

March 27, 2026

Georgia Department of Community Affairs  
Office of Planning and Environmental Management  
60 Executive Park South, NE  
Atlanta, GA

RE: Regional Plan Annual Implementation Program Report Transmittal

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission has completed an annual implementation program report for its regional plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

I certify that we have held one required public hearing on March 16, 2026, and have involved regional stakeholders in development of the annual report in a manner appropriate to our region's dynamics and resources and in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning, Chapter 110-12-6. Documentation of the required public hearing has been included with our submittal.

I certify that appropriate regional staff and decision-makers have, at a minimum, reviewed the following planning documents and taken them into consideration in formulating our annual report:

- Georgia's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Regional Water Plans: Savannah-Upper Ogeechee, Upper Oconee, and Middle Ocmulgee
- Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Plans: Gainesville-Hall, Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study, Atlanta Regional Commission
- Adjacent Regional Commissions' Plans: Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Atlanta Regional Commission, Three Rivers Regional Commission, Middle Georgia Regional Commission, Central Savannah River Area Regional Commission

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact Planning & Government Services Director, Mark Beatty, at [mbeatty@negrc.org](mailto:mbeatty@negrc.org) or (706) 369-5650.

Sincerely,



Eva Kennedy  
Executive Director

**Northeast Georgia Regional Plan**

Annual Implementation Report

Fiscal Year 2026

Northeast Georgia Regional Commission

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**Fiscal Year 2026 Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Report of Accomplishments 2023-2027**

#	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 years)	Ongoing	Aligns with	Implementation Status (FY26)
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**Priority: Provide resources to support local and regional transportation infrastructure improvements**

**Strategy: Provide local governments with tools to help plan and budget for complete streets infrastructure**

1	Update NEGRC Complete Streets Guide to include cost-breakdowns for complete streets infrastructure improvements	GDOT, local governments	Year 2-3 \$8,000		Goals 5 and 7	Cancelled – updates determined as unnecessary
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**Strategy: Support development and use of public electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure**

2	Develop a plan for public EV charging station locations throughout the Region	GDOT, local governments, local development authorities	Years 3-4 \$15,000		Goals 5 and 7	Cancelled – determined as duplicative to existing initiatives
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**Strategy: Analyze feasibility of regional water trails and facilities**

3	Complete a feasibility study identifying public access along the Region’s major rivers and lakes, outline the feasibility of the network, and outline any federal, state, or local policy barriers to implementation	DCA, GDOT, DNR, local governments, recreation departments, land trusts	Years 2-4 \$25,000		Goals 6 and 7	Postponed
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4	Create an online map of potential future public access point locations identified in regional water trail feasibility study	DCA, GDOT, DNR, local governments, recreation departments, land trusts	Year 5 \$2,000		Goals 6 and 7	Scheduled for initiation in FY27
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**Priority: Facilitate cooperative management of natural and cultural resources**

**Strategy: Identify and make available information about cultural and historic resources within the Region**

5	As a foundation for future research by others in the Region, conduct and publish a regional historic Native American resource analysis, identifying historic trading routes and settlements	Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, local governments, local historic preservation boards, SHPO	Years 3–5 \$15,000		Goal 6	Postponed
6	Create an online map of locations identified during the historic Native American resource analysis	Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, local governments, local historic preservation boards, SHPO	Year 5 \$2,000		Goals 6 and 7	Scheduled for initiation in FY27
7	Develop GIS inventory delineating the boundaries of local and national historic districts and resources within the region	Local governments, local historic preservation boards, SHPO	Years 1–2 \$5,000		Goals 6 and 7	Completed
8	Create, manage, and promote a publicly accessible inventory of historic landmarks, festivals and events, tours, and other visitor attractions	JDANEGA and other development authorities, chambers of commerce, local governments	Years 1–2 (initial development) \$5,000	Years 1–5 (maintenance) \$1,000 annually	Goals 3, 6, and 7	Completed

**Strategy: Develop guidance for addressing water and climate challenges during comprehensive planning**

9	Following adoption of updated Regional Water Plans for the Middle Ocmulgee, Savannah-Upper Ogeechee, and Upper Oconee regions (expected 2023), develop guidance identifying opportunities for aligning comprehensive plans with regional water management planning objectives	Local governments, local water authorities, State Water Council, Regional Water Planning Councils	Years 1-2 \$10,000		Goals 6 and 7	Completed
10	Develop a guide local governments can refer to for ideas about how to incorporate climate resilience into local plans	Local governments, Georgia Initiative for Climate and Society (UGA)	Years 3-4 \$3,000		Goals 2, 3, and 7	Cancelled - determined as duplicative to existing initiatives

**Priority: Address needs associated with population growth and changing demographics**

**Strategy: Explore options for expanding water supply capacity for growing communities**

11	Evaluate and publish a report on the feasibility, options, and costs of county groundwater surveys	Georgia EPD, Regional Water Planning Councils	Years 2-3 \$15,000		Goal 6	Postponed
12	Develop a presentation for decision-makers summarizing groundwater survey options, including costs, benefits, justification, methodological considerations, and other relevant considerations	Local governments, local water authorities, State Water Council, Regional Water Planning Councils, Georgia EPD	Year 3 \$2,000		Goals 6 and 7	Postponed

**Strategy: Share tools and information to help address projected development and housing needs**

13	Create growth-scenario projections of a major urban center or centers in the region	Local governments, development authorities, chambers of commerce	Years 3-4 \$10,000		Goals 3 and 7	Postponed
14	Host regional housing collaborative forum(s), such as a housing roundtable, to promote information sharing and identification of partnership opportunities	Local housing authorities, land trusts, local governments, DCA	Year 1-5 \$4,000		Goal 4	Completed

**Strategy: Develop guidance on accessible, inclusive design of public spaces**

15	Develop and publish a collaborative report providing guidance on designing public spaces that are accessible and inclusive for all ages and physical abilities	Local governments, NEGRC Aging Division	Years 3-4 \$15,000		Goals 2 and 7	Postponed
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**Priority: Share information and resources to enhance planning capabilities**

**Strategy: Create tools and guidance to enhance the region's planning capabilities, including spatial analysis, public participation, and awareness of funding opportunities**

16	Create and publish a Geospatial Strategy to serve as a business-oriented plan defining how the PGS Division of NEGRC will use GIS to increase efficiency, productivity, and collaboration for spatial analysis projects across the region	GARC, local governments, local GIS consultants	Year 1-2 \$12,000		Goal 7	Completed
17	Hold a manager roundtable featuring examples of public input and engagement best practices from around the region	Local governments	Years 4-5 \$1,000		Goal 7	Scheduled for initiation in FY27
18	Develop a working inventory of state and federal funding opportunities, categorized by program activity, for internal use and to share with local governments in the region when needed; use this information to publish an annual report summarizing funding opportunities by type	State and Federal agencies	Year 1 (initial development) \$1,000	Years 1-5 (annual report; inventory updates) \$1,000	Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7	Completed

**Priority: Enhance economic mobility and competitiveness**

**Strategy: Implement the economic development roadmap laid out in the Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2022–2026**

19	As part of the CEDS Action Plan for Item 1: Transportation, complete a study to determine the feasibility of a regional transit authority	CEDS Committee, local development authorities, local governments	Year 1		Goals 1 and 5	Completed
20	As part of the CEDS Action Plan for Item 2: Technology & Energy, offer at least one targeted managers roundtable or educational program on renewable energy	CEDS Committee, local development authorities, local governments	Year 4		Goals 1 and 7	Scheduled for initiation in FY27
21	As part of the CEDS Action Plan for Item 3: Broadband, host one or more broadband education events, including knowledgeable guest speaker(s)	CEDS Committee, local development authorities, local governments	Year 2		Goals 1 and 7	Postponed
22	As part of the CEDS Action Plan for Item 4: Education, perform regional SWOT analysis regarding workforce education and training in the construction and manufacturing sector	CEDS Committee, local development authorities, local governments	Year 3		Goal 1	Postponed
23	As part of the CEDS Action Plan for Item 5: Equity, perform a regional brownfields analysis as a strategy to reduce greenfield development	CEDS Committee, local development authorities, local governments	Year 5		Goals 1 and 2	Scheduled for initiation in FY28

