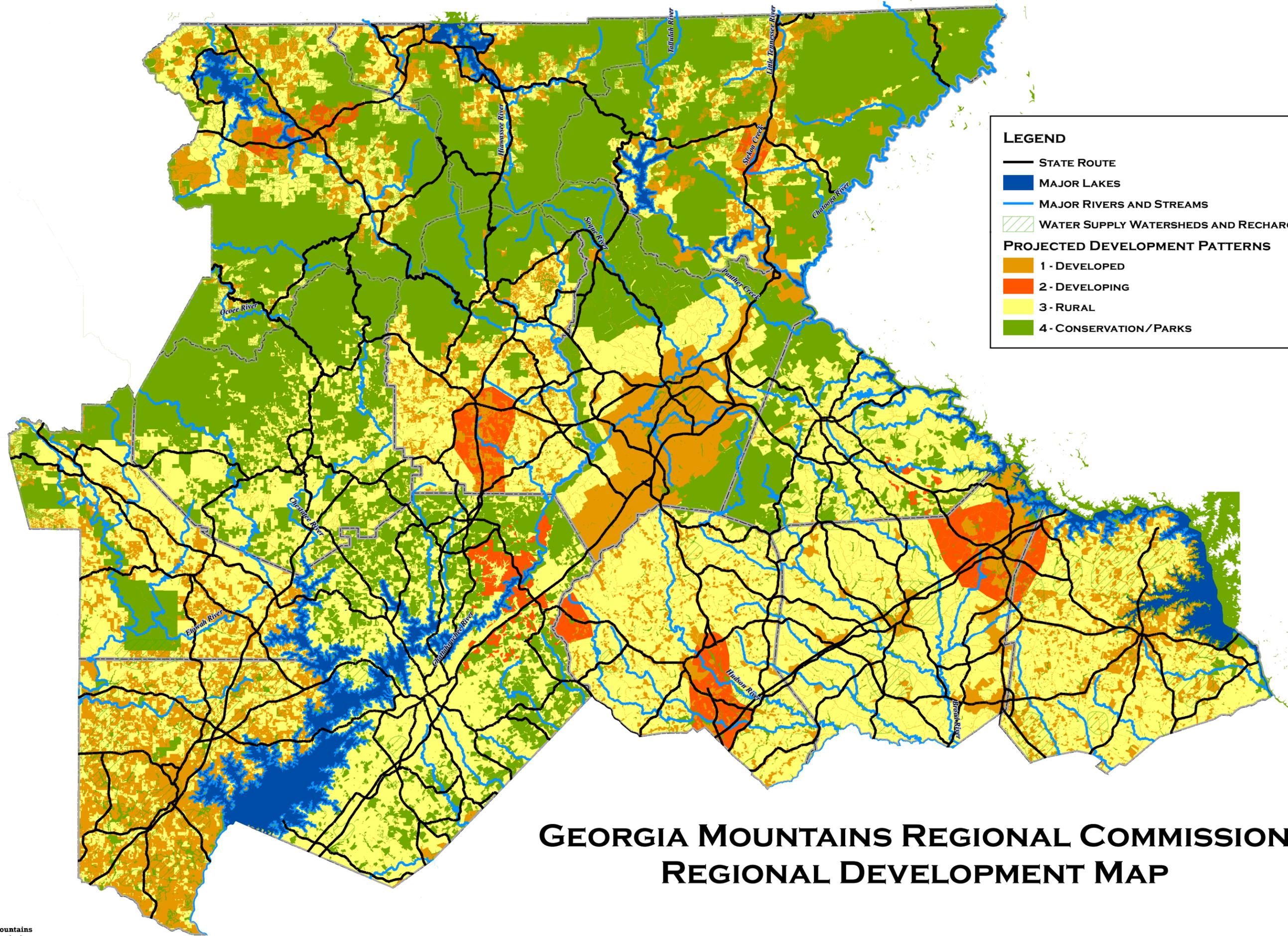
- Job Growth in non-manufacturing industries
- Average wage growth
- Unemployment Rate
- SAT scores
- Educational Attainment
- Drop-out rates

Housing

- Regional housing sales in 2012 vs. regional housing in sales in 2017
- Total amount of grant awards to member governments from housing programs
- Homelessness Rate in 2012 vs. Homelessness Rate in 2017
- Creation of regional housing Advisory Committee

Pre-Disaster Mitigation

- Governmental efficiency and response time
- # of mitigation projects put in place and funded
- # of local plan updates



