



## HINTS FOR PLANFIRST APPLICATION COMPLETION

### PRE-REQUISITES - be sure you can answer YES to all components of these 2 questions:

1. We have participated in at least two local comprehensive plan update cycles.
2. We have a good track record of maintaining our Qualified Local Government status **and** submitting required reports to DCA, including the current Report of Local Government Finances. (To check status, please visit <http://www.georgiaplanning.com/planners/planreview/default.asp>).
3. We have attained the Minimum Standard for performance as called for in our regional commission's regional comprehensive plan.
4. Our Community Work Program located in our Local Comprehensive Plan consists primarily of clear, specific action items.
5. We successfully implement projects listed in our Community Work Program.

### Then, for the rest of the application --

- **Read the questions carefully and make sure you answer the question asked**
- Proof-read for spelling, grammatical errors, and other mistakes
- Don't just give yes or no answers - explain, be verbose but truthful
- We do not look up additional information on things you tell us in the application
- Tell the story; paint a visual picture. Reviewers aren't able to ask the applicant questions as they review
- If in Excel or other tabular format, be sure that the blocks are big enough to contain all the text before you turn them into PDFs
- Use exhibits and photos
- DO NOT parrot the question back in your answer
- Support letters are fine but only if add to the story
  - Consider using one letter that all the support organizations sign (petition-like)
- This is about comprehensive plan preparation process and implementation. It is advantageous when the local government has good relationships with its community partners, i.e., development authority, chamber, historical society, and other local governments. But, please remember they aren't the ones responsible for making sure that the community's vision is realized, they are just parts of the whole
- Integrate any support exhibits into the document, don't send as a separate document
- Make sure photos and exhibits are in focus and are clearly identified

- Don't send copy of the plan or the STWP/CWP- just reference them, with correct section, date of the plan and page number
- Signature– we prefer the CEO, or at least the manager/administrator
- TELL A COMPLETE STORY, WITH PICTURES, if they contribute to the story
- Know what the program is about - it is not JUST the local government's planning department, but the local government itself -- how the plan is used for decision making and how it is implemented by all departments and staff - to address the community's vision as stated in their comprehensive plan
- This is about the GA Planning Act comprehensive plan, NOT about a strategic plan resulting from the comprehensive plan or a small area plan for a downtown or neighborhood, or other plans that have come out of the comprehensive plan - they are only part of the implementation of the larger (bird's-eye) comprehensive plan; however, including them in the application to show implementation is good
- Make sure it is signed and submitted by the deadline, May 15
- You have 20 full pages, use them