



DRAFT
2026 Annual Implementation Report
on the 2024-2028 Regional Plan

Adopted _____, 2026

2026 Regional Plan Implementation Program Annual Report

Contents

1.1	Introduction to the Regional Plan	3
1.2	Annual Report on the Implementation Program.....	3
1.3	Report of Accomplishments FY 2025	4
1.4	Local Government Minimum Standards Update.....	12
1.5	Regional Work Program Revisions	13
1.6	Public Hearing and Stakeholder Participation Documentation	19
1.7	Transmittal Letter to Georgia Department of Community Affairs	37
1.8	Georgia Department of Community Affairs Approval Letter.....	39
1.9	Adoption Resolution	39

Regional Plan Implementation Program Annual Report

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL PLAN

In 2024, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Council (Steering Committee) updated the Regional Plan with input from a Technical Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and the public via stakeholder meetings (open to the public), public hearings, and the Regional Priorities Survey, which garnered 549 responses.

The Regional Plan includes: Regional Goals and Policies; Regional Development Maps (including the Regional Land Use Map, Conservation and Development Map, and Areas Requiring Special Attention Map); Regional Needs and Opportunities; and the Implementation Program including Performance Standards (Minimum and Excellence), the Regional Work Program (2024-2028), and the Report of Accomplishments on the previous five-year work program.

The Regional Plan meets Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Regional Planning Requirements. The Regional Resource Plan was also updated in 2024. The Plan aligns with the 2024 NWGRC Regional Resource Plan, local Comprehensive Plans, state plans, and regional plans of the Georgia Mountains, Atlanta, and Three Rivers Regional Commissions.

1.2 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

NWGRC prepared this 2026 Annual Report on the Regional Plan Implementation Program according to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Regional Planning Requirements. It includes the FY2024 Report of Accomplishments, a report on Local Government Minimum Standards, and additions/ deletions to the 2026-2027 Work Program. This report has been reviewed by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Council and regional stakeholders including representatives of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Department of Economic Development. The Annual Update is in alignment with these state and regional plans:

- Georgia Plan for Outdoor Recreation SCORP 2022-2026
- Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan (2023)
- Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District 2022 Water Resources Management Plan
- 2022 Water Resources Management Plan
- Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan (2023)
- Northwest Georgia's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027 (CEDS)
- Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County-North Georgia MPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan & TIP (as amended)
- Cartersville-Bartow County FY 2023-2026 TIP
- Rome/Floyd County 2024-2027 TIP and 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- Atlanta Regional Commission MPO Regional Transportation Plan and TIP
- Georgia DOT FY 24-27 STIP
- Georgia Mountains Regional Commission CEDS & Regional Plan 2022-2027
- Three Rivers Regional Plan & FY22 Annual Implementation Report

1.3 REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2025

The Report of Accomplishments presents an annual status update for FY2025, the year just completed, for each project listed in the 2024-2028 Regional Work Program. Each project must be listed as “ongoing,” “completed,” “dropped,” or “postponed.” If a project is shown as “dropped” or “postponed,” a reason must be given to show the circumstances and changes that occurred. “Completed” projects show the date completed. “Ongoing” projects are in progress by the Regional Commission or another agency.

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
Community and Economic Development						
Priority Need: Ensure infrastructure is in place across the region to meet the needs of existing and new businesses and industries.						
Strategy: Implement regional and local plans and strategies for infrastructure improvements needed to support job creation/retention and private investment						
1.	Assist 10-15 communities/ year to improve or expand infrastructure to support downtown and economic development through grant writing and planning	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$70,000/ YR			Ongoing; 15 projects in 2025
2.	Partner with neighboring regions to assist in the transition to Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturing; assist with public EV infrastructure	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$1,000/ yr			Completed. While the ARISE grant was not awarded, we will continue assistance as needed
3.	Update the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)	NWGRC	2027 \$10,000			2027
4.	Implement Economic Resiliency Plan (EDA) in NW Georgia.	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$10,000/			Ongoing
5.	Prepare and update annual report for the region; prepare data reports as needed	NWGRC	2025-2026 \$7,500			Ongoing
Priority Need: Improve the competitiveness of Northwest Georgia communities to attract and retain business and industry						
Strategy: Provide planning and funding assistance to increase economic competitiveness in coordination with state and federal agencies						
6.	Provide EDA RLF loan packaging to assist 3+ small businesses each year to expand operations or add jobs, including assessment of need, preparation of loan packages, and financial planning in partnership with EDA and lending institutions	NWGRC, EDA, Lenders, Businesses	2025-2028			Ongoing
7.	Participate in and implement recommendations of Georgia's Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing (GA-AIM) project	NWGRC	2025-2026			Ongoing
Priority Need: Provide resources and assistance to support community development projects						
Strategy: Provide project development and application assistance for projects that improve public services, infrastructure, and tourism						

