

Northwest Georgia Regional Plan
2013 – 2033

Regional Agenda

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January 16, 2014

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Introduction

The Northwest Georgia Regional Plan has been prepared in accordance with the Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-6, Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning (effective July 1, 2009). The regional plan consists of three components:

The first component of the regional plan, the *Regional Assessment*, is the factual and conceptual foundation upon which the rest of the plan is built. Preparation of the Regional Assessment was largely a staff function of collecting and analyzing information and data about the region and presenting the results in a concise, easily understood format for consideration by the public and decision-makers involved in the subsequent development of the Regional Agenda. The second component of the regional plan, the *Stakeholder Involvement Program*, outlines the various participation techniques used by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission for involving selected stakeholders and the general public in the process of developing the Regional Agenda. Upon completion, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission transmitted both the Regional Assessment and the Stakeholder Involvement Program to the Department of Community Affairs for review. On November 16, 2012, the Regional Commission received notification from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs that the Regional Assessment and Stakeholder Involvement Program adequately address the requirements of the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning.

This document, the *Regional Agenda*, is the third and final component of the regional plan. Its development was initiated once review of the Regional Assessment and Stakeholder Involvement Program was completed. The purpose of the Regional Agenda is to lay out a road map for the region's future. Because it provides guidance for future decision-making about the region, it was prepared with adequate input from regional stakeholders and the general public. The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission contracted with Kennesaw State University to develop and administer an online stakeholder survey and facilitate a full-day stakeholder workshop as part of the Stakeholder Involvement Program. The Regional Agenda is the most important part of the regional plan, because it includes the region's vision for the future, key issues and opportunities to be addressed during the planning period, and an implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing the identified issues and opportunities. It is a concise, user-friendly document suitable for day-to-day decision-making by regional leaders as they work toward achieving the desired future of the region.

Once a draft of the Regional Agenda was completed, regional public hearings were held at the Rome and Dalton Offices of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission on September 10, 2013, and September 11, 2013, respectively, to brief regional stakeholders on the contents of the Regional Agenda and provide them an opportunity to make final suggestions, additions, or revisions. After stakeholder comments were addressed, the Council of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, on September 19, 2013, approved the transmittal of the Regional Agenda to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review.

Regional Vision

The Regional Vision 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 a general vision statement, a regional development map, and defining narrative.

General Vision Statement

The General Vision Statement that follows identifies the overall goals and desired future the region seeks to achieve:

Northwest Georgia strives to become a region where economic opportunities are available for all citizens; where our natural resources are used wisely and conserved for future generations; where community facilities and services support the needs of everyone; where cooperation among the public, private, and non-profit sectors is common-place, and where citizens have opportunities to enjoy a healthy and productive life.

Regional Development Map

The Regional Development Map illustrates desired future land use patterns for the region using the four categories identified in section 110-12-6-.03(2)(b)1 of the Department of Community Affairs' Regional Planning Requirements. These four categories are as follows:

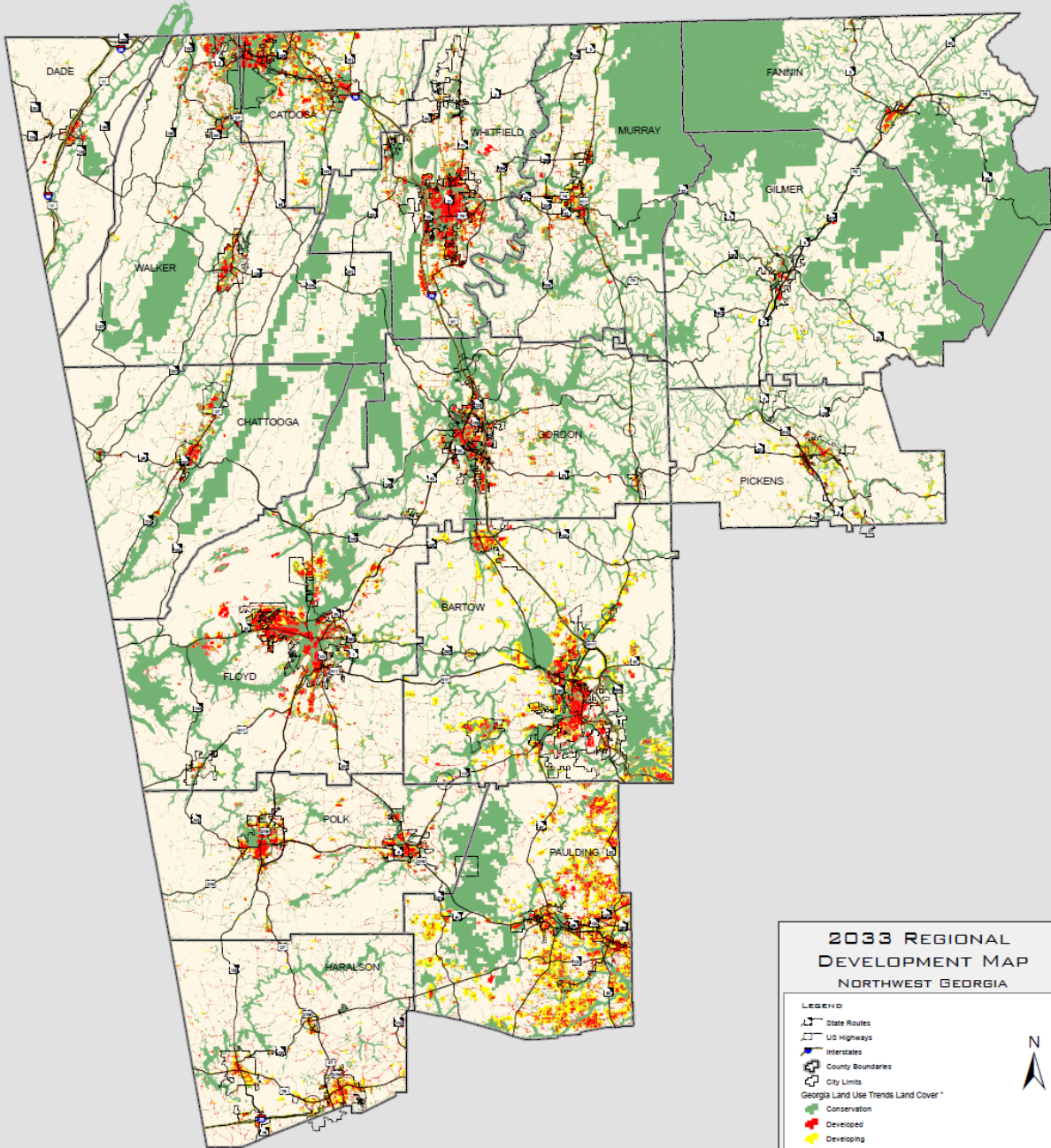
- **Conservation:** Areas to be preserved in order to protect important resources or environmentally sensitive areas of the region. Areas shown as conservation correspond to the Regionally Important Resource Map for the region.
- **Rural:** Areas not expected to become urbanized or require provision of urban services during the planning period.
- **Developed:** 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.
- **Developing:** Areas that likely will become urbanized and require provision of new urban services (i.e., water, sewer, etc.) during the planning period.

To produce the Regional Development Map in this document, the Projected Development Patterns Map prepared for the Regional Assessment component of the regional plan was modified somewhat to illustrate “desired” future development patterns rather than simply to reflect the projection of current development trends.

The Regional Development Map also includes the Areas Requiring Special Attention that were identified during the Regional Assessment and adjusted, as appropriate, following the stakeholder involvement process. For clarity, the Areas Requiring Special Attention are illustrated on separate maps as follows:

- Areas where significant natural resources are likely to be impacted by development;
- Areas where significant cultural resources are likely to be impacted by development; and
- Areas with significant levels of poverty.

These areas will be described in more detail in the Defining Narrative for each. Also considered an Area Requiring Special Attention are the areas identified in the Regionally Important Resource Map contained in the Regionally Important Resource Plan, approved and adopted by the Northwest Georgia Regional Council on January 19, 2012.



**2033 REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT MAP
NORTHWEST GEORGIA**

LEGEND

- State Routes
- US Highways
- Interstates
- County Boundaries
- City Limits
- Georgia Land Use Trends Land Cover ***
- Conservation
- Developed
- Rural

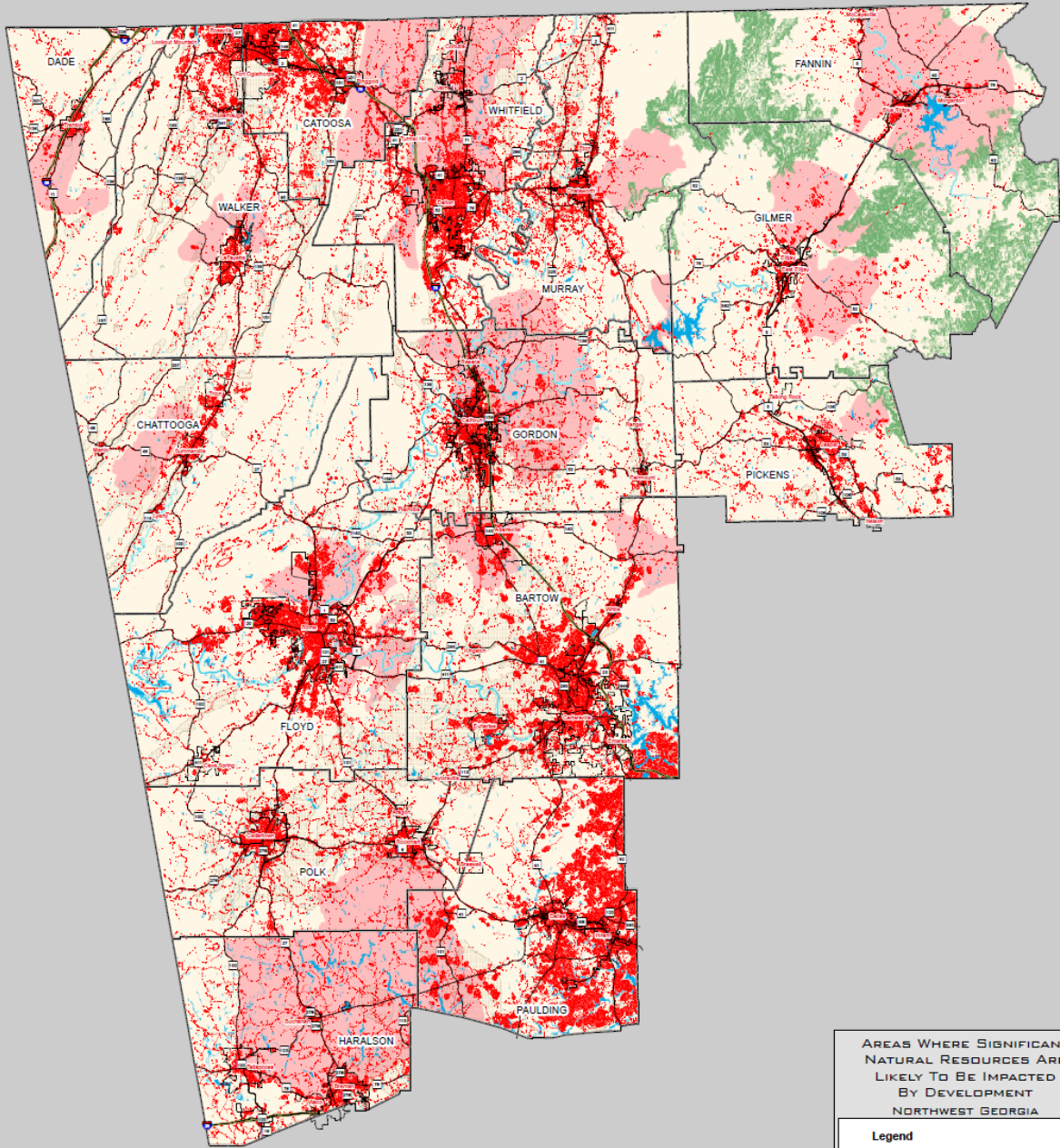
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* Source: 2030 Georgia Land Use Trends (GLUT) from the Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory of the University of Georgia

