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## Georgia communities recognized for successful planning

**ATLANTA (October 23, 2019)** – Four Georgia communities have received statewide distinction in the PlanFirst program, which recognizes excellence in community planning. PlanFirst, a Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) program, recognizes and rewards communities that clearly demonstrate an established pattern of successfully implementing their Local Comprehensive Plan.

Oconee County and the Cities of Dallas, Duluth and Powder Springs have each achieved “PlanFirst” designation. In addition, two communities renewed their PlanFirst designation: Douglas and Vidalia. Designated communities are eligible for technical assistance, as well as bonus points and enhanced eligibility for certain DCA funding opportunities.

DCA Commissioner Christopher Nunn said, “The PlanFirst designation marks a tremendous achievement for these communities, and redesignation showcases a commitment to long-term success.”

To apply for PlanFirst, communities are required to address four primary program criteria focused on having a proven record of plan implementation success: goals, leadership, community participation and implementation. The designation is for three years – beginning January 1, 2020 – and enables these communities to take advantage of various incentives that include public recognition, eligibility for specified grant opportunities, and certain reduced interest loans.

The next deadline for applications is May 15, 2020. The Department of Community Affairs developed the program with a steering committee comprised of partners including the Georgia Municipal Association, Association County Commissioner of Georgia, the Georgia Planning Association, the Regional Commissions, and the University of Georgia Archways program, and other state agencies including the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority, the Historic Preservation Division and Environmental Protection Division.

**About the Department of Community Affairs**

*The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) partners with communities to build strong and vibrant neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas through community and economic development, local government assistance, and safe and affordable housing. Using state and federal resources, DCA helps communities spur private job creation, implement planning, develop downtowns, generate affordable housing solutions and promote volunteerism. DCA also helps qualified Georgians with low and moderate incomes buy homes, rent housing and prevent foreclosure and homelessness. For more information, visit [www.dca.ga.gov](http://www.dca.ga.gov).*

