

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 1989 Georgia General Assembly enacted House Bill 215, the Georgia Planning Act, requiring all local governments to prepare a comprehensive plan in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures promulgated by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, was prepared in accordance with the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures; and

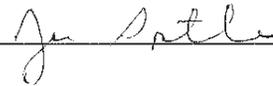
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia that the Comprehensive Plan Update for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, dated 2023, as approved by the Georgia Department Community Affairs is hereby adopted, and furthermore, that the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission shall be notified of said adoption within seven (7) days of the adoption of this resolution.

Adopted this 2 day of May, 2023.

Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia



Kelly Girtz, Mayor



Jean Spratlin, Clerk



2023
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR THE ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY
UNIFIED GOVERNMENT

2023 Comprehensive Plan Update





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NOTE: All images included in this document are sourced from ACCGov.

Introduction

The Athens-Clarke County Unified Government hereby submits its official 2023 Comprehensive Plan. This was a collaborative effort amongst staff, politicians, professionals, non-profits, and of course, the residents of Athens-Clarke County. The Unified Government believes it has assembled a document that not only meets the minimum criteria as required by O.C.G.A 50-8-1 et seq, but also exceeds those standards when coupled with supplemental reports and studies.

The document that follows is meant to outline a collective strategy going forward that makes every attempt to ensure the continued health, safety, and general welfare of the community. Building on the Envision Athens planning effort, which had significant influence on the 2018 Comprehensive Plan, we have fulfilled our obligation to you, the citizenry, and the State of Georgia, in complying with the standards put forth for planning at the local government level.

Preparation of the 2023 Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan began in January 2022. Throughout this time, Planning Department Staff have led an effort always meant to be driven by the public through various means of input. Together, with identified stakeholders and an appointed Steering Committee, Staff has assembled a document that meets the standards administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

Over the course of this planning process it was repeatedly articulated that the community strives to maintain the local character that embodies both people and place. Just as important, however, is the continued support for equitable services and opportunities amongst the entire population and across the entire geographic area. Sustainability, in all facets of life, will likely become the most important aspect in planning for our future. With that, there is already a concerted effort to implement alternative transportation initiatives both in modes and design.



“Not one sentence or statement is able to capture the entire feeling of what Athens-Clarke County is or strives to be..”



Introduction

Poverty is still a major reality for thousands of Athenians, and touches all ages and races. By securing well-paying jobs for everyone, we can combat this challenge while also providing additional income that could in turn help residents pursue better housing. Such housing should be affordable though, which was a common call amongst the public for this plan.

The 2023 Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan is a living document that will not cease in its formulation simply because it achieves an associated due date. This plan will remain open to interpretation, discussion and debate, all while undergoing periodic amendments as circumstances arise and our future takes shape.

As you review the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, you will notice the document is arranged in a manner consistent with the standards and procedures stated by the DCA. Required elements include a Vision Statement, Goals, Policies, Needs and Opportunities, as well as a Community Work Program. Additional required elements, or those applicable to Athens-Clarke County based on mandated thresholds, include Economic Development, Land Use, Transportation, and Housing.

Athens-Clarke County is a community of more than 130,000 citizens in northeast Georgia, about 65 miles east of Atlanta. The smallest geographic county in Georgia, Athens-Clarke County measures roughly 120 square miles in area. A progressive and vibrant community that is home to the University of Georgia, Athens-Clarke County is nationally recognized for its quality of life, state-of-the-art educational opportunities, endless outdoor recreation, and cultural amenities such as art, entertainment, music, and dining. Athens-Clarke County is the most urbanized area in the region, and as such, can be considered the center of employment, culture, education, and business activity. The unified city and county hold a rich history in manufacturing and maintain a strong industrial base. The mix of businesses is diverse and includes both large companies and entrepreneurial startups. The largest sectors

both large companies and entrepreneurial startups. The largest sectors of business activity include government, education, and healthcare. As is common amongst urbanized areas, demographic statistics suggest Athens-Clarke County is also struggling to ease the impacts of poverty within a significant percentage of the population.

The following information is reflective of Athens-Clarke County as a whole, including the City of Winterville and those parts of the City of Bogart. Although these two municipalities are not a focus of this comprehensive plan, their jurisdiction within Athens-Clarke County must be observed, analyzed, and included for purposes of research, data, and overall findings of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan.