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
8.	Assist local governments with applications for funding for water, sewer, broadband, and other infrastructure improvements, fire and police services, parks, recreation, and trails, and other community development needs	NWGRC, DCA, ARC, GEFA, LWCF, Recreational Trails, AFG, others	2025-2028 \$80,000/yr			Ongoing; 7 projects in 2025
9.	Provide 1-5 training workshops/ year for local governments on project development, funding assistance, compliance, and related topics	NWGRC, DCA, ARC, others	2025-2028 \$10,000/yr			Ongoing; Provided 2 workshops in 2025
10.	Provide technical assistance to local governments in meeting compliance requirements for grants received	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$5,000/yr			Ongoing; Assisted 5+ local governments in 2025
11.	Plan and host Outdoor Recreation Summits in Northwest Georgia. highlighting outdoor recreation's impact on region's economy	NWGRC, partners incl. City of Rome, TRED, others	2024-2028 \$5-10,000/yr			Ongoing; Inaugural 2025 summit with 100+ attendees
Housing						
Priority Need: There is a lack of safe, affordable housing and a lack of housing investment						
Strategy: Incentivize redevelopment of blighted or vacant areas for residential use; assist local governments with housing needs						
12.	Partner with state agencies to hold 1-3 regional workshops per year for housing-related training and resources	NWGRC, DCA, state agencies, partners	2025-2028 \$5,000			Ongoing; Postponed (Rewrite since GICH, others provide training)
13.	Provide data and resources to communities to assess housing needs	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$10,000/yr			Ongoing; Assisted with 2 housing assessments and 2 comprehensive plans
14.	Assist 1-2 communities/ year to apply for GA Initiatives for Community Housing (GICH); serve on community teams	NWGRC, local governments	2025-2028 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing; In 2025, assisted Dade County to apply, served on Catoosa & Murray teams and as Murray facilitator

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
15.	Prepare regional Housing and Transportation analysis and growth scenario study	NWGRC	2025-2026 \$7,500			Postponed; THRIVE expanding regional data resource
16.	Prepare regional Solid Waste Assessment and Waste to Energy Feasibility Study/ report	NWGRC	2025 \$7,500			Completed
Land Use						
Priority Need: Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans and balances conservation with development needs						
Strategy: Assist local governments to comply with the current Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (O.C.G.A. 36-66-1, et seq.; 36-67-1, et seq.; and, 36-67A-1, et seq. as amended) and provide necessary technical assistance.						
17.	Assist 2-5 local governments/ year with Zoning and Land Use Ordinance authoring, adoption, and amendment; develop local service contracts with local governments for zoning and land use assistance	NWGRC, local governments	2025-2028 \$20,000/yr.			Ongoing; In 2025, assisted Lookout Mountain, Kingston, Rome-Floyd County, Chatsworth, Waco, Tallapoosa, others
18.	Administer the Dalton-Whitfield- Varnell Unified Development Ordinance	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$40,000/yr			Completed for 2025
19.	Work with training providers including UGA CVIIOG to provide 1- 2 planning and zoning workshops/ year	NWGRC, training providers (GAZA, GPA, DCA, UGA CVIIOG)	2025-2028 \$1,000/ yr.			Ongoing; Coordinated with UGA on specialized zoning training
Strategy: Assist local governments to prepare and implement Comprehensive Plans, update and implement the regional plan, meet other requirements of the Georgia Planning Act and related laws, and apply for PlanFirst designation.						
20.	Assist with the preparation of scheduled updates to joint comprehensive plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gilmer County and municipalities (2024), • Chattooga and Catoosa Counties and municipalities (2026), • Dade, Fannin, Haralson, Polk, Walker Counties and municipalities (2027), 	NWGRC, local governments	2025-2028 \$60,000/yr.			Ongoing; Prepared joint plan updates for Chattooga and Catoosa Counties and municipalities.

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bartow, Gordon, Murray, and Whitfield Counties and municipalities (2028) 					
21.	Prepare 10+/year Development of Regional Impact reviews; prepare regional map of DRI projects	NWGRC, local governments	2025-2028 \$7,500/year			Ongoing; Completed 9 DRI reviews
22.	Prepare regional solid waste needs assessment including landfill siting map; prepare a feasibility study of waste-to-energy facility	DNR	2025-2026 \$10,000			Completed
23.	Assist 1-2 communities each year with PlanFirst applications	NWGRC, local governments	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr.			Ongoing; Assisted Cedartown
24.	Update the <i>Northwest Georgia Regional Plan</i> in 2024 and 2028-2029; prepare annual implementation reports.	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$7,500			Ongoing; annual report prepared in 2025
25.	Prepare 20-30 local plan reviews, environmental reviews, Section 106 reviews, and other coordinated intergovernmental reviews each year	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr.			Ongoing; Prepared 33 Section 106 and 6 environmental reviews
Natural and Cultural Resources						
Priority Need: Connect more people with Northwest Georgia’s natural resources so they will enjoy and protect its diversity and beauty						
Strategy: Identify, preserve, and promote identified Regional Resources						
26.	Implement the 2024 Regional Resource Plan: Develop publicly accessible GIS database and maps highlighting the region’s historic, cultural, and natural assets including Civil War and Native American history	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing
Strategy: Improve trails, greenways, water trails/ blueways, and trail connections within and to adjoining regions; Improve safety, visibility, and access to trails and water trails/blueways; provide improved recreational opportunities for all						
27.	Assist 1-5 communities/ year to improve water trails/ blueways and put-ins, parks and recreation areas, trails, and trailheads	NWGRC, local governments, state partners and agencies, SORBA, TPL, Limestone Valley RC&D, Thrive Regional Partnership, and others	2025-2028 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing; Assisted 4 communities with blueway-related projects
28.	Assist Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and municipalities to implement the 2015 NW GA	NWGRC, Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and	2025-2028 \$7,500			Ongoing; Assisted Trenton with TPL

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
	Feasibility Study for Bikeway & Pedestrian Multi-Use Trails including the development of Chick-Chatt greenway, trail, and Lookout Mountain trail connections	Cities, funding agencies, Chick-Chatt Greenway Association, Thrive Regional Partnership				application for trail project
Priority Need: Preserve irreplaceable historic and cultural resources through inventory, citizen engagement, planning, and funding assistance						
Strategy: Identify and preserve historic and cultural resources						
29.	Provide resources to local governments for National Register nominations for regionally significant historical assets	NWGRC, HPD	2025-2028 \$10,000/ YR			Ongoing
30.	Provide support and assistance for historic resource surveys; digitize NWGRC's historic resource documents	NWGRC, Bandy Heritage Center	2025-2028 \$6,000			Ongoing; Prepared historic records for digitization
31.	Assist region's Certified Local Governments (CLGs) to maintain eligibility; assist in updating local ordinances	NWGRC, HPD, local govts	2025-2028 \$5,000/ YR			Ongoing; Assisted Walker County with CLG grant application
Priority Need: Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region to meet federal and state regulations						
Strategy: Apply for funding to improve water quality, manage stormwater, restore streambanks, and protect water resources in the region						
32.	Provide resources to local governments to implement Watershed Management Plans and water quality plans, with Limestone Valley RC&D as a partner when possible.	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$5,000/yr.			Ongoing; Served on Dalton's Resilient Community team
33.	Provide staff support to the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership including administration of Regional Water Plan Seed Grants, annual educational seminar	NWGRC	2025-2028 \$5,000/yr.			Ongoing; 2025 Annual Educational Seminar, 100+ attendees
34.	Administer FY2024 RWP seed grant funds for resiliency study	Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, N GA Water Resources Partnership, NWGRC, GAEPD	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr			Completed FY24 RWP grant; submitted FY26 grant

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
35.	Assist 2-3 local governments/ year with funding and technical assistance to implement recommendations of Regional Water Plans, resiliency studies, related plans	NWGRC, GAWP, DCA, others	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing
Transportation						
Priority Need: Provide safe, efficient movement of people and goods through Northwest Georgia to enhance economic growth						
Strategy: Improve coordination between local governments, GDOT, MPOs, and federal agencies to implement regionally significant transportation projects						
36.	Implement Regional Transit Development Plan in partnership with GDOT and region's transit providers, including convening 1-2 meetings of transit providers/ year	GDOT, NWGRC	2025 \$10,000			Ongoing; In 2025, met with Catoosa County, Dalton
37.	Prepare feasibility study for regional transit operation	GDOT, NWGRC	2025-2026 \$10,000			Dropped; more interest in expanding local systems or vanpooling
38.	Participate in meetings of federal and state transportation agencies, Atlanta MPO, Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO, Rome-Floyd County MPO, Greater Dalton MPO, Cartersville-Bartow County MPO; provide quarterly planning and coordination between these agencies and the NWGRC Council and non-MPO governments on regionally significant projects	NWGRC, GDOT, MPOs			Ongoing \$20,000/yr.	Ongoing
39.	Implement THRIVE2055 transportation and freight mobility initiatives, representing NWGRC Counties of Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray	NWGRC, THRIVE2055	2025-2028 \$5,000/yr.			Ongoing; participating in THRIVE Resource Hub
40.	Add transit page with GDOT transit materials and links to NWGRC website; update regularly	NWGRC	2025 \$5,000/yr.			Postponed
Priority Need: Improve connectivity of bike and pedestrian pathways throughout the region						
Strategy: Implement bike & pedestrian safety plans, GA Bicycle/ Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, Safe Routes to School, implement Complete Streets design						