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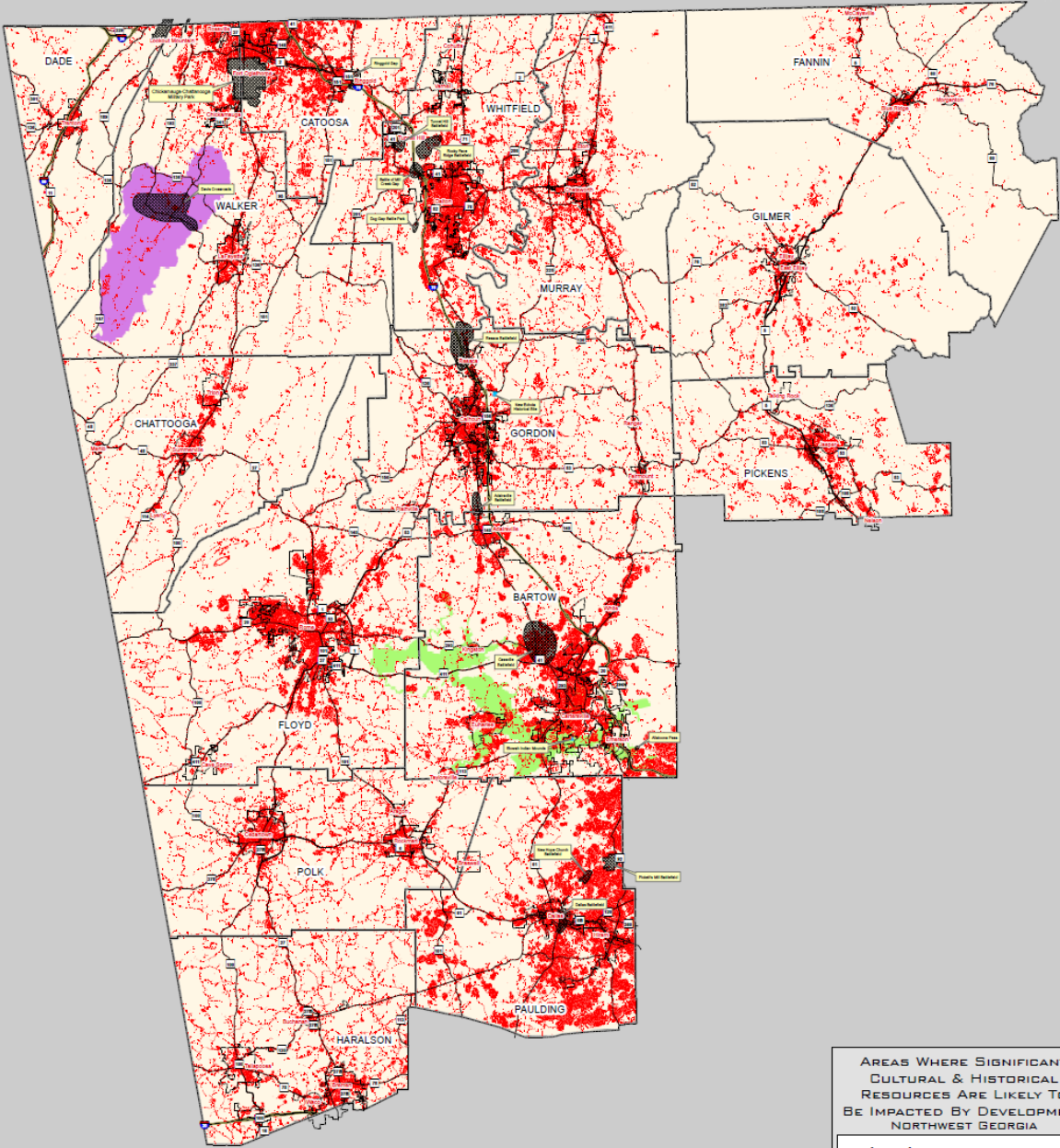
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**AREAS WHERE SIGNIFICANT
NATURAL RESOURCES ARE
LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED
BY DEVELOPMENT
NORTHWEST GEORGIA**



* Source: University of Georgia Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory
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**AREAS WHERE SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL & HISTORICAL RESOURCES ARE LIKELY TO BE IMPACTED BY DEVELOPMENT
NORTHWEST GEORGIA**

Legend

- Highways
- Battlefield Core Areas
- 2033 - Developed or Developing Areas*
- National Historic Landmarks
- Etowah Valley Historic District
- McLemore Cove Historic District

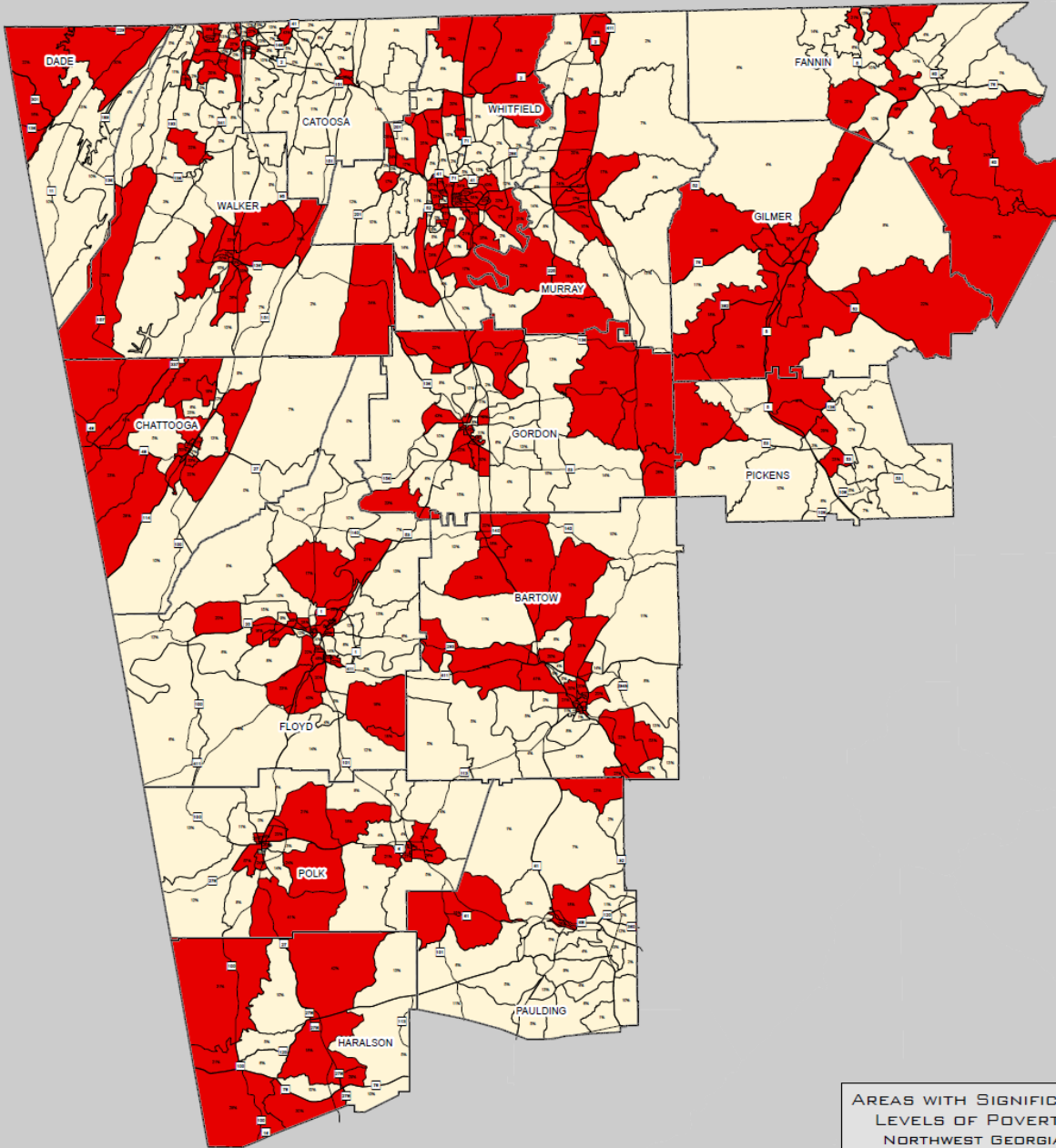
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* Source: University of Georgia Natural Resources Spatial Analysis Laboratory

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**AREAS WITH SIGNIFICANT LEVELS OF POVERTY
NORTHWEST GEORGIA**


Legend

■ Census Block Groups with 15% or More Poverty

N

0 2.5 5 10 15 Miles

Source: American Community Survey 5-11 Estimate, 2005-2010


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Defining Narrative

The Defining Narrative defines specific strategies for managing each Area Requiring Special Attention (ARSA). It includes the following information for each ARSA shown on the preceding maps:

- A written description that makes it clear what types, forms, styles, and patterns of development are to be encouraged in the area;
- A listing of specific types of land uses to be allowed in the area;
- A listing of the Quality Community Objectives to be pursued in the area; and
- A menu of implementation measures to help achieve the desired development patterns for the area.

For simplicity, the Quality Community Objectives (published by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs) are described below and are identified by name only in the Defining Narratives that follow:

- **Economic Prosperity** - Encourage development or expansion of businesses and industries that are suitable for the community. Factors to consider when determining suitability include job skills required; long-term sustainability; linkages to other economic activities in the region; impact on the resources of the area; or prospects for creating job opportunities that meet the needs of a diverse local workforce.
- **Resource Management** - Promote the efficient use of natural resources and identify and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community. This may be achieved by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation; encouraging green building construction and renovation; utilizing appropriate waste management techniques; fostering water conservation and reuse; or setting environmentally sensitive areas aside as green space or conservation reserves.
- **Efficient Land Use** - Maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the costly conversion of undeveloped land at the periphery of the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the traditional core of the community; designing new development to minimize the amount of land consumed; carefully planning expansion of public infrastructure; or maintaining open space in agriculture, forestry, or conservation uses.
- **Local Preparedness** - Identify and put in place the prerequisites for the type of future the community seeks to achieve. These prerequisites might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer, and telecommunications) to support or direct new growth; ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired; leadership and staff capable of responding to opportunities and managing new challenges; or undertaking an all-hazards approach to disaster preparedness and response.