Altogether, the Unified Government is determined to produce a plan that meets or exceeds all requirements established by the State of Georgia for local comprehensive planning. As the reader progresses through the document, careful consideration was taken to ensure a clear, concise, and mindful format that portrays the needed elements of the plan.



Committees

Stakeholders

The following community partners, agencies, and institutions were consulted in the development of the various elements of the Comprehensive Plan, and they will play key roles in the Plan's successful implementation:

List of Stakeholders:

- Athens Area Chamber of Commerce
- Athens Area Home Builders Association
- Athens Technical College
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Athens
- Clarke County School District
- Envision Athens
- Family Connection-Communities in Schools of Athens
- Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center
- St. Mary's Hospital
- University of Georgia

Steering Committee

The development of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan for Athens-Clarke County was guided and informed by a dedicated group of resident volunteers appointed by the Mayor's Office to serve in this capacity. This group met frequently beginning in January 2022, and their leadership in the creation of this plan made this process possible. Membership of the Steering Committee includes representatives from the Athens-Clarke County Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, neighborhood leaders, community-based non-profit agencies, industry, education, and development professionals.

Steering Committee:

- Sara Beresford
- Kristen Morales
- Taylor Pass
- Monique Sanders
- Joey Tucker
- Grant Whitworth
- Commissioner Patrick Davenport

Community Goals

Vision Statement

While Athens has an established music and arts scene and close ties with the state's flagship university, in recent decades the city has evolved into the economic driver for Northeast Georgia. Health care, manufacturing, tourism and small businesses are now tightly woven into the fabric of Athens, giving the Classic City a diverse population and economy.

Despite the challenges associated with growth and change, Athens-Clarke County remains steadfast in its commitment to improve the health, equity and prosperity for all residents and to preserve our natural and cultural resources. We also recognize that our community expects a responsive government that follows a collaborative and open process of public decision-making.

The Athens-Clarke County Comprehensive Plan is a 20-year vision for our future. This Plan guides decisions on land use, transportation, and county investments in parks and open space, transit, utilities, and other public infrastructure and services. The Plan reflects our commitment to proactively manage and embrace growth while maintaining our core values of race and social equity, environmental stewardship, economic opportunity and security, and community connectedness.

Overview and Organization

Athens-Clarke County has identified a list of Community Goals / Needs and Opportunities to meet over the course of the next 20 years. This list is not in order of importance as all items are necessary for the continued success of the community. Needs and Opportunities, as well as corresponding Goals, Strategies, and Policies have been highlighted for each of the (15) topics, and grouped with the associated category as identified within the Community Assessment of the Envision Athens study. The five common categories are **"People, Prosperity, Place, Vitality, and Foundation"**.

The **"People"** category revolves around demographics, future projections, and the diversity of our residents. This in turn has a direct impact on services provided to improve health, safety, and general welfare. **"Prosperity"** examines common themes like economics, but also the quality of education. **"Place"** refers to the built and natural environment, including how land and structures are used. **"Vitality"** highlights the liveliness of the community, or how aspects can invigorate the daily outlook of citizens and visitors through cultural and civic engagement. Finally, **"Foundation"** touches upon the oft over-looked basis from which a community is physically built. This may include infrastructure and transportation, but also the system of government.

Each of the five categories includes a list of associated topics. These topics are broad in nature, but give indication as to the specific needs, opportunities, goals, strategies and policies directly affecting the subject. Deliberate thought was given to how each topic's information is arranged, beginning with a brief description of the topic and a list of relevant needs and opportunities. A goal was then decided upon, followed by strategies for achieving it. Finally, policies were formulated that will ensure the goal is met. Each particular aspect of this section is further described as follows.

Community Goals / Needs and Opportunities

During the public engagement process, clarity was warranted with regard to the definition of what exactly a “need” or “opportunity” is, and so staff took the initiative to rename and clarify the procedure as “ideas and obstacles”. Athens-Clarke County has used the (15) topics for dividing the needs and opportunities of the community.