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing	Project Status
41.	Migrate Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia website materials to NWGRC website to implement the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Safety Plan and local plans.	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr.			Postponed to 2026; DOT scope changed
42.	Participate in 1-2 Safe Routes to School Resource Center walk safety audits per year and assist 1-2 schools and local governments/ year to implement audit recommendations and GDOT Complete Streets policies	NWGRC, GDOT, Safe Routes Resource Center	2025-2028 \$5,000/ yr.			Completed. Followed up with Summerville, Ellijay on implementation; hosted Safe Routes workshop
43.	Incorporate all local bike/ ped plans into a regional database; identify favorable connection corridors between bike/ ped infrastructure	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2025-2028 \$10,000			Postponed to 2026; Rewrite for revised GDOT scope
44.	Use GDOT Complete Streets Manual, Bike and Pedestrian Guide, and Vulnerable Road Users Action Plan to assist communities with bike and ped safety projects, provide training	NWGRC	\$1,000/ year			Completed. Prepared 8 safety grant applications

1.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINIMUM STANDARDS UPDATE

To encourage implementation of the Regional Plan, realize the Regional Vision, and address Regional Issues and Opportunities, the NWGRC set Minimum and Excellence thresholds for local governments as required by Georgia DCA Regional Planning Requirements. The Minimum Standard includes essential activities for consistency with the Regional Plan; that report is shown below.

Number	Minimum Standard Requirement	Status	Action to assist
Min1	The local government has an updated, adopted comprehensive plan and uses the future development map or land use map to guide development.	All local governments have met except Braswell	
Min2	The local government has an approved, adopted Service Delivery Strategy which is updated as required.	All local governments have met	
Min3	The municipal/county clerk meets the mandated orientation training as specified in State law (O.C.G.A. sections 36-1-24 and 36-45-20).	All local governments have met	
Min4	Newly elected municipal/county officials participate in training sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association or the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.	All local governments have met	
Min5	The local government uses the Guiding Principles, Regional Vision, and Regional Priorities of the Northwest Georgia Regional Plan in making local planning decisions.	All local governments have met	
Min6	The local government uses the General Policies and Protection Measures in the Northwest Georgia Regional Resource Plan when making decisions that affect Regionally Important Resources.	All local governments have met	
Min7	The local government complies with requirements regarding Developments of Regional Impact.	All local governments have met	
Min8	A hazard mitigation plan approved by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.	All local governments have met	
Min9	The local government meets state financial reporting requirements and E-Verify requirements.	Not met: Braswell (E-Verify, Sanctuary, GOMI, RLGf); Aragon (RLGF); Chattooga County (GOMI, RLGf); Cohutta (RLGF); Resaca (RLGF); Blue Ridge (E-Verify, Sanctuary); Bremen (Sanctuary, RLGf); Ellijay (Sanctuary, RLGf); Fairmount (RLGF); Lookout Mountain (RLGF); Menlo (E-Verify, Sanctuary); Resaca (RLGF); Taylorsville (E-Verify, GOMI, RLGf); Trenton (RLGF); Trion (RLGF)	Contact & assist in completing reports as needed. Several reports are in progress.
Min10	The local government shares updated Tax Assessor's data tables and parcel data with NWGRC annually or as needed.	All local governments have met	
Min11	The local government reports annexations and deannexations to the Department of Community Affairs and the US Census Bureau and participates in the annual Census Boundary and Annexation Survey.	All local governments have met	