LEGEND

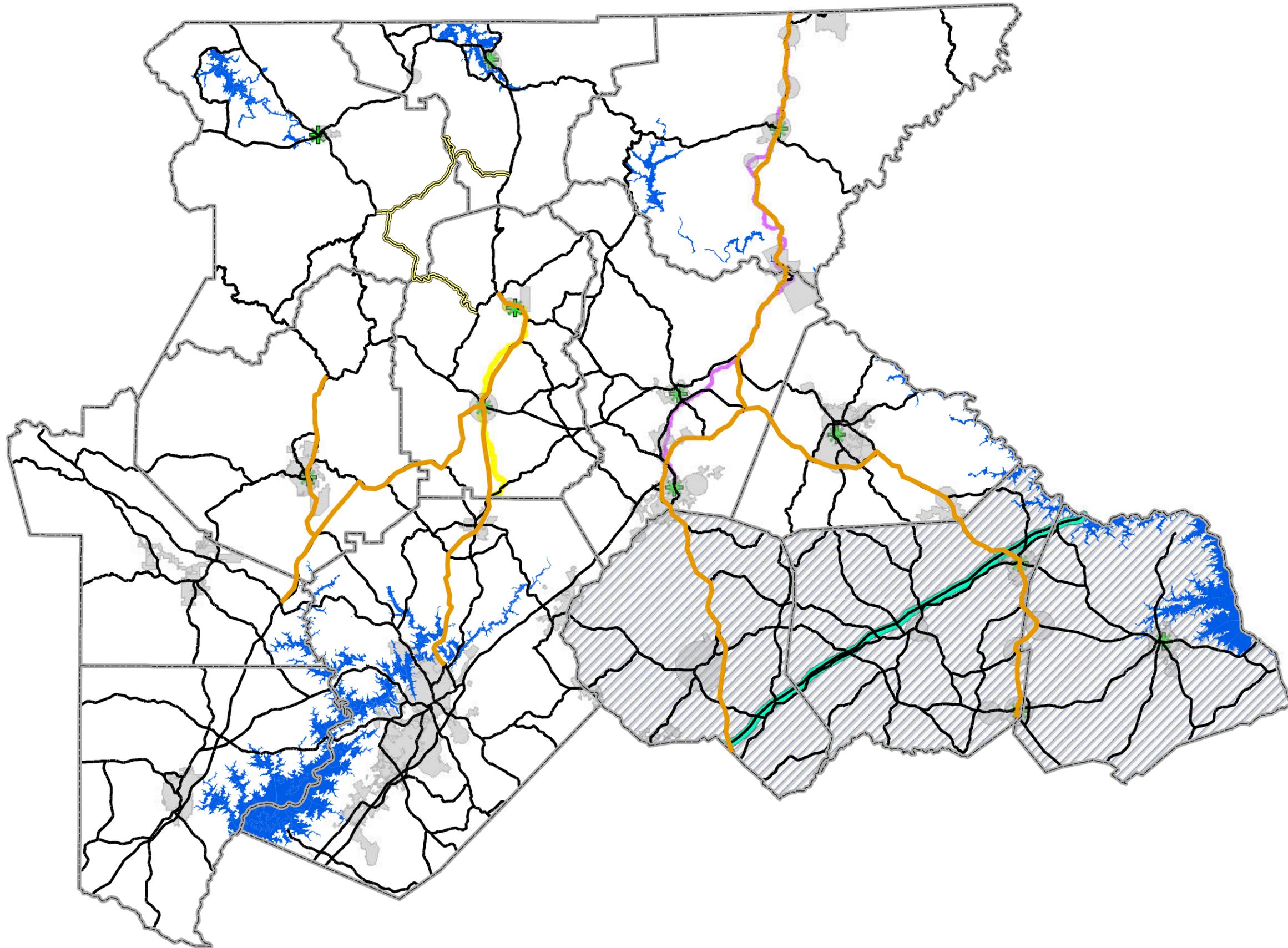
- STATE ROUTE
- MAJOR LAKES
- MAJOR RIVERS AND STREAMS
- WATER SUPPLY WATERSHEDS AND RECHARGE AREAS

PROJECTED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

- 1 - DEVELOPED
- 2 - DEVELOPING
- 3 - RURAL
- 4 - CONSERVATION/PARKS

**GEORGIA MOUNTAINS REGIONAL COMMISSION
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT MAP**

**Georgia Mountains
Regional Commission
Regional Plan 2011
Areas Requiring
Special Attention**



Legend

- North South Arterials
- Richard Russell Scenic Highway
- Major Roads
- Major Lakes
- Municipalities
- Town Centers
- I-85 Corridor
- Tallulah Falls Trail and Greenway
- Gainesville Northwestern Route
- Agricultural Transition

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