- **Health**
- **Safety**
- **Social Services**
- **Education**
- **Economic Development**
- **Housing**
- **Land Use**
- **Neighborhoods**
- **Agriculture**
- **Environment**
- **Arts and Culture**
- **Civic Engagement**
- **Transportation**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Government Operations**

Each specific list of needs and opportunities is meant to assist in achieving desired goals by providing examples of issues that could benefit from proposed policy or be corrected from it. Needs and Opportunities differ from Goals, Strategies, and Policies by purposely providing specific scenarios or examples within the community. Whereas Goals, Strategies, and Policies can often be broad in an effort to be far-reaching across the spectrum of the county, Needs and Opportunities provide the many detailed possibilities for improvement. Through SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, the community was able to develop current and future scenarios that can be specifically discussed and addressed over the next 20 years.

All ideas and obstacles identified during this process were given proper attention, but those needs and opportunities of high priority, typically ones that demand attention within the next five years, have been highlighted through associated projects for implementation within the corresponding Community Work Program. Therefore, the following topics detail a complete list of needs and opportunities without consideration of rank.

The Goals are broad statements arranged by topic. Those identified are aspirational in nature, setting a course for the Unified Government to in turn implement actions as they relate to guiding the community’s future. Each of the Goal statements are followed by a series of Strategies that identify concepts intended to address the desired Goal. The organization and content of these Goals and related Strategies are inspired by the Envision Athens process, have been vetted through the Comprehensive Plan process, and have their aspirational roots in the legacy of the Guiding Principles previously adopted as part of the community’s last two Comprehensive Plans.

Finally, the Policies signal a commitment to achieving the Goals put forth by the community. The list of community policies for each topic were developed in association with the Goals and Strategies outlined to help address identified Needs and Opportunities. Policies stated herein were written to directly aid in completion of the Goals.

People

Strengthening the lives of citizens and visitors through Health, Safety, and Social Services.

Health

A healthy community is one that is educated about the mind and body, and has the opportunity to pursue lifestyle changes should residents choose to do so. By partnering with our local and regional health providers, Athens-Clarke County can continue to provide not only basic health needs, but advanced initiatives aimed at securing a holistic approach coupled with state-of-the-art services and technology.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Support affordable healthcare for all ages that provides regional access for patients through an adequate number of providers and associated services, equally distributed by location as based on the population served, including specialists. Zoning should be examined to account for this need.
- b. Promote awareness of associated issues involving behavioral health, development disabilities, addiction, and HIV/AIDS, among others, by eliminating stigmas and marketing available programs.
- c. Athens-Clarke County is a regional provider for healthcare in Northeast Georgia, where it has become one of the County's dominant industries. As such, focus should be maintained and/or increased in this sector to capitalize on the full potential of its offerings.
- d. Due to its larger population, the county can reach a greater number of people to promote not only healthcare, but a healthy lifestyle. This may include offering programs, incentives, and infrastructure to support healthy choices. Increasing greenspace, promoting walkability and safe cycling, and access to clean air should be included as a means to improve public health.

A goal has been identified...

- **Goal:** A culture of healthy lifestyles with inclusive access to affordable, holistic and state-of-the-art services and facilities for physical health, mental health, and general wellbeing.

People

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Identify and address mental health issues in youth.
2. Strategy: Create more opportunities and coordinate services for people moving back to the community from incarceration.
3. Strategy: Expand substance abuse and addictive disease treatment.
4. Strategy: Create a regional hub for health care to centralize health care facilities and providers.
5. Strategy: Coordinate communication on health care issues to increase the public's understanding of service providers.
6. Strategy: Create education programs to help citizens make healthy lifestyle choices.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Coordinate communication on health care issues to increase the public's understanding of service providers, translation services, and program requirements for clients.
- B. Policy: Continue to support healthy living.
- C. Policy: Create education programs to help residents make healthy lifestyle choices.
- D. Policy: Put in place preventive measures, services, and interventions to address youth mental health issues in the community.
- E. Policy: Support coordination of services for people moving back to the community from incarceration – transition programs and resources from short-term and long-term incarceration.
- F. Policy: Develop an effective mental health crisis response team.