1.5 REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM REVISIONS

Needs, funding opportunities, and projects may change from year to year, and the regional work program is adjusted to reflect those updates. New projects are indicated with an underline, while projects that were completed or dropped are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing
Community and Economic Development					
Priority Need: Ensure infrastructure is in place across the region to meet the needs of existing and new businesses and industries.					
Strategy: Implement regional and local plans and strategies for infrastructure improvements needed to support job creation/retention and private investment					
45.	Assist 10-15 communities/ year to improve or expand infrastructure to support downtown and economic development through grant writing and planning	NWGRC	2026-2028	\$70,000/ yr	
	Partner with neighboring regions to assist in the transition to Electric Vehicle (EV) manufacturing; Assist communities to seek public EV infrastructure, battery storage, and EV-related funding	NWGRC, ARC	2026-2028	\$5,000/ yr	
46.	Update the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)	NWGRC	2027	\$10,000	
47.	Implement Economic Resiliency Plan (EDA) in NW Georgia.	NWGRC	2026-2028	\$10,000/ yr	
48.	Prepare and update annual report for the region; prepare data reports as needed	NWGRC	2026-2026	\$7,500	
Priority Need: Improve the competitiveness of Northwest Georgia communities to attract and retain business and industry					
Strategy: Provide planning and funding assistance to increase economic competitiveness in coordination with state and federal agencies					
49.	Provide EDA RLF loan packaging to assist 3+ small businesses each year to expand operations or add jobs, including assessment of need, preparation of loan packages, and financial planning in partnership with EDA and lending institutions	NWGRC, EDA, Lenders, Businesses	2026-2028		
50.	Participate in and implement recommendations of Georgia's Artificial Intelligence in Manufacturing (GA-AIM) project	NWGRC	2026-2028	\$5,000/yr	
Priority Need: Provide resources and assistance to support community development projects					
Strategy: Provide project development and application assistance for projects that improve public services, infrastructure, and tourism					
51.	Assist local governments with applications for funding for water, sewer, broadband, and other infrastructure improvements, fire and police services, parks, recreation, and trails, and other community development needs	NWGRC, DCA, ARC, GEFA, LWCF, Recreational Trails, AFG, others	2026-2028	\$80,000/yr	

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing
52.	Provide 1-3 training workshops/ year for local governments on project development, funding assistance, compliance, and related topics	NWGRC, DCA, ARC, others	2026-2028	\$10,000/yr	
53.	Provide technical assistance to local governments in meeting compliance requirements for grants received	NWGRC	2026-2028	\$5,000/yr	
54.	Plan and host annual Outdoor Recreation Summit, highlighting outdoor recreation's impact on the region's economy	NWGRC, partners incl. City of Rome, TRED, others	2026-2028	\$5-10,000/yr	
Housing					
Priority Need: There is a lack of safe, affordable housing and a lack of housing investment					
Strategy: Incentivize redevelopment of blighted or vacant areas for residential use; assist local governments with housing needs					
55.	Partner with state agencies to hold 1-3 regional workshops per year for housing-related training and resources	NWGRC, DCA, state agencies, and partners	2026-2028	\$5,000	
56.	Provide data and resources to communities to assess housing needs	NWGRC	2026-2028	\$10,000/yr	
57.	Assist 1-2 communities/ year to apply for GA Initiatives for Community Housing (GICH); serve on community teams	NWGRC, local governments	2026-2028	\$7,500/ yr	
58.	Prepare a regional Housing and Transportation analysis and growth scenario study	NWGRC	2026-2027	\$7,500	
Land Use					
Priority Need: Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans and balances conservation with development needs					
Strategy: Assist local governments to comply with the current Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (O.C.G.A. 36-66-1, et seq.; 36-67-1, et seq.; and, 36-67A-1, et seq. as amended) and provide necessary technical assistance.					
59.	Assist 2-5 local governments/ year with Zoning and Land Use Ordinance authoring, adoption, and amendment; develop local service contracts with local governments for zoning and land use assistance	NWGRC, local governments	2026-2028	\$20,000/yr.	
60.	Administer the Dalton-Whitfield- Varnell Unified Development Ordinance	NWGRC		\$40,000/yr	
61.	Work with training providers, including UGA CVIOG, to provide 1- 2 planning and zoning workshops/ year	NWGRC, training providers (GAZA, GPA, DCA, UGA CVIOG)	2026-2028	\$3,000/ yr.	