**Strategy: Connect employers with skilled and dedicated employees**

24	Produce region-wide report on link between educational preparation/attainment and existing/future employees	WIB, local governments, TCSG	Year 5 \$10,000		Goal 1	Scheduled for initiation in FY27
25	Develop educational program (materials and workshop) to educate local governments about workforce training programs, internship resources, and incentives for public-private partnerships	Local governments, TCSG, NEGRC WIOA, local employment centers, DOL	Year 2 \$7,500		Goals 1 and 4	Postponed

Partner abbreviations used in Work Program table on preceding pages:

*CEDS Committee: Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Committee*

*DCA: Georgia Department of Community Affairs*

*DOL: Georgia Department of Labor*

*DNR: Georgia Department of Natural Resources*

*GARC: Georgia Association of Regional Commissions*

*GIS Consultants: Geographic Information Systems consultants*

*GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation*

*EPD: Georgia Environmental Protection Division*

*JDANEGA: Joint Development Authority of Northeast Georgia*

*WIOA: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act program*

*SHPO: State Historic Preservation Office*

*TCSG: Technical College System of Georgia*

*UGA: University of Georgia*

*WIB: Workforce Investment Board*

**Local Government Performance Standards, Fiscal Year 2025**

The State of Georgia requires Regional Commissions to provide annual updates on the status of each local government that has not achieved the minimum performance standards laid out in the respective Commissions' regional plans.

The minimum standards per the Northeast Georgia Regional Plan are:

- Update the local Comprehensive Plan, including the Future Development Map and/or Future Land Use Map, at regular intervals, as required by the State of Georgia.
- Utilize the Future Development Map and/or Future Land Use Map to steer new development to appropriate areas of the community.
- Update the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) and Capital Improvements Element (CIE), where applicable, as required by the State of Georgia.
- Submit potential Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) to the Regional Commission per the Development Thresholds established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.
- Comply with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Part V. Environmental planning Criteria of the Georgia Planning Act by adopting appropriate ordinances for water supply watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, wetlands protection, and river corridor protection, where applicable.



- Update the local pre-disaster mitigation plan per the standards established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Share updated Tax Assessor's data tables and land parcels with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission annually, where applicable.
- Report annexation and deannexation to the Department of Community Affairs, and forward the GIS shapefiles to the Department of Community Affairs and Reapportionment Office.

**As of March 2026, the following NEGRC local governments do not meet the minimum standards:**

- Oglethorpe County (Comprehensive Plan; overdue for local adoption since 10/31/2021; Delinquent Reports: FY2020 RLGf)
- City of Arnoldsville (Comprehensive Plan; overdue for local adoption since 10/31/2021)
- City of Crawford (Comprehensive Plan; overdue for local adoption since 10/31/2021)
- City of Maxeys (Comprehensive Plan; overdue for local adoption since 10/31/2021)
- Jasper County (CIE; overdue for local adoption since 10/31/2021)
- Town of Bishop (Delinquent Reports: FY2019 RLGf, FY2020 RLGf, FY2021 RLGf)
- City of Bogart (Delinquent Reports: FY2019 RLGf, FY2020 RLGf, FY2021 RLGf)
- City of Bostwick (Delinquent Reports: 2021 GOMI, FY2020 RLGf)

# Regional Hearing Records

## Press Release:

Area Agency on Aging Development  
Local Government Services  
Planning  
Workforce



**NEGRC**  
NORTHEAST GEORGIA  
REGIONAL COMMISSION

256 Research Drive  
Athens, GA 30605-2795  
Phone: 706.369.3650  
Eva Kennedy, Executive Director

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## Press Release

**For Immediate Release — February 13, 2026**

### REGIONAL PLAN ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM REPORT

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) announces a regional hearing for the FY26 annual implementation report on the 12-county Regional Plan. The purpose of the regional hearing is to inform interested parties about the contents of the report and the process by which it will be adopted. The report outlines progress made on the Regional Plan Work Program during the 2026 fiscal year.