- **Sense of Place** - Protect and enhance the community's and the region's unique qualities. This may be achieved by maintaining the downtown as focal point of the community; fostering compact, walkable, mixed-use development; protecting and revitalizing historic areas of the community; encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community; or protecting scenic and natural features that are important to defining the community's and region's character.
- **Regional Cooperation** - Cooperate with neighboring jurisdictions to address shared needs. This may be achieved by actively participating in regional organizations; identifying joint projects that will result in greater efficiency and less cost to the taxpayer; or developing collaborative solutions for regional issues such as protection of shared natural resources, development of the transportation network, or creation of a tourism plan.
- **Housing Options** - Promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource efficient housing in the community. This may be achieved by encouraging development of a variety of housing types, sizes, costs, and densities in each neighborhood; instituting programs to provide housing for residents of all socio-economic backgrounds; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure availability of adequate workforce housing in the community.
- **Transportation Options** - Address the transportation needs, challenges and opportunities of all community residents. This may be achieved by fostering alternatives to transportation by automobile, including walking, cycling, and transit; employing traffic calming measures throughout the community; requiring adequate connectivity between adjoining developments; or coordinating transportation and land use decision-making within the community.
- **Educational Opportunities** - Make educational and training opportunities readily available to enable all community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions. This can be achieved by expanding and improving local educational institutions or programs; providing access to other institutions in the region; or coordinating with local economic development programs to ensure an adequately trained and skilled workforce.
- **Community Health** - Ensure that all community residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical goods and services, safe and clean neighborhoods, and good work opportunities. This may be achieved by providing services to support the basic needs of disadvantaged residents; instituting programs to foster better health and fitness; or providing all residents the opportunity to improve their circumstances in life and to fully participate in the community.

Defining Narrative – Areas where Significant Natural Resources are Likely to be Impacted by Development

The preceding map of Areas where Significant Natural Resources are Likely to be Impacted by Development shows state vital areas and projected “developed” and “developing” areas for 2033. Areas where these environmentally sensitive resources and the developed and developing areas overlap or coincide are areas where development conflicts are likely to occur and are, thus, Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSAs). The areas of significant natural resources most likely to be impacted by development appear to be water supply watersheds and groundwater recharge areas. Specific strategies for managing these ARSAs are provided in the defining narrative that follows. The Regionally Important Resource Plan can be consulted for additional information regarding the management of these areas as well as other state vital areas experiencing development conflicts.

Patterns of Development to be Encouraged

- Preservation of undisturbed natural areas by setting them aside as conservation areas, parks, trails, or greenbelts.
- Very low impact activities/development with limited impervious services.
- Landscape features that support recharge, including vegetative channels and swales, rain gardens, filter strips, dry wells, infiltration basins, pervious paving systems, and native plant landscaping.
- Conservation design subdivisions.

Types of Land Uses to be Allowed

- Single or two-family homes on lots one acre or greater, provided that septic system or wastewater discharge does not occur within groundwater protection area;
- Commercial development limited to retail shopping, business or professional office uses if groundwater recharge performance standards are met and the use does not involve the storage or use of toxic or hazardous materials in quantities greater than normal household use;
- Parks, greenways, or publicly-owned recreational areas such as foot, bicycle and/or horse paths, playgrounds, picnic areas, ball fields, tennis courts, beaches, or boat landings;
- Conservation activities or conservation areas for soil, water, plants or wildlife;
- Necessary public drinking water supply related facilities, including the construction, maintenance, repair, and enlargement of source, treatment, storage, pumping, or distribution facilities;

- Agriculture (To the extent legally permissible, zoning authority should require that fertilizers, pesticides, manure, and other leachables are used according to Best Management Practices that will protect ground and surface water quality.); and
- Maintenance or repair of any existing structure, provided there is no increase in impermeable surface above the performance standards (see implementation measures).

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued

- Resource Management
- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Regional Cooperation
- Transportation Options

Implementation Measures

- Establish a groundwater recharge performance standard requiring new development to maintain a percentage (100% is ideal) of the predevelopment recharge volume, and develop a detailed design manual to help accomplish that goal.
- Minimize impervious areas. Set impervious surface limits (generally 15% or less) for new development based on the percentage of a watershed already converted to impervious surface.
- Review zoning and stormwater ordinances to remove requirements that are inconsistent with groundwater recharge and water quality goals (e.g., requirements that roof downspouts be connected to storm sewers; street width, building setback, and minimum parking requirements).
- Ensure, through zoning ordinances, that high-risk land uses are not located in important groundwater recharge areas and that all contamination risks are subject to Best Management Practices.
- Adopt a conservation design subdivision ordinance.
- Adopt or strengthen stormwater management ordinances to mitigate the impact of development on watersheds.
- Protect and preserve critical areas such as buffer areas along the edges of streams (riparian buffers) by regulations, conservation easements, or outright purchase of the land to prevent development.

Defining Narrative – Areas where Significant Cultural Resources are Likely to be Impacted by Development

The preceding map of Areas where Significant Cultural Resources are Likely to be Impacted by Development shows the region's large, rural historic districts, McLemore Cove and Etowah Valley, Civil War battlefield core areas, and the region's projected "developed" and "developing" areas for 2033. Areas where these cultural resources and the projected developed and developing areas overlap or coincide are areas where development conflicts are likely to occur and are, thus, Areas Requiring Special Attention.

Rural historic landscapes, such as McLemore Cove, are geographical areas that historically have been used by people, or shaped or modified by human activity, occupancy, or intervention, and that possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of areas of land use, vegetation, buildings and structures, road and waterways, and natural features. These landscapes contain substantial areas of vegetation, open space, or natural features that embody, through past use or physical character, significant historical values. Buildings, structures, objects, designed landscapes, and archaeological sites may also be present. Civil War battlefields also may possess important landscape characteristics. Although their significance does not directly relate to land use, their historic integrity depends upon landscape characteristics such as natural features, land uses, vegetation, and associated buildings and structures. It is important, therefore, for battlefield lands located in rural or agricultural areas to retain their rural or agricultural identity.

Inappropriate development adjacent to battlefields, even protected battlefields such as Chickamauga and Pickett's Mill, also can affect their historic integrity as it can negatively impact viewsheds from the battlefield sites. The same can be said for several of the region's other significant cultural resources, such as New Echota and Etowah Mounds (also shown on the preceding map). Land with development potential nearby these other significant cultural resources also should be considered Areas Requiring Special Attention. Specific strategies for managing these ARSAs are provided in the defining narrative that follows.

Patterns of Development to be Encouraged

- Historic land uses continued to the greatest extent possible to preserve or maintain historic development patterns.

- Lands in open or cultivated state or sparsely settled, including woodlands and farm lands; property boundary demarcations marked by fences, walls, land use, vegetation, roadways, a water bodies.
- Rural village developments (existing) with buildings clustered at the center and a clearly defined edge surrounded by open space.
- Roadways widened or realigned only when absolutely necessary and with carefully designed alterations to minimize visual impacts.
- New subdivisions strictly limited; but if minor exceptions are made, subdivisions should be required to follow rural cluster zoning or conservation design.

Types of Land Uses to be Allowed

Preferred land uses would be the continuation of the historic uses of the land. The introduction of non-historic land uses should be avoided to the greatest extent possible. Non-historic land uses to be avoided include the following: quarries; tree farms; sanitary landfills; telecommunication structures, power plants, wastewater treatment plants, and other public utilities; widening and resurfacing of historic roadways; limited access highways and interchanges; and subdivision for residential, commercial, or industrial development. Changes in land use and management that alter vegetation; change the size and shape of fields; destroy boundary demarcation; flatten the contours of land; disturb archaeological sites; or result in the damage, abandonment, or loss of historic buildings or structures also should be avoided. In order for a large, rural historic landscape to maintain its overall historic integrity, large-scale modern development must be concentrated in relatively few locations and compose a small percentage of the overall acreage.

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued

- Efficient Land Use
- Local Preparedness
- Sense of Place
- Regional Cooperation
- Transportation Options

Implementation Measures

- Implement non-exclusive agricultural zoning with large minimum lot size restrictions (20+ acres) on all residential uses.
- Promote the use of conservation easements by land owners.

- Establish a mandatory transferable development rights (TDR) program with significant cultural resource areas as “sending zones.”
- Implement design controls requiring compliance with design guidelines for rural development overseen by a design review board (can involve local historic district designation).
- Adopt a conservation design subdivision ordinance.
- Require an environmental impact assessment as part of the development approval process.
- Develop and implement a differential tax assessment (use-tax) program to help preserve open space.
- Develop activities to promote agriculture and agriculture-related businesses to keep farms viable (e.g., agri-tourism, farmers’ markets, farm festivals).

Defining Narrative – Areas of Significant Levels of Poverty

The preceding map of Areas with Significant Levels of Poverty shows the region's census block groups with 15% or more poverty—those areas that correspond to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs' "Opportunity Zone" program. Census block groups are statistical divisions of census tracts, usually cover contiguous areas, and never cross state, county, or census tract boundaries (but may cross the boundaries of any other geographic entity). Although census block groups vary greatly in area, they are defined to contain 600 to 3,000 people. Thus, census block groups in rural areas tend to be larger than those in urban areas.

For urban areas, in particular, census block groups with significant levels of poverty are generally predictive of areas of decline and disinvestment. These areas generally have dilapidated buildings, poor-quality housing, high vacancy rates, joblessness, few resources (e.g., health care, reliable public transportation, retail stores), and unsafe/unhealthy conditions. Thus, areas of significant poverty indicative of decline and disinvestment in the region's urban areas are considered Areas Requiring Special Attention. Strategies for managing these ARSAs are provided in the defining narrative that follows.

Patterns of Development to be Encouraged

- Infill development on vacant or under-utilized sites.
- Addition of neighborhood commercial centers on appropriate infill sites to serve surrounding neighborhood.
- Improvement of sidewalk and street appearance and amenities of neighborhood commercial centers.
- Well-designed development that blends into existing neighborhoods by disguising its density (e.g., small scale apartment buildings, multi-family that looks like a single residence from the street, etc.).
- Street layouts that match those in older parts of community and connect to the existing street network at many points.
- Developments that have easy access to nearby transit, shopping, schools and other areas where residents travel daily.
- New development that reflects traditional neighborhood design (TND) principles, such as smaller lots, orientation to street, mix of housing types, pedestrian access to neighborhood commercial center.
- Residential development with healthy mix of uses (corner groceries, barber shops, drugstores) within easy walking distance of residences.

- Retrofitting existing residential communities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and connectivity with nearby commercial areas.
- Community schools developed at smaller scale and located in neighborhoods where students can walk to class.
- Reuse of existing vacant or underutilized structures (e.g. commercial centers, office spaces, warehouses) to accommodate new community facilities.

Types of Land Uses to be Allowed

- Residential (single-family and multi-family)
- Neighborhood commercial
- Institutional
- Mixed use
- Park and recreation

Quality Community Objectives to be Pursued

- Economic Prosperity
- Housing Options
- Transportation Options
- Educational Opportunities
- Community Health

Implementation Measures

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive listing and referral service (Community Health Resource Center) to help citizens understand and access available local community health and social welfare assistance resources
- If public transportation options to local community health facilities aren't available in your area, consider instituting a DOT 5311 on-demand transit system (or contact your regional commission about their RHST program).
- Form a community improvement district (CID) to enhance the business development potential of a particular section of your community, such as a declining strip mall or older warehouse district. A CID can levy a small tax on businesses within the district to finance a range of needed facilities and services to enhance the attractiveness of the area.
- Create a job center featuring free job listings for local business and free resources for the job seeker such as access to job boards, resume workshops, etc.
- Write an Urban Redevelopment Plan and apply for opportunity zone designation to take advantage of tax incentives available to businesses locating within the zone.

- Provide access to training opportunities for the local workforce. These can include formal educational institutions, private providers, and specialized programs from a department of labor.
- Create incentives such as tax breaks, code changes or other regulatory tools to encourage property owners to rehabilitate underutilized or vacant structures so that they can be put to new uses.
- Provide assistance and incentives for redevelopment of greyfield areas.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for encouraging infill development in particular areas of the community, while also regulating this development to ensure protection of quality of life in affected neighborhoods.
- Ensure your zoning or land development regulations allow for a mix of uses in appropriate areas of the community.
- Adopt building codes with standards appropriate to the renovation of older buildings.
- Establish an urban redevelopment plan (and appoint an authority to implement this plan) for areas with high concentrations of underutilized buildings and infrastructure.
- Involve neighborhood residents and stakeholder in developing detailed plans for future development of particular areas of the community, especially for declining areas of the community or areas likely to experience significant development pressure.
- Amend your local development regulations to permit traditional neighborhood development (TND) in your community.
- Adopt a manufactured housing ordinance or program that: 1) Ensures the compatibility of manufactured homes with adjacent single-family residences. 2) Regulates the appearance, layout, and location of manufactured home parks, recreational vehicle and travel trailer parks, and campgrounds. 3) Requires installation of manufactured homes in accordance with the applicable federal and manufacturer's standards.
- Utilize code enforcement as a tool to require property owners to properly maintain their residential units and thereby prevent neighborhood blight and foreclosed properties.
- Establish a nonprofit association that works to create more affordable housing in the community by employing innovative financial tools, often in collaboration with other institutions, stakeholders and government agencies.
- Participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing program. This program helps communities establish an effective local program and strategy for providing affordable housing in the community.
- Implement a program or access state and federal resources for housing special needs populations with the community.
- Start an Aging in Place or Lifelong Community Initiative to educate about appropriate adaptations to ensure that housing remains appropriate as residents age.

- Establish a local land bank empowered to acquire and assemble available properties in areas of the community in need of redevelopment, then offer these properties to private developers as sites for new development of affordable or infill housing.
- Adopt zoning requirements that specifically allow for a range of housing sizes and types (multi-family, attached, single family) in particular neighborhoods.
- Access the services of state and federal organizations and programs that help children achieve literacy, complete school, and be prepared to work.
- Develop and maintain a listing and referral service (Educational Resource Center) to help citizens understand and access available educational and training opportunities in your community.
- Provide easily accessible transportation options such as regular van shuttles to training centers, libraries, and local community and technical colleges, both in town and in neighboring communities.
- Participate in the Georgia Work Ready program, which helps citizens build their work skills, certify their preparedness for particular types of jobs, and match workers with employers looking for their particular skills.
- Ensure that your community provides public access to internet connected computers at locations such as libraries.

Regional Issues and Opportunities

The Regional Issues and Opportunities listed below are the final, agreed upon, issues and opportunities to be addressed in the Implementation Program of the Regional Agenda. The list of Potential Issues and Opportunities identified in the Regional Assessment was modified and refined through stakeholder input to yield this final list. Each of the issues and opportunities on this final list is followed-up with corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Program. The identification codes are provided to cross reference the implementation measures to the final issues and opportunities. The Regional Issues and Opportunities that follow are categorized by various planning elements.

Economic Development Issues

ID	The issue is. . . .
ED-I-1	Inadequate incentives and/or burdensome regulations.

Economic Development Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to. . . .
ED-O-1	Diversify the region's economic base.
ED-O-2	Improve the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the region's workforce.
ED-O-3	Retain the region's existing jobs.
ED-O-4	Recruit new business and industry.
ED-O-5	Improve regional corridor development to support industries.
ED-O-6	Enhance Northwest Georgia's import/export capabilities through the Georgia ports and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport.
ED-O-7	Develop a consortium of local food growers to share common issues and seek solutions.
ED-O-8	Increase tourism visitation and visitor expenditures.

Housing Issues

ID	The issue is. . . .
H-I-1	A lack of adequate, safe, affordable, and diverse housing for low income individuals, the elderly, and the average wage earner.

Housing Issues, cont.

ID	The issue is. . . .
H-I-2	The quantity of aging housing stock and substandard, dilapidated, and abandoned housing.
H-I-3	Too many foreclosed/vacant properties, including undeveloped and partially developed subdivisions.

Housing Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to. . . .
H-O-1	Utilize unique spaces for housing (downtown lofts, mill / warehouse conversions).

Natural and Cultural Resources Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to. . . .
NC-O-1	Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region commensurate with federal and state regulations.
NC-O-2	Protect and preserve watersheds that comprise the principle source of public water supply for the region.
NC-O-3	Protect and preserve water quality, water sources, wildlife habitat, and recreational resources of major river corridors.
NC-O-4	Protect and preserve the steep sloped mountain ridges that comprise the significant views of the region.
NC-O-5	Plan, develop, identify, and market greenways and trails in the region to promote enjoyment of the outdoors, provide recreational opportunities for area residents and tourists, and encourage trail and greenway use for connectivity between places to live, work, and play.
NC-O-6	Enhance the preservation potential of regionally significant historic resources.

Community Facilities and Services Issues

ID	The issue is. . . .
CF-I-1	A lack of focus on regional recreation.

Community Facilities and Services Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to. . . .
CF-O-1	Provide sufficient, economical public water supply, treatment, and distribution services and waste water collection and treatment services to accommodate future growth.
CF-O-2	Develop and maintain the urban service center's ability to provide basic infrastructure in support of the Regional Development Map.
CF-O-3	Improve telecommunication services to expand accessibility and speed of service to residential, business, and governmental sectors throughout the region.
CF-O-4	Manage solid waste facilities to emphasize long-term benefits and maximizes waste reduction consistent with the Georgia Solid Waste Management Plan.
CF-O-5	Improve the quality of local schools to bring them closer to state and national measurements in testing and retention.
CF-O-6	Develop a coordinated service delivery system for meeting the priority needs of senior citizens.
CF-O-7	Improve the access to primary care for underserved areas of the region.
CF-O-8	Expand services for low-income / disabled / homeless individuals.
CF-O-9	Expand mental health and substance abuse services.

Intergovernmental Coordination Issues

ID	The issue is. . . .
IC-I-1	A need of cooperation, coordination, and communication across jurisdictional boundaries.
IC-I-2	A need for multi-jurisdictional cooperation on common/key issues such as water, transportation, and economic development as a way of building partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries

Intergovernmental Coordination Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to. . . .
IC-O-1	Increase coordination/cooperation with private industry.

Transportation Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to . . .
T-O-1	Provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods through the region that will enhance economic growth.

Land Use Issues

ID	The issue is. . . .
LU-I-1	Too much sprawl development.
LU-I-2	Little encouragement for private green space conservation in development / more balance between development and conservation

Land Use Opportunities

ID	The opportunity is to . . .
LU-O-1	Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for the region that respects local land use plans and development plans.
LU-O-2	Maintain up-to-date Future Land Use Maps.

Implementation Program

The Implementation Program is the overall strategy for achieving the Regional Vision and addressing each of the Regional Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by 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 includes the following components: guiding principles, performance standards, and regional plan implementation measures or activities.

Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles that follow include policies 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. The Guiding Principles are categorized by the same planning elements used to categorize the foregoing Regional Issues and Opportunities.

Economic Development

Number	Guiding Principle
GP1.1	We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses and industries that are a good fit for our region’s economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.
GP1.2	We will make educational and training opportunities readily available to all residents to enable them to improve job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions.
GP1.3	We will target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in previously undeveloped areas.
GP1.4	We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.
GP1.5	We will encourage the development of downtowns as vibrant centers of the region’s communities in order to improve overall attractiveness and quality of life.

Housing

Number	Guiding Principle
GP2.1	We will strive to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our region's communities.
GP2.2	We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.
GP2.3	We will support and promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in our region's communities
GP2.4	We will increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.

Natural and Cultural Resources

Number	Guiding Principle
GP3.1	We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect scenic and natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or significant historic or archaeological resources from encroachment.
GP3.2	We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.
GP3.3	We support the protection and revitalization of historic areas in our region's communities.

Community Facilities and Services

Number	Guiding Principle
GP4.1	Our region's communities will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.
GP4.2	Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our region's communities.
GP4.3	We will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.
GP4.4	We will strive to ensure that all the region's residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical services.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Number	Guiding Principle
GP5.1	We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.
GP5.2	We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection).
GP5.3	We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them, and we will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decisions that are likely to have an impact on our jurisdiction.

Transportation

Number	Guiding Principle
GP6.1	We will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.
GP6.2	We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the region.

Land Use

Number	Guiding Principle
GP7.1	Our region's communities will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.
GP7.2	We will strive to preserve the rural character of our region and to provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the region.
GP7.3	We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the region's communities.
GP7.4	We are committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas in preference to new development in previously undeveloped areas.
GP7.5	We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new developments.

Performance Standards

To encourage local government implementation of the Regional Plan and to realize the Regional Vision and address the Regional Issues and Opportunities, the NWGRC has established Minimum and Excellence thresholds for local performance standards as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Regional Planning Requirements. The Minimum Standard includes activities that are essential for consistency with the Regional Plan, while the Excellence Standard includes activities that are desirable for consistency with the Regional Plan.

Minimum Standard

The Minimum Standard requirements are the same for all local governments in the region and are as follows:

Number	Minimum Standard Requirement
Min1	The local government has a comprehensive plan that complies with the <i>Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning</i> and has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.
Min2	The local government has a Service Delivery Strategy (O.C.G.A. 36-70-22) that is verified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.
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).
Min4	Newly elected municipal/county officials participate in training sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association or the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.
Min5	The local government uses the Guiding Principals contained in the Northwest Georgia Regional Plan as guidance for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision or addressing the Regional Issues and Opportunities.
Min6	The local government uses the General Policies and Protection Measures in the <i>Northwest Georgia Regionally Important Resource Plan</i> when making decisions that affect Regionally Important Resources.
Min7	The local government complies with the <i>Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-3, for Developments of Regional Impact</i> .
Min8	A hazard mitigation plan approved by the Georgia Emergency Management Agency has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.
Min9	The local government has the ability to send and receive electronic communications.

Local governments have three years from the adoption date of the Regional Plan to achieve the Minimum Standard requirements or risk losing Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. If a local government fails to achieve the Minimum Standard within the three-year period, the Regional Commission must notify the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) immediately for appropriate action. The Regional Commission and DCA will provide technical and training assistance to local governments, as needed, to help them achieve the Minimum Standard

Excellence Standard

The Excellence Standard is based on a “point system” whereby a local government is asked to consider a menu of possible activities (best practices) to achieve a threshold of points. Each recommended Excellence Standard activity is assigned a value of 1, 2, or 3 points based on its complexity of accomplishment and/or its consistency with the Regional Plan. The NWGRC recognizes that local governments in the region have different needs and capacities. Consequently, the Excellence Standard threshold is established at three different levels: basic (Tier 1), intermediate (Tier 2), and advanced (Tier 3). The Excellence Standard levels (tiers) and corresponding thresholds are as follows:

Tiers / Levels	Excellence Standard Thresholds
Tier 1 (Basic Level) – Municipalities with a population of less than 3,000; counties with a population of less than 30,000	Tier 1 local governments must achieve 75 total points, with at least 7 points coming from each of the seven categories.
Tier 2 (Intermediate Level) - Municipalities with a population of 3,000 to 9,999; counties with a population 30,000 to 69,999.	Tier 2 local governments must achieve 150 total points, with at least 13 points coming from each of the seven categories.
Tier 3 (Advanced Level) - Municipalities with a population of 10,000 or greater; counties with a population of 70,000 or greater	Tier 3 local governments must achieve 225 total points, with at least 20 points coming from each of the seven categories.

Each recommended Excellence Standard activity a local government implements will count toward achieving the appropriate Excellence Standard threshold indicated above. Any local government that attains the appropriate threshold may be awarded recognition as a “Regional Steward” for its accomplishments and will be eligible for special incentives identified by the Department of Community Affairs. The menu of Excellence Standard activities, categorized by various planning elements, is as follows:

Economic Development

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc1.1	We are a Certified Work Ready Community (Governor's Office of Workforce Development program).	2
Exc1.2	We are an Entrepreneur Friendly Community (Georgia Department of Economic Development program).	2
Exc1.3	We support or encourage a Buy Local campaign.	1
Exc1.4	We have developed a how-to guide for starting a local business.	2
Exc1.5	We have a website with business information.	2
Exc1.6	Our ordinances are available on-line, on our website or another website such as municode.com.	1
Exc1.7	We host an annual business resource fair.	2
Exc1.8	We are actively involved with a chamber of commerce.	1
Exc1.9	We have conducted a Business Retention and Expansion Process (BREP) Survey, or an Existing Industry Program (EIP) Survey in the last five years.	2
Exc1.10	We have an Urban Redevelopment Plan (URP) per O.C.G.A. 36-61-1.	2
Exc1.11	We participate in the Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) under the Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education.	1
Exc1.12	We meet all Certified Literate Community Program (CLCP) county goals.	2
Exc1.13	At least one of our staff or elected officials has attended the Georgia Academy training offered by the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.	2
Exc1.14	Our downtown development directors (board members) are all certified (if positions are applicable).	2
Exc1.15	We have a written inventory of existing businesses.	2
Exc1.16	We have a written inventory of sites and buildings available for commercial and manufacturing development or redevelopment.	3
Exc1.17	We are a Main Street Community or a Better Hometown Community.	2
Exc1.18	We have an Enterprise Zone or similar program that offers incentives such as tax or fee exemptions to attract new business.	3
Exc1.19	We have an Opportunity Zone (Georgia tax credit program) in our jurisdiction.	3
Exc1.20	We have a business incubator program.	3
Exc1.21	We regularly conduct a Labor Market Information (LMI) Analysis to identify industry sectors best suited to a local community's available workforce, and what training might be required to attract potential employers.	3
Exc1.22	We participate in multi-county economic development efforts.	1

Economic Development, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc1.23	We have a Neighborhood Watch program in our community to help prevent crime and vandalism.	2
Exc1.24	We have a unified development code (all our ordinances relating to development are in one place), to help streamline the development process.	2
Exc1.25	We have a GDOT-designated scenic byway.	2
Exc1.26	We have developed a detailed industry recruitment strategy or plan, including the process for creating a qualified workforce to serve current and future regional industries.	3
Exc1.27	We have developed an existing business retention plan or program.	3
Exc1.28	We participate in regional tourism efforts (e.g. promotional materials).	1
Exc1.29	We utilize way-finding signage for tourism, shopping district(s), downtown, etc.	2
Exc1.30	We are a Camera Ready Community.	2
Exc1.31	We support downtown efforts through promotion and attendance at downtown events.	1
Exc1.32	We have participated in the Department of Economic Development Tourism Resource Team Program.	2

Housing

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc2.1	We have a written housing plan or strategy.	2
Exc2.2	We have a written housing inventory.	2
Exc2.3	We have a written neighborhood redevelopment plan.	3
Exc2.4	We streamline the review process, or otherwise provide incentives to developers, for mixed-income housing developments that include housing for low and moderate income households.	3
Exc2.5	We have a housing trust fund to provide a stable source of revenue reserved solely for affordable homes.	3
Exc2.6	We have tax exempt programs for mixed-income developments and low income home owners.	2
Exc2.7	We participate in the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH) program.	3
Exc2.8	Our zoning ordinance allows very small lot sizes (1/4 acre or smaller) for single-family houses.	2
Exc2.9	Our staff or elected officials attend housing training annually.	1

Housing, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc2.10	In some cases, we allow manufactured housing to be taxed as real estate and not as personal property.	2
Exc2.11	Our zoning ordinance has an inclusionary provision that requires developers to make a percentage of housing units in new residential developments available to low and moderate income households.	3
Exc2.12	We have a community-based organization that provides credit counseling.	2
Exc2.13	We have, or are a member of, a housing authority.	2
Exc2.14	We have made demonstrable efforts to stimulate infill housing development in existing neighborhoods.	2
Exc2.15	We have adopted and implemented an ordinance that facilitates the cleanup, repair, and/or demolition of unsafe or abandoned properties.	3
Exc2.16	We conduct periodic Housing Assessments to determine existing conditions and current and future needs.	2
Exc2.17	We have established recognition programs such as "Home of the Month" or "Yard of the Month."	2
Exc2.18	We participate in public/private partnerships such as Habitat for Humanity.	2
Exc2.19	We have established or participate in a Land Bank Authority	3

Natural and Cultural Resources

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc3.1	We have adopted and enforce the Part V Environmental ordinances to provide protection for wetlands, steep slopes, groundwater recharge areas, river corridors, and water supply watersheds (as applicable to our jurisdiction).	3
Exc3.2	As required under the Georgia Water Stewardship Act, beginning in July 2012, we will require sub-metering in new multi-unit buildings so that each unit will receive consumption reports and have incentive to practice conservation measures.	2
Exc3.3	As required under the Georgia Water Stewardship Act, beginning in January 2011, we will restrict outdoor irrigation to the hours between 4pm to 10am.	2
Exc3.4	We organize or participate in a stream clean-up program such as Adopt-A-Stream or Rivers Alive.	2
Exc3.5	We have adopted and implemented a historic preservation ordinance and have an active historic preservation commission.	2
Exc3.6	We have a locally designated historic district.	3
Exc3.7	We are a certified local government under the Georgia Historic Preservation Division.	1

Natural and Cultural Resources, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc3.8	We have a Georgia/National Register listed or nominated property or properties.	2
Exc3.9	We have and enforce a tree ordinance.	2
Exc3.10	We have an area-specific plan (such as a downtown development plan) to address a specific part of our jurisdiction.	3
Exc3.11	We have an environmental resource inventory that maps the community's environmentally sensitive areas (such as floodplains, wetlands, significant stands of old growth trees, etc.) in order to make rational decisions about areas best suited to set aside as open space, or for areas of development.	2
Exc3.12	We support a local environmental conservation organization that champions issues.	1
Exc3.13	We are a Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliate.	1
Exc3.14	We adopted administrative procedures to enforce the state minimum standard building codes (Building, Residential, Fire, Plumbing, Mechanical, Fuel Gas, Electric and Energy Conservation).	3
Exc3.15	We adopted one or more permissive codes (International Property Maintenance Code, or International Existing Building Code).	2
Exc3.16	We have developed and/or maintain a comprehensive inventory of cultural, archaeological, and historic resources.	3
Exc3.17	We have developed a local process to evaluate natural, cultural, and historic resources identified in the Regionally Important Resources Plan during the land development process.	2
Exc3.18	We integrate cultural and historic resources with heritage tourism efforts.	1
Exc3.19	We have developed and adopted ordinances that encourage developers to protect open space, natural resources, and wildlife habitat.	3
Exc3.20	We have adopted and implemented a water conservation ordinance or policy.	3
Exc3.21	We have monitored impaired streams and rivers to determine the pollution sources and implemented mitigation strategies.	3

Community Facilities and Services

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc4.1	We require connection to public water and sewer systems for new construction where they are available, and at the natural time of replacement when septic systems fail [in our urban areas].	2
Exc4.2	We have water and sewer revenues that adequately cover the maintenance and operation of the systems (see Environmental Protection Agency's Environmental Finance Center).	3

Community Facilities and Services, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc4.3	Our clerk is certified by the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Georgia Certification Program for Municipal and County Clerks).	2
Exc4.4	Our municipal elected officials have each obtained certification at one of four levels (Recognition, Achievement, Excellence, Distinction) through GMA's Municipal Leadership Institute.	2
Exc4.5	Our county commissioner(s) have obtained and maintain at least Core Certification through the ACCG Lifelong Learning Academy.	2
Exc4.6	Our chief of police is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.7	Our emergency medical technicians and paramedics are all certified (if positions are applicable).	2
Exc4.8	Our gas operators are all certified (if positions are applicable).	1
Exc4.9	Our firefighters are all certified (if positions are applicable).	2
Exc4.10	Our landfill operator is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.11	Our municipal court judge is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.12	Our law enforcement officers are all certified (if positions are applicable).	1
Exc4.13	Our wastewater lab analyst is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.14	Our wastewater operator is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.15	Our water operator is certified (if position is applicable).	1
Exc4.16	We have a written maintenance and replacement plan for infrastructure (water, sewer, electric, etc.).	3
Exc4.17	We have a written utility expansion plan.	3
Exc4.18	We have a written recreation plan.	3
Exc4.19	We have a searchable, up-to-date inventory of private wells and septic systems in our jurisdiction.	2
Exc4.20	We require new development to provide a storm water mitigation and management plan.	3
Exc4.21	We operate our utilities as enterprise funds.	2
Exc4.22	We have a capital improvement program (CIP) for improving public facilities.	2
Exc4.23	We have developed and adopted a Capital Improvements Element (CIE) according to state law.	1
Exc4.24	We receive funds from an approved special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST).	1
Exc4.25	We make maintenance of existing infrastructure a priority before extending new infrastructure into additional areas.	3

Community Facilities and Services, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc4.26	We support youth activities or facilities.	2
Exc4.27	We report to the National Fire Incident Reporting System.	2
Exc4.28	Our local land development ordinances and standards discourage the use of individual lot septic systems for developments that exceed a density threshold of one dwelling unit per acre.	3
Exc4.29	Our local land development ordinances and standards prohibit the installation of new septic systems within 100 feet of any river and within 50 feet of any state water body.	3
Exc4.30	We have developed an inspection, maintenance, and monitoring program for private septic systems.	3
Exc4.31	We have developed and implemented a water quality monitoring program.	3
Exc4.32	We have adopted and implemented a stormwater management plan and/or ordinance.	3
Exc4.33	We partner with local boards of education to identify new school locations in areas connected by appropriate infrastructure.	2
Exc4.34	We have developed, adopted, and implemented plans to protect and create public greenspaces such as parks, greenways, and other recreational facilities.	2
Exc4.35	We provide educational information to property owners on the value of connecting to a public or community water/wastewater system when available or nearby.	2
Exc4.36	We have or participate in a recycling program.	2
Exc4.37	We have a "pay per throw" (unit-based or variable rate) structure for solid waste disposal so households are charged according to the amount of waste disposed.	2
Exc4.38	We have a solid waste management plan, prepared or updated within the last 10 years, that includes, as a minimum, a waste disposal stream analysis; waste reduction, collection, disposal, land limitation, and education and public involvement elements; and an implementation strategy.	3
Exc4.39	We have developed and implemented active recreation after school programs.	2
Exc4.40	We have developed and implemented or actively support a community youth leadership or mentoring program.	2
Exc4.41	We have developed and implemented incentives to increase high school graduation rates.	2
Exc4.42	We have developed and implemented a seamless education model to ensure that all students progress smoothly through the education systems and into the workforce.	3

Intergovernmental Coordination

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc5.1	Our department heads actively review the comprehensive plan community work program at least semi-annually.	2
Exc5.2	We develop our comprehensive plan with the other local governments in our county.	1
Exc5.3	We have a fully functional website that is regularly updated.	2
Exc5.4	We can provide evidence of working jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, natural resource protection, transportation, air quality, etc.).	3
Exc5.5	We have developed active partnerships with state and/or federal agencies in addressing regional issues.	3
Exc5.6	We provide input and feedback, as applicable, during the review process of Developments of Regional Impact.	2
Exc5.7	We update and amend the Service Delivery Strategy when changes occur.	2
Exc5.8	We have established formal agreements (one or more) with neighboring jurisdictions for sharing services, resources, or facilities.	3
Exc5.9	We participate regularly in Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia (BWNWGA), the regional bicycle and pedestrian task force.	3
Exc5.10	We appoint a Board of Education member to actively participate on the Planning Commission.	2
Exc5.11	We participate in quarterly meetings with the Board of Education and local governments.	1
Exc5.12	We participate in the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership.	3
Exc5.13	We are implementing the recommendations contained in the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Plan, Middle Chattahoochee Regional Water Plan, or Metropolitan North Georgia Planning District's Water Resources Plans, as appropriate.	3

Transportation

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc6.1	We require sidewalk connectivity.	2
Exc6.2	We have employed traffic calming measures (e.g., raised crosswalks, narrower traffic lanes, fewer lanes, on-street parking, bump-outs, pedestrian refuges, and landscaped medians) in our downtown and traditional neighborhoods.	3
Exc6.3	We require development of sidewalks and multipurpose paths in new subdivisions over a certain size.	2
Exc6.4	We have a bicycle and pedestrian master plan.	3

Transportation, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc6.5	We have a walking awareness and promotion program.	2
Exc6.6	We participate in the Georgia Safe Routes to School program.	3
Exc6.7	We have provided safe, adequate, and well-designed bicycle facilities, such as designated bike lanes, pavement markings, signage, intersection crossings, and bike racks.	3
Exc6.8	We have a designated path for joggers, bicyclists, and/or pedestrians that serves a valuable recreational purpose and/or serves as a transportation alternative.	2
Exc6.9	We require connectivity between parking lots where appropriate.	2
Exc6.10	We allow shared parking in commercial areas.	2
Exc6.11	We participate in a public transit program.	3
Exc6.12	We promote alternative transportation modes by holding special events, such as "Bike to Work Day," "Walk to School Day," or "Share the Ride Day" to demonstrate the benefits of using alternatives to the single-occupant automobile to get around our community.	2
Exc6.13	We have developed and implemented polices/ordinances/plans that encourage or promote street connectivity and improve access and mobility.	2
Exc6.14	We initiate local transportation improvements consistent with all existing bicycle and pedestrian plans.	2
Exc6.15	We employ access management techniques for public roads and to provide incentives for private roads.	2
Exc6.16	We have prepared a local Transit Assessment and/or prepared and adopted a Transit Development Plan (TDP).	3
Exc6.17	We participate in regional transportation-related forums that focus on multi-modal transportation approaches.	1
Exc6.18	We participate in regional transit initiatives.	2
Exc6.19	We have adopted a local Right-of-Way Protection Plan.	2
Exc6.20	We have implemented local road improvements consistent with an existing transportation plan.	2
Exc6.21	We provide incentives for private roads to be paved and constructed per local road standards and provide for maintenance through homeowner's associations.	3

Land Use

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc7.1	We have a zoning ordinance or development code in place that is regularly updated to reflect the community vision.	2
Exc7.2	Our zoning ordinance allows accessory housing units by right (mother-in-law suites, carriage houses, garage apartments, etc.).	2
Exc7.3	Our zoning ordinance allows mixed uses (such as allowing residential and commercial together in the same district).	2
Exc7.4	Our zoning ordinance allows planned unit developments (PUDs).	2
Exc7.5	Our zoning ordinance accommodates the reuse of closed, decommissioned, or obsolete (greyfields) uses.	2
Exc7.6	Our zoning ordinance includes manufactured home compatibility standards that ensure architectural compatibility of manufactured homes with adjacent single-family residences.	2
Exc7.7	Our zoning ordinance has a floating or more permissive overlay zone to provide greater flexibility.	2
Exc7.8	Our zoning ordinance requires that new infill development is compatible with its neighborhood and maintains the harmony and character of existing areas.	3
Exc7.9	We have subdivision regulations.	2
Exc7.10	We have growth boundaries to attempt to control sprawl.	3
Exc7.11	We have adopted and implemented a landscaping ordinance.	2
Exc7.12	We have a process or procedure to allow construction on existing substandard lots.	1
Exc7.13	We provide incentives for green subdivision design, such as conservation or cluster subdivisions.	3
Exc7.14	We have an impact fee ordinance.	2
Exc7.15	We require or provide incentives for new development/redevelopment to pursue LEED certification for "green" site planning, construction, and post-construction practices.	3
Exc7.16	We require that new developments consider and accommodate upstream stormwater runoff and do not negatively impact downstream areas.	2
Exc7.17	We require agricultural buffers where non-agricultural land abuts agricultural land.	2
Exc7.18	We have developed, adopted, and implemented policies and regulations to preserve agricultural land and activities.	3
Exc7.19	We have a certified code enforcement officer.	1
Exc7.20	We participate in annual code enforcement training.	1
Exc7.21	We require our planning commissioners and staff to attend training at least annually.	1

Land Use, cont.

Number	Excellence Standard Activity	Points
Exc7.22	We have an annual meeting of the planning commission and elected officials.	1
Exc7.23	We have adopted and enforce design guidelines for new construction.	3
Exc7.24	We participate in the National Flood Insurance Program by enforcing a floodplain management ordinance that meets or exceeds FEMA requirements to reduce the risk of flooding.	3
Exc7.25	We have a legal sign ordinance.	2
Exc7.26	We analyze the financial impacts of growth before allowing residential development (subdivisions) over a certain size.	2
Exc7.27	We have developed, adopted, and implemented design overlay ordinances for important gateways, corridors, and city center areas.	3
Exc7.28	We have a litter prevention ordinance.	2
Exc7.29	We have developed, adopted, and implemented standards or ordinances that require development to minimize effective impervious area (i.e., allow low impact development techniques that minimize the quantity and improve the quality of runoff).	3
Exc7.30	We plan for development to locate where infrastructure and services already exist.	3
Exc7.31	We have a geographic information system (GIS) that utilizes in-house staff or a third party.	2
Exc7.32	We have a GIS that is shared with other local government entities such as fire and police, public works, etc.	1
Exc7.33	We have GIS-generated products that are available to the public.	2
Exc7.34	We have developed GIS data for address points and/or building footprints.	1
Exc7.35	We participate in Federal Emergency Management Agency's Community Rating System (CRS) program to reduce flood losses, facilitate accurate insurance ratings, and promote the awareness of flood insurance.	2

The point values of recommended activities and the Excellence Standard thresholds will be reviewed periodically and adjusted as deemed appropriate. Furthermore, additional activities may be added periodically to the Excellence Standard menu, as appropriate, to assist local governments' efforts to achieve the Regional Vision.

Strategies and Regional Work Program

The Regional Work Program identifies specific activities the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will undertake over the next five years in its effort to successfully implement the Regional Plan. The table of plan implementation activities that follows also includes specific strategies that participants other than the Regional Commission may take to implement the Regional Plan.

These implementation measures are separated into the following categories:

- **Planning and Coordination.** Activities performed by the Regional Commission to assist local governments and other regional participants to act consistently with the Regional Plan.
- **Review.** Activities performed by other participants in the region that require review and comment by the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. The findings from reviews are advisory in nature.

Planning and Coordination activities are subdivided into seven categories by planning element. Each activity includes a brief description; the timeframe for undertaking the activity; the responsible party or parties for implementing the activity; the estimated cost of implementing the activity; funding sources, if applicable; and the specific regional issue or opportunity addressed by the activity.

Planning and Coordination

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT									
Develop, improve, and promote economic development tax incentives.	X	X	X	X	X	State of Georgia	TBD	State	ED-I-1
Stimulate spin-off industries from existing economic clusters.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD, COC, Dev. Auth.	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by export trade assistance.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD, RC	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by alternative financing assistance.	X	X	X	X	X	NGCDC, Inc.; Bus. Dev. Corp; state; federal	\$130,000/yr	SBA, RLF, state, federal	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by industrial planning, engineering and other services.	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. Tech	TBD	Ga. Tech	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by business planning and other services.	X	X	X	X	X	UGA Bus. Outreach	TBD	UGA, private sector.	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by cooperative, regional marketing and recruitment of diversified business and industries.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD, Dev. Auth., COC	TBD	State, local, private sector	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by investigating the feasibility of establishing additional business incubators.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. Tech	\$20,000	State, federal, local govts., universities	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by conducting entrepreneur assistance workshops and creating entrepreneurial networks.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Bus. Outreach	\$3,000/yr	Federal	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by including entrepreneurial training in school curriculums.	X	X	X	X	X	School systems	\$250,000	School systems, federal	ED-O-1
Assist business and manufacturing to start up and/or expand in the region by implementing the NWGRC's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	State, federal, local, private	ED-O-1

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Focus on improving skills including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), inter-personal communications, and self-motivation.	X	X	X	X	X	BOE, WIA, colleges and universities	TBD	State, federal, local	ED-O-2
Identify and provide programs for those individuals with barriers to employment such as welfare, teen parents, senior citizens, disabled, and Hispanic populations.	X	X	X	X	X	Legislators, businesses, BOE, social service agencies	TBD	State, local, private, federal	ED-O-2
Facilitate occupational shifts in the region by early identification of trends and retraining workers by: (a) establishing and expanding mechanisms that facilitate matching workers with jobs; and (b) improving identification of occupational trends in the region.	X	X	X	X	X	COC, RC, Workforce Investment Act.	TBD	State, local, private, federal	ED-O-2
Work with existing post-secondary training institutions to discover gaps in services and fill these by: (a) establishing business symposiums to discuss service gaps and needed programs; (b) working with post-secondary training institutions to expand funding for facilities, programs and scholarships; (c) linking area colleges and vocational schools to provide more joint enrollment opportunities; (d) accredit technical schools so that credit can be transferred; and (e) seek interstate reciprocity for college tuition.	X	X	X	X	X	Legislators, businesses, Board of Regents, Department of Technical and Adult Education	TBD	State, local, private, federal	ED-O-2
Encourage programs for workplace remediation for persons with substandard skills by: (a) encouraging worksite GED programs; (b) fostering worksite continuing education; and (c) encouraging worksite skills improvement labs.	X	X	X	X	X	Businesses, technical schools, libraries, personnel associations	TBD	State, local, private, federal	ED-O-2
Administer Workforce Investment Act Program	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DOL	\$3,650,000	State, federal	ED-O-2
Develop and implement a Digital Economy Regional Plan in coordination with the Georgia Technology Authority.	X	X	X	X	X	GTA, RC	\$60,000	GTA	ED-O-2 ED-O-3
Prepare an Advanced Manufacturing Strategic Plan	X	X				RC	\$170,000	EDA, Ga. Tech, RC	ED-O-2 ED-O-3
Develop an outreach program to aid in the growth and development of existing industries.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD, Dev. Auths., COC	TBD	State, federal, local	ED-O-3
Develop regionally significant industrial and commercial sites with complete infrastructure in place.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD, local govts.	TBD	State, federal, local	ED-O-4

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Support the US Highway 27 Association marketing strategies.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	State, federal, local	ED-O-5
Assist local governments in planning and coordinating the extension of basic infrastructure along major transportation corridors consistent with local and regional land use plans.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$10,000/yr	State, local govts.	ED-O-5
Educate existing businesses and industries on importing and exporting opportunities.	X	X	X	X	X	GDEcD	TBD	State	ED-O-6
Seek funding and technical assistance to develop a regional and local farmers and growers group to identify solutions for training, marketing and promotion, processing, distribution and other shared needs.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Address regulations on growing, production, sales and distribution that affect local, small scale growers adversely and disproportionately from large scale commercial growers.	X	X	X	X	X	State, federal	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Develop community-level plans, strategies, and inventories to promote and protect local agriculture and local food assets.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Develop a regional food systems study of growers, suppliers, buyers, and distribution.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Support the Georgia Made, Georgia Grown initiative and assist local businesses pursuing designation.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Support the development of value added processing industries, farmer's markets and neighborhood groceries supplied by local farmers to provide fresh food in the region.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	State, federal	ED-O-7
Promote the "Historic High Country" identity as a brand for tourism development, and support the Historic High Country Travel Association and other organizations' efforts to cooperatively market and promote tourist attractions of the region.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDEcD, COC	\$30,000/yr	State, federal, local govts.	ED-O-8
Assist local governments and other entities in developing new tourist attractions in the region which capitalize on the region's historic, cultural and natural resources.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DCA, GDEcD	\$5,000/yr	State, federal, local govts.	ED-O-8

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
HOUSING									
Identify and promote financing arrangements that will allow first time home buyers an easier path to home ownership, including enhanced access to or availability of mortgage loans.	X	X	X	X	X	Local financial institutions, state, federal agencies	TBD	State, federal private sector	H-I-1
Promote greater use of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Rural Development, HUD and other agencies' programs for stimulating private sector sponsored low cost housing development in the region.	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. DCA, USDA Rural Dev., HUD, private sector	TBD	State, federal agencies	H-I-1
Conduct an inventory and analysis of local housing needs throughout the region; determine appropriate programs for addressing those needs; and provide technical assistance to implement.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$15,000/yr	State, federal, local govts.	H-I-1
Educate local officials, developers, and builders on alternative housing arrangements that may reduce the cost of housing while preserving quality standards.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DCA	5,000/yr	State, RC tech. assist.	H-I-1
Utilize State and Federal housing rehabilitation programs to preserve existing low cost housing stock for low income and elderly.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts.	TBD	State, RC tech. assist.	H-I-2
Encourage the preservation of historic homes to maintain community and neighborhood character.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., historic pres. commissions	\$5,000/yr	RC & Ga. DNR tech. assist., local govts.	H-I-2
Establish building and housing codes in communities where they do not exist to assure uniform, minimum standards for construction and maintenance of housing throughout the region.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts.	\$2,500 per community	Local govts., Ga. DCA & RC tech. assist.	H-I-2
Implement the Neighborhood Stabilization Program	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DCA, Comm. Dev. Corps	\$8,-\$10 million	State, federal agencies	H-I-3
Amend zoning ordinances and building codes as appropriate..	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., DDAs, Main Street programs	TBD	Local	H-O-1
NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES									
Educate citizens and local officials through workshops on water quality issues, current and future planning activities, and Federal and State programs.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DNR, NGWRP	\$5,000/yr	State, federal	NC-O-1

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Assist local governments with implementation of environmental protection standards for ground water recharge areas, water supply watersheds, wetlands, major river corridors, soil erosion and sediment control, and on-site sewage management systems.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$5,000/yr	State, local govts.	NC-O-1
Assist State and local governments with implementation of the Source Water Protection strategies.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. EPD	\$20,000/yr.	Ga. EPD, state, federal, local gov'ts.	NC-O-1
Assist State and local governments with implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load requirements.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. EPD	\$60,000/yr.	State, federal, local govts.	NC-O-1
Encourage coordination of water planning between water districts.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. EPD, NGWRP	\$1,000/yr.	Ga. EPD	NC-O-1
Sponsor and conduct workshops on Water Supply Watershed protection criteria and other methods of preserving these resources; and assist local governments with implementation of approved methods.	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. DCA, RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	State, local govts.	NC-O-2
Sponsor and conduct workshops on River Corridor protection criteria and other methods of preserving these resources and assist local governments, which contain protected rivers within their jurisdiction, with the preparation, adoption, and implementation of River Corridor Protection Plans.	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. DCA, RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	State, local govts.	NC-O-3
Convene and facilitate public/private partnerships such as the Conasauga River Alliance, Coosa River Basin Initiative, Coosawattee River Alliance, New Echota Rivers Alliance, and Upper Etowah River Alliance to coordinate programs for managing river corridor resources.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, RC&D councils, Nature Conservancy, local govts.	\$10,000/yr	State, federal, local govts.	NC-O-3
Sponsor and conduct workshops on Mountain Protection Act requirements and other methods of preserving these resources such as "open space preservation" techniques; and assist local governments with implementation of approved methods.	X	X	X	X	X	Ga. DCA, RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	State, local govts.	NC-O-4
Convene and facilitate public/private partnerships such as land trusts to acquire prominent views through conservation easements and similar methods.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Nature Conservancy, local govts.	\$10,000/yr	State, local govts. private land trusts	NC-O-4

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Assist local governments with development of and maintenance of greenspace plans.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$10,000/yr	Local govts.	NC-O-5
Implement the Northwest Georgia Greenspace Conservation and Greenway Plan recommendations.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts.	TBD	State, federal, local govts.	NC-O-5
Update the Northwest Georgia Greenspace Conservation and Greenway Plan.					X	RC	\$50,000	State, federal, local govts.	NC-O-5
Promulgate the Regional Resource Plan per Section 110-12-4-.02(4) of Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	Ga. DCA	NC-O-6
Update or revise local comprehensive plans as required to address preservation needs of regionally significant historic resources and to call for coordination were appropriate.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$10,000/yr	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Sponsor and conduct coordinated planning workshops concerning the preservation and protection of the region's large, rural historic districts, such as the Etowah Valley Historic District and McLemore Cove.				X	X	RC, local govts., Ga. DNR, nonprofits	\$2,000/yr	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Encourage the development of preservation master plans for rural historic districts, battlefields and other regionally significant resources with serious or complex preservation needs including historic county courthouse buildings.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DNR, local govts.	\$2,500/yr	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Offer preservation technical assistance to all local governments and nonprofit owners of regionally significant historic resources and provide them with "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties".	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DNR	\$2,500/yr	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Provide technical assistance to local governments desiring to develop and implement local regulatory measures to protect historic resources.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts., Ga. DNR	\$10,000/yr	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Encourage public-private collaborations to acquire significant cultural properties for preservation or use as parks and/or tourist attractions.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, state, local govts.	TBD	State, local, federal	NC-O-6
Plan for the preservation of the region's historic districts and related properties.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, state, local govts.	TBD	State, local, federal	NC-O-6

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES									
More or better quality parks and recreation facilities and programs and greater availability of youth activities	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., Ga. DNR	TBD	State, federal, local	CF-I-1
Support and participate in the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts.	\$1,500/yr. for ea. local govt.	Local	CF-O-1
Provide administrative support to the Coosa-North Georgia Regional Water Planning Council.	X	X	X	X	X	NWGRC, GMRC	\$35,000/yr.	Ga. EPD	CF-O-1
Implement the Regional Water Plans prepared by the Regional Water Planning Councils.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., Ga. EPD	TBD	Local govts., Ga. EPD	CF-O-1
Be an active participant in the allocations of water resources in the Chattahoochee, Coosa, Tallapoosa and Tennessee river basins.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts., Ga. DNR	\$5,000/yr	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Coordinate with DNR, Corps of Engineers, adjoining state agencies, and local governments to plan and develop regional (multi-jurisdictional) water supply and storage facilities.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts., Ga. DNR	\$5,000/yr	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Encourage local governments to undertake long range capital improvements planning for expanding water distribution services commensurate with planned growth and development.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	RC, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Assist local governments in maintaining and/or updating service delivery strategies that promote multi-jurisdictional water treatment and distribution services.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	RC, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Coordinate with GA DNR adjoining state agencies and local governments to plan and develop regional (multi-jurisdictional) wastewater treatment facilities.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DNR, local govts.	\$10,000/yr.	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Encourage local governments to undertake long range capital improvements planning for expanding wastewater collection and treatment services commensurate with planned growth and development.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	State, local gov'ts	CF-O-1
Assist local governments with defining urban service areas and preparing capital improvements plans and budgets for extending services to these areas.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$20,000/yr	Local govts.	CF-O-2