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing
Strategy: Assist local governments to prepare and implement Comprehensive Plans, update and implement the regional plan, meet other requirements of the Georgia Planning Act and related laws, and apply for PlanFirst designation.					
62.	Assist with the preparation of scheduled updates to joint comprehensive plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dade, Fannin, Haralson, Polk, Walker Counties and municipalities (2027), Bartow, Gordon, Murray, and Whitfield Counties and municipalities (2028) 	NWGRC, local governments	2026-2028 \$60,000/yr.		
63.	Prepare 10+ /year Development of Regional Impact reviews; prepare a regional map of DRI projects	NWGRC, local governments	2026-2028 \$7,500/year		
64.	Assist 1-2 communities each year with PlanFirst applications	NWGRC, local governments	2026-2028 \$5,000/ yr.		
65.	Update the <i>Northwest Georgia Regional Plan</i> in 2024 and 2028-2029; prepare annual implementation reports.	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$7,500		
66.	Prepare 20-30 local plan reviews, environmental reviews, Section 106 reviews, and other coordinated intergovernmental reviews each year	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$5,000/ yr.		
Natural and Cultural Resources					
Priority Need: Connect more people with Northwest Georgia’s natural resources so they will enjoy and protect its diversity and beauty					
Strategy: Identify, preserve, and promote identified Regional Resources					
67.	Implement the 2024 Regional Resource Plan: Develop a publicly accessible GIS database and maps highlighting the region’s historic, cultural, and natural assets, including Civil War and Native American history	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$7,500/ YR		
Strategy: Improve trails, greenways, water trails/ blueways, and trail connections within and to adjoining regions; Improve safety, visibility, and access to trails and water trails/blueways; provide improved recreational opportunities for all					
68.	Assist 1-5 communities/ year to improve water trails/ blueways and put-ins, parks and recreation areas, trails, and trailheads	NWGRC, local governments, state partners and agencies, SORBA, TPL, Limestone Valley RC&D, Thrive Regional Partnership, and others	2026-2028 \$7,500/ YR		
69.	Assist Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and municipalities to implement the 2015 NW GA Feasibility Study for Bikeway & Pedestrian Multi-Use Trails, including the development of Chick-Chatt greenway, trail, and Lookout Mountain trail connections	NWGRC, Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and Cities, funding agencies, Chick-Chatt Greenway Association, Thrive Regional Partnership	2026-2028 \$7,500		

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing
70.	<u>Partner with THRIVE on the Resource Hub to expand the footprint of transportation, freight, and natural resources data hub</u>	<u>NWGRC, THRIVE</u>	<u>2026-2027</u> <u>Approx.</u> <u>\$9,000</u>		
Priority Need: Preserve irreplaceable historic and cultural resources through inventory, citizen engagement, planning, and funding assistance					
Strategy: Identify and preserve historic and cultural resources					
71.	Provide resources to local governments for regionally significant historical assets, CLG Grants	NWGRC, HPD	2026-2028 \$10,000/ YR		
72.	Provide support and assistance for historic resource surveys; digitize NWGRC’s historic resource documents	NWGRC, Bandy Heritage Center	2026-2028 \$6,000		
73.	Assist the region’s Certified Local Governments (CLGs) to maintain eligibility; assist in updating local ordinances	NWGRC, HPD, local govts	2026-2028 \$5,000/ YR		
Priority Need: Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region to meet federal and state regulations					
Strategy: Apply for funding to improve water quality, manage stormwater, restore streambanks, and protect water resources in the region					
74.	Provide resources to local governments to implement Watershed Management Plans and water quality plans, with Limestone Valley RC&D as a partner when possible.	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$5,000/yr.		
75.	Provide staff support to the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership, including grant administration and annual educational seminar	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$5,000/yr.		
76.	<u>Administer FY2026 RWP seed grant for water quality assessment, if awarded</u>	Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, N GA Water Resources Partnership, NWGRC, GAEPD	2026-2028 \$5,000/ yr		
77.	Assist 2-3 local governments/ year with funding and technical assistance to implement recommendations of Regional Water Plans, resiliency studies, and related plans	NWGRC, GAWP, DCA, others	2026-2028 \$5,000/ yr		
Transportation					
Priority Need: Provide safe, efficient movement of people and goods through Northwest Georgia to enhance economic growth					
Strategy: Improve coordination between local governments, GDOT, MPOs, and federal agencies to implement regionally significant transportation projects					

NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

#	Action	Partners	Short Term (1-5 yrs)	Long term (6-10 yr)	Ongoing
78.	Implement the Regional Transit Development Plan in partnership with GDOT and the region's transit providers, including convening 1-2 meetings of transit providers/ year	GDOT, NWGRC	2026-2027 \$10,000		
79.	Participate in meetings of federal and state transportation agencies, Atlanta MPO, Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia MPO, Rome-Floyd MPO, Greater Dalton MPO, Cartersville-Bartow MPO; provide quarterly planning and coordination	NWGRC, GDOT, MPOs			Ongoing \$20,000/yr.
80.	Implement THRIVE2055 transportation and freight mobility initiatives, representing NWGRC Counties of Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray	NWGRC, THRIVE2055	2026-2028 \$5,000/yr.		
81.	Add transit page with GDOT transit materials and links to NWGRC website; update regularly	NWGRC	2026 \$5,000/yr.		
Priority Need: Improve connectivity of bike and pedestrian pathways throughout the region					
Strategy: Implement GDOT and local bike & pedestrian safety plans, GA Bicycle/ Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, Safe Routes to School, and implement Complete Streets design					
82.	Prepare bike and pedestrian transportation safety page on NWGRC website	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2026-2028 \$5,000/ yr.		
83.	Incorporate all local bike/ ped plans into a regional database	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2026-2028 \$5,000		
84.	Implement DOT bike and pedestrian safety plans, including the Rural Safety Action Plan when completed, the Complete Streets Manual, the Bike and Pedestrian Guide, and the Vulnerable Road Users Action Plan; implement local plans	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$20-30,000/yr		
85.	<u>Partner with GDOT, Toole Design Group, Go Georgia, other state partners to implement bike and pedestrian safety projects and provide resources and training, including Safe Routes to School programming, workshops, and outreach</u>	NWGRC	2026-2028 \$20-30,000/yr		

1.6 PUBLIC HEARING AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION DOCUMENTATION

Today in History

Today's highlight:

On March 14, 1909 the... Today's highlight: On March 14, 1909 the... Today's highlight: On March 14, 1909 the...

On this date:

1882, German... 1921, the... 1988, Catholic... 1990, NATO... 2013, German... 2018, a U.S....

CELEB... GILES... Today's highlight: On March 14, 1909 the... Today's highlight: On March 14, 1909 the...

HOROSCOPE

ARIES (March 21-April 20)... TAURUS (April 21-May 21)... GEMINI (May 22-June 21)... CANCER (June 22-July 22)... LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)... VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)... LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)... SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)... SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)... CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 20)... AQUARIUS (Jan. 21-Feb. 19)... PISCES (Feb. 20-March 20)

County Commission to hear annual report

By Diane Wagner... Floyd County Commissioners will hear a presentation of the annual report for 2025 at their regular meeting Tuesday and decide on two recycling applications.

Local state lawmakers head into final stretch

By Diane Wagner... With five voting days left in the 2026 Georgia General Assembly, Floyd County's delegates are keeping a close watch on their outstanding legislation.



Sen. Chuck Hufstetter, R-Rome, accepts a commemorative pin Friday, March 20, as Gov. Steve Ross signs legislation to approve the Senate regarding the gas tax for 90 days.



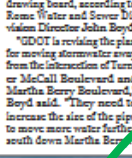
Rep. Matt Barton (center), R-Culver, above talking with House colleagues March 20, is pushing for a Senate vote on H.R. 1277.



Rep. Eddie Lumsden, R-Archard, has his insurance bill to date now passed the House and is awaiting action in the state Senate Friday.

PROJECT

From A1... and were scheduled start to work on the storm drains on the levee side of the street earlier this year.



Heavy equipment is at the site of the storm drain project at Monday and the completion date has been pushed back due to issues with storm drains.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION... The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) has prepared a draft Annual Report on the implementation of the 2024 Northwest Georgia Regional Plan per the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning, Chapter 110-12-6. The draft report includes a report of accomplishments, a local government performance standards update, and revisions to the regional work program.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION... The draft report was prepared with consideration of the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Regional Water Plans, Georgia's Plan for Outdoor Recreation: SCORP 2022-2026, Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation plans, and adjacent Regional Commissions' plans.

PRINCIPAL

From A1... an allocation of bonus funds. Employees of the school system are eligible for the state bonus plan.

Hearing held 3/31/2026 at 11:00am at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, Georgia, 30162.



PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION... The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) has prepared a draft Annual Report on the implementation of the 2024 Northwest Georgia Regional Plan per the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning, Chapter 110-12-6. The draft report includes a report of accomplishments, a local government performance standards update, and revisions to the regional work program.

The draft report was prepared with consideration of the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Regional Water Plans, Georgia's Plan for Outdoor Recreation: SCORP 2022-2026, Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation plans, and adjacent Regional Commissions' plans.

A public hearing is scheduled for comments on the draft report. After the public hearing, the draft report will be transmitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for approval.

The public hearing on the draft report will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, GA 30161. The draft report is posted on the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission website, https://www.nwgrc.gov/.

GEORGIA LOTTERY... Wednesday March 22, 2026... Sunday March 22, 2026... Mega Ball 2-2-4-5-6... Right Ball 1-2-3-4-5-6

Rome News-Tribune

ADVERTISING... Classified Advertising... Phone: 706-850-0200... Fax: 706-850-0200

MISS YOUR PAPER? CALL 706-290-3300... If you did not receive your newspaper or your daily mail or if you have any other questions...