*The regional hearing will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2026, at the Athens Clarke County Planning Department at 120 W. Dougherty Street, Athens, GA 30601. Please contact the Planning & Government Services Division at [pgsassist@negrc.org](mailto:pgsassist@negrc.org) or (706) 369-5650 if you have any questions prior to the meeting.*

The NEGRC serves Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties.

02/13/2026

*Serving the City and County Governments of Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties.*

NEGRC Website Posting:

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the NEGRC website. The URL in the address bar is [negrc.org/planning-government-services/regional-hearing-notice-fy26-regional-plan-report/](https://negrc.org/planning-government-services/regional-hearing-notice-fy26-regional-plan-report/). The browser's address bar also shows "Chrome isn't your default browser" and a "Set as default" button. The website's navigation menu includes: HOME, ADMINISTRATION, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, AGING, PLANNING & GOVERNMENT SERVICES (highlighted in yellow), and MORE INFO.

The main content area features a large image of railroad tracks with the NEGRC logo overlaid. Below the image, the text reads: "The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) announces a regional hearing for the FY26 annual implementation report on the 12-county regional plan. The purpose of the regional hearing is to inform interested parties about the contents of the draft report and the process by which it will be adopted. The report outlines progress made on the Regional Plan Work Program during the 2026 fiscal year." It then states: "The regional hearing will take place at 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2025 at the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department Auditorium, 120 W Dougherty Street, Athens GA 30601." Finally, it provides contact information: "Questions may be directed to the Planning & Government Services Department at [pgsassist@negrc.org](mailto:pgsassist@negrc.org) or (706) 369-5650."


On the left side, there is a section titled "Additional Resources" with a list of links: National Association of Development Organizations, Georgia Municipal Association, Advancing Georgia's Counties, and Georgia Association of Regional Commissions. Below this is a section titled "About NEGRC".

On the right side, there is a vertical list of services and their corresponding dates: Loan (February 2022), Natural Resources (January 2022), PGS (October 2021), PGS HP (September 2021), Planning (August 2021), Population (July 2021), Preservation (June 2021), Recreation (May 2021), RFP/RFQ (April 2021), Safety (March 2021), Solid Waste (February 2021), Transportation (January 2021), Uncategorized (December 2020), Walking (October 2020), Webinars (September 2020), Workforce (August 2020), July 2020, May 2020, April 2020, January 2020, and December 2019.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the Start button, a search bar, and various application icons including File Explorer, Edge, Word, and Teams.



**Public Hearing Agenda:**

Area Agency on Aging Development Local Government Services Planning Workforce	 <p><b>NEGRC</b> NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION</p>	335 Research Drive Athens, GA 30605-7395 Phone 706.869.5650 Eva Kennedy, Executive Director
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NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Regional Hearing for Regional Plan FY26 Annual Implementation Report


Meeting Agenda

March 16, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.  
120 W Dougherty St, Athens, GA 30601

- I. Purpose of Regional Hearing
- II. Contents of Annual Implementation Report
- III. Review and Adoption Process
- IV. Questions and Comments
- V. Adjournment

*Serving the City and County Governments of Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton Counties.*

**Sign-In Sheet – 3/16/2026:**

 <p><b>NEGRC</b> NORTHEAST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION</p>	Northeast Georgia Regional Plan Annual Implementation Report Regional Hearing: 4:00p.m., March 16, 2026 120 W Dougherty St, Athens, GA 30601
NAME	EMAIL
Mark Beatty	mbeatty@negrc.org
Max Black	black_max_a@hotmail.com