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Utilize Community Work Program and Service Delivery Strategy updates as a regional coordination mechanism to assure that service providers are coordinating in their efforts to serve the region with basic infrastructure.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$5,000/yr	Local govts.	CF-O-2
Provide assistance to local governments in developing and securing financing alternatives for the extension of urban services.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$40,000/yr	State, federal, local govts.	CF-O-2
Create a partnership of telecommunications providers; business and industry, public institutions, and government to sponsor and conduct regional forums on how telecommunications technology can be used to expand economic development.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., Ga. DCA Region 1	\$5,000/yr.	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-3
Educate local governments to promote local telecommunications infrastructure such as fiber networks where such systems are lacking.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts., Ga. DCA Region 1	\$5,000/yr.	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-3
Encourage public and private sector employers to investigate the potential for Telecommuting programs.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts, Ga. DCA Region 1	\$2,500/yr	State, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-3
Encourage local governments to prepare solid waste management plans with an emphasis on multi-jurisdictional approaches.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$10,000/yr.	RC, federal, local gov'ts	CF-O-4
Promote community support of and involvement in schools through: (a) support of local and state educational priorities including new ways to finance schools; (b) encouraging increased publicity of positive side of school and personnel; and (c) encouraging community mentoring programs.	X	X	X	X	X	Local collaborative, legislators, local education foundations, COC, religious groups, RC (public service announcements)	TBD	Local gov'ts, BOE, state, private	CF-O-5
Encourage business sponsorship of schools through: (a) promoting business adoption of schools and (b) encouraging apprenticeship programs.	X	X	X	X	X	COC, civic/social organizations, trade associations, RC (information clearinghouse)	TBD	Local, private	CF-O-5

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Promote the early identification and remediation of students actually or in danger of falling behind through: (a) school-based family support services; (b) expanded services for "at risk" students and provide more alternative schools; (c) involvement of the judiciary with parents to reduce truancy; (d) increased birth to school age early intervention programs; (e) initiate/expand pregnancy prevention programs; and (f) encourage after school programs to promote education, self esteem and work place ethic.	X	X	X	X	X	BOE, public health organizations, judiciary system, Family and Children Services, Head Start, religious organizations, RC (grant writing)	TBD	BOE, local gov'ts, private	CF-O-5
Promote stay in school efforts through: (a) increased involvement of business community in dropout prevention programs; (b) developing improved dropout tracking system; and (c) encouraging early instruction in career development.	X	X	X	X	X	BOE, Ga. DOE, COC, RC (information clearinghouse)	TBD	BOE, state, private	CF-O-5
Work with the State and local governments to address the priority needs identified in the Area Agency on Aging Plan including: (a) transportation; (b) legal assistance; (c) adult day care; (d) nutrition services; (e) health care; (f) housing and home maintenance; (g) long-term care and protective services; (h) employment; and (i) recreation/social opportunities among seniors and care givers.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DHR, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	Local, state, federal	CF-O-6
Provide advocacy role through information sharing for services and tax breaks for the elderly.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DHR	\$2,500/yr.	Local, state, federal	CF-O-6
Encourage more community based services to ensure longer independent living.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DHR	\$2,500/yr.	Local, state, federal	CF-O-6
Support additional nursing homes and home health alternatives for elderly and their families.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DHR	\$2,500/yr.	Local, state, federal	CF-O-6
Administer the Area Agency on Aging.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, Ga. DHR	\$4,300,000/yr.	Local, state, federal	CF-O-6
Work with health care service providers, local governments, and chambers of commerce to recruit physicians to underserved communities.	X	X	X	X	X	District health offices, local govts., COC, local health care providers.	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7
Educate citizens on preventative health care and wellness programs.	X	X	X	X	X	Local health care providers	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Work with health care providers, local governments and chambers of commerce to recruit additional OB/GYN physicians and general surgeons to area.	X	X	X	X	X	Local health care providers	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7
Work with health care service providers, local governments, and chambers of commerce to attract additional dental professional to area and increase capacity for indigent dental services especially for children.	X	X	X	X	X	Local health care providers	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7
Work with health care service providers, local governments and others to obtain additional geriatric care and control cost of medications for the elderly.	X	X	X	X	X	Local health care providers	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7
Work with health care service providers to improve family support and intervention services including: (a) dental services for children; (b) affordable health care insurance; (c) school based nurses; (d) additional mental health services; and (e) marriage/divorce counseling support services.	X	X	X	X	X	Local health care providers	TBD	State, local, federal	CF-O-7
Work with health care and social service providers to improve services for low-income, disabled, and homeless individuals.	X	X	X	X	X	Federal, state, local	TBD	Federal, state, local	CF-O-8
Work with health care and social service providers to improve mental health and substance abuse services.	X	X	X	X	X	Federal, state, local	TBD	Federal, state, local	CF-O-9
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION									
Provide better understanding of opportunities to cooperate/coordinate through such vehicles as a semi-annual City and County Managers' Meeting.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	RC	IC-I-1
Support existing multijurisdictional entities, such as the Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board; Area Agency on Aging Advisory Council; Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia; North Georgia Water Resources Partnership; Greater Dalton MPO, Rome-Floyd County MPO, Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO, Cartersville-Bartow County MPO, and Atlanta MPO.						Local govts., state	TBD	State, local, RC	IC-I-2
Greater Chattanooga Thrive 2055 Regional Planning Initiative	X	X	X			RC	\$20,000	RC, DCA	IC-1-2

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Increase coordination with Chambers of Commerce and economic development authorities.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, COC, Dev. Auth.	TBD	State, local	IC-O-1
TRANSPORTATION									
Coordinate with federal and state transportation agencies, the Atlanta Regional Commission (Atlanta MPO), Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO, Rome-Floyd County MPO, Greater Dalton MPO, Cartersville-Bartow County MPO, and local governments to strengthen regional transportation planning and priority setting.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$15,000/yr	State, federal, local gov'ts	T-O-1
Coordinate with transportation agencies and local governments to plan and determine feasibility of expanding alternative transportation modes such as (a) high-speed and commuter rail connecting the region to Atlanta and Chattanooga; (b) Amtrak service through region; (c) expanding services of local bus systems; and (d) linking county bus systems to existing and future mass transit system.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	State, federal, local gov'ts.	T-O-1
Support the implementation of the Georgia Department of Transportation, "Georgia Statewide Aviation System Plan."	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$5,000/yr	State, federal, local	T-O-1
Support Scenic Byways Program; assist in promoting and developing bicycle and pedestrian path plans; implement the Transportation Enhancement Program; and exercise due diligence in conducting historical and environmental impact assessments.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDOT	\$190,000/ yr	State, federal, local	T-O-1
Assist local governments with implementation of regional bike and pedestrian facilities plans; coordinate and facilitate Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDOT	\$15,000/yr	State, federal, local	T-O-1

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Seek and establish a Rural Planning Organization process at each Regional Commission consistent with Federal Highway Administration rules and regulations. Such a process would include: preparing and maintaining a long range transportation plan; providing technical assistance for transportation plan implementation; and coordination with GDOT, MPOs, Federal Highway Administration, and other planning entities.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDOT	\$160,000/yr	State, federal, local	T-O-1
Promote improved east-west transportation corridors within the region.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDOT	TBD	State, federal, local	T-O-1
Encourage regional transportation projects through public-private partnerships.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, GDOT	TBD	State, federal, local	T-O-1
LAND USE									
Prepare and update the <i>Northwest Georgia Regional Plan, 2013-2033</i> .	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$20,000	RC, Ga. DCA	LU-O-1
Prepare and update local comprehensive plans.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	TBD	RC, Ga. DCA, local govts.	LU-O-2
Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of property with current infrastructure.	X	X	X	X	X	Local govts.	TBD	Local govts.	LU-I-1
Devise and promote the use of incentives in local development regulations to encourage developers to utilize open space conservation land development practices, and assist local governments with implementation.	X	X	X	X	X	RC, local govts.	\$10,000/yr	State, local govts.	LU-I-2

Review

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Initiate the local plan review process, coordinate the review, and take action on local government plans (comprehensive plans, capital improvement elements, CIE updates, or plan amendments) pursuant to DCA Rules, Chapter 110-12-1 and additional standards in the DCA contract scope of services.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	Ga. DCA	-

Activity Description	Timeframe					Responsible Party	Estimated Cost	Funding Source(s)	Issue / Opp Addressed
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017				
Review all Developments of Regional Impact within the region, adhering to DCA Rules, Chapter 110-12-3.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$10,000/yr.	Ga. DCA	-
Review Developments of Regional Impact located within one mile of any area included on the Regionally Important Resources Map and recommend such developments be designed in accordance with the adopted best practices.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	Ga. DCA	-
Provide Section 106/environmental review advisory comments for GDOT projects, telecommunications structures, CDBG projects, and other projects, as requested, regarding their potential effects on cultural resources.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$4,000/yr.	GDOT; Ga. DNR	-
Review local government applications for EDA funding for consistency with the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).	X	X	X	X	X	RC	\$2,000/yr.	EDA	-
Review and comment on long-range transportation plans for consistency with the Regional Plan.	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	GDOT	-
Review and comment on applications for federal or state grant/loan/permit assistance by local governments and other applicants within the region in accordance with provisions of the Georgia Intergovernmental Consultation Process (Executive Order 12372).	X	X	X	X	X	RC	TBD	Ga. DCA	-

Evaluation and Monitoring

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission will undertake evaluation and monitoring activities to ensure that the regional plan is accomplishing the desired results. These activities will include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Conduct Quality Growth Effectiveness assessments of each local government in the region to determine if they are achieving prescribed performance standards. The Regional Commission will use the Department of Community Affairs Quality Community Objectives assessment tool for this purpose. These assessments will be conducted no less frequently than once every two years and may be conducted in conjunction with plan implementation assistance meetings that include a discussion of how the local government is progressing with achieving the performance standards identified in the Regional Plan..
2. Survey regional leaders as to whether the Strategies identified in the Regional Plan are being implemented. For this survey of regional leaders, the Regional Commission will consult annually with the NWGRC Council's Regional Planning Committee.
3. Survey and evaluate changes and developments in the region, in consultation with the Regional Planning Committee, to determine whether the plan is being effectively implemented and having the desired impact on regional development patterns. Based on this survey and evaluation, NWGRC staff will identify impediments to plan implementation and possible solutions or needed amendments of the Regional Plan.

An Evaluation and Monitoring Report will be included in the annual update of the Regional Work Program and will consist of the following information:

- A description of the evaluation and monitoring activities undertaken by the NWGRC (during the fiscal year just concluded) to measure the effectiveness of the Regional Plan;
- The results of the evaluation and monitoring process, assessing the effectiveness of the Regional Plan and identifying any modifications needed to enhance its effectiveness; and
- A list of any plan amendments required as a result of the evaluation and monitoring findings.