Join us for the 2026 Outdoor Recreation Summit - June 15-16, 2026 in Cartersville!

[Learn More](#)



- HOME
- ABOUT
- SERVICES
- OUR REGION
- MEETINGS & ANNOUNCEMENTS
- PUBLICATIONS
- JOB OPPORTUNITIES
- CONTACT
- Q

Public Hearing Notice – Draft Annual Implementation Report of the 2024 Northwest Georgia Regional Plan

March 20, 2026 | Meetings & Announcements

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) has prepared a draft [Annual Report on the implementation of the 2024 Northwest Georgia Regional Plan](#) per the Georgia Department of Community Affairs’ Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning, Chapter 110-12-6. The draft report includes a report of accomplishments, a local government performance standards update, and revisions to the regional work program.

The draft report was prepared with consideration of the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, Regional Water Plans, Georgia’s Plan for Outdoor Recreation: SCORP 2022-2026, Metropolitan Planning Organization transportation plans, and adjacent Regional Commissions’ plans.

A public hearing is scheduled for comments on the draft report. After the public hearing, the draft report will be transmitted to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for approval.

The public hearing on the draft report will be held at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, 1 Jackson Hill Drive, Rome, GA 30161. The draft report is posted on the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission website, <https://www.nwgrc.gov/>




Publications

Below are the Comprehensive Plans, Studies, Strategies, etc. that Northwest Georgia Regional Commission has assisted in developing. Materials from workshops hosted by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission can be found here.



2026 Annual Implementation Report on the 2024-2028 Regional Plan
March 20, 2026 | Publications

2026 Annual Implementation Report on the 2024-2028 Regional Plan











Cartersville Capital Improvements Element 2025 Annual Update: Financial Report & Community Work Program
January 12, 2026 | Publications

Cartersville Capital Improvements Element 2025 Annual Update: Financial Report & Community Work Program


NWGRC 2026 Annual Regional Plan Implementation Update

Submitted to Georgia Department of Community Affairs and Georgia Department of Economic Development Regional Representatives for review.

Northwest Georgia 2026 draft Annual Implementation Report

 Julianne Meadows       

To: Patrick Vickers; Lori Dowdy <ldowdy@georgia.org> Mon 3/16/2026 11:27 AM

 NWGRC.RegPlan.AnnualImple...
742 KB


Hi Lori and Patrick,

Each year, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission prepares an Annual Regional Plan Implementation Report. This report highlights projects completed over the past year (p. 5-11) and includes updates to our Regional Work Program, such as EV and GA-AIM project assistance (p. 14) and regional data partnerships (p.17).

We are sharing the attached draft for your review. Please let me know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Thank you, and have a great day!

Julianne Meadows
Director of Regional Planning


REGIONAL COMMISSION

PO Box 1798/1 Jackson Hill Drive Rome, GA 30162

1.7 TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS



April 1, 2026

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

RE: NWGRC Regional Plan Annual Implementation Report Submittal

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission has prepared the annual implementation report on the 2024 Regional Plan and is submitting it with this letter for review by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. I certify that we have held the required public hearing on March 31, 2026, and have notified regional representatives of the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Georgia Department of Community Affairs, in accordance with the Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (Chapter 110-12-6). Evidence of this has been included with our submittal, in accordance with Chapter 110-12-6(5)(d).

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 plan:

- *State Comprehensive Plan for Outdoor Recreation 2022-2026*
- *Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan (2023)*
- *Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District 2022 Water Resources Management Plan*
- *Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan (2023)*
- *Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2022-2027*
- *Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization FY2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)*
- *Chattanooga Hamilton County-North Georgia MPO 2050 Regional Transportation Plan & TIP as amended*
- *Cartersville-Bartow County FY 2023-2026 TIP*
- *Rome/Floyd County 2024-2027 TIP and 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan*
- *Atlanta Regional Commission MPO Regional Transportation Plan and TIP*
- *Georgia DOT FY 24-27 STIP*
- *Georgia Mountains Regional Commission CEDS & Regional Plan 2022-2027*
- *Three Rivers Regional Plan & 2024 CEDS Annual Update*

If you have any questions concerning our submittal, please contact me at baustin@nwgrc.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Boyd Austin".

Boyd Austin
Executive Director

Enclosures

Rome Office: PO Box 1798 | Rome, GA 30162-1798
Dalton Office: 503 West Waugh Street | Dalton, GA 30720-3475

An Equal Opportunity Employer
Programs/Auxiliary Aids/Services Available Upon Request to Individuals with Disabilities



706.295.6485
nwgrc.org

1.8 GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS APPROVAL LETTER

1.9 ADOPTION RESOLUTION