People

Safety

Public safety protects residents from physical and financial harm while respecting constitutional rights. Our laws and efforts to uphold them will be based in part on community values and expectations. Safety will be provided through a number of methods and techniques in an effort to be fair, transparent, and successful.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Develop a street master plan and policies for pedestrian safety, including the strategic placement of lights on the same side of the street as sidewalks in an effort to promote walkability.
- b. Increase funding to advance public safety recruitment, retention, education, and higher pay.
- c. Promote responsible consumption of alcohol Downtown.
- d. Enhance a more equitable neighborhood traffic-calming program that promotes safe walkability to various destinations.
- e. Increase coordination amongst Athens-Clarke County Emergency Services to improve the safety of residents and visitors.
- f. Continuation of crime reduction through non-traditional means like community policing, volunteerism, mentorships, restorative justice, and community protection through environmental design (CPTED).
- g. Expand safety programs to reverse the role that violence is having on the community. Specifically, those initiatives aimed at reducing the sexual, financial, emotional and physical abuse upon women and children.
- h. Expand the existing Citizens Police Academy program into local schools to improve public understanding and perception of public safety.
- i. Continue to collaborate with the UGA Police Department on ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness in operations while avoiding duplication of services.

People

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Make residents and visitors feel safe in the community, whether in residential areas, public places or on transportation routes.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Develop a comprehensive Community Supervision Plan in order to support successful reintegration from incarceration to achieve productive outcomes for the individual and society.
2. Strategy: Further expand youth development programs for public safety using data from the Youth Development Task Force.
3. Strategy: Improve cyclist and pedestrian safety through educational campaigns, facility improvements, and law enforcement.
4. Strategy: Identify and evaluate ways to leverage existing and future technology to better coordinate efforts between residents and local law enforcement.
5. Strategy: Evaluate and update policies that aim to reduce traffic fatalities.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Provide and identify sufficient funding to implement ACC Police Department Strategic Vision Plan.
- B. Policy: Develop and fund retention incentives for public safety officers.
- C. Policy: Develop Fire & Emergency Services Strategic Plan.
- D. Policy: Review and enhance safety programs for at-risk populations to reduce sexual, financial, and emotional abuse.

People

Social Services

Institutions throughout the county need to support and sustain services and facilities that respond to the needs of our population, especially social welfare. Services provided assist in the daily quality of life for our residents and visitors, contributing to the community's vibrant live/work mentality.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Promote and formalize a time-bank system for trading skilled services.
- b. Reduction in the high levels of poverty throughout the community, especially for school-age children and the elderly. This issue threatens not only human life but also the character of the community.
- c. Full, life-cycle coverage for individuals in need, from childhood to adulthood to the elderly, would ensure programs and services are available to ease hunger, poverty and increase support for family welfare.
- d. Stronger focus should be placed on equity so that the most vulnerable get necessary services. There should also be an equalization of services and their distribution between the east and west sides of the county. Investigate those uses and facilities that appear to be lacking from one side of the county or the other.
- e. Expand opportunities and connections for the senior population to lend their time and expertise for the betterment of the community.
- f. Regional collaboration and contributions are key in supporting the social safety net and to avoid duplication of services. A network manager could help coordinate programs, organizations, and services. "Service fairs" could be held at targeted locations throughout the county.
- g. Additional services and programs for people experiencing homelessness to decrease the number of people found in such a situation. An increased number of facilities that go beyond nighttime shelter are needed.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Effective and accessible social service delivery that enables people to reach their full potential. The community is open to, aware and supportive of social services, and the non-profit community is connected and communicative, with increasing collaboration.

People

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Create more opportunities for job training and preparation to help address poverty, unemployment, and underemployment.
2. Strategy: Create a community that is supportive of, and provides opportunities for, individuals facing limited opportunities.
3. Strategy: Develop and expand youth development programming.
4. Strategy: Provide a framework for non-profits to collaborate, convene productively, and effectively communicate their services.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Nonprofits collaborate, convene productively, and effectively communicate services.
- B. Policy: Develop and expand accessible youth development programming such as before and after school learning and leisure options. Provide adequate and affordable child care as a similar option for those citizens with younger children seeking assistance.
- C. Policy: Address poverty by targeting unemployment and underemployment, as well as our limited ability to attract employers to Athens-Clarke County through training and preparing individuals for vocational success.
- D. Policy: Create a community that is effectively supportive of and provides accessible and productive opportunities for individuals with limited access to opportunity and who are underrepresented in quality of life indicators such as income, food security, stable housing, community inclusion, etc.
- E. Policy: Develop a clearinghouse to more easily access programs and social services.

Prosperity

Create, sustain, and advance the livelihood of citizens through Education and Economic Development.

Education

As a community, Athens-Clarke County provides educational opportunities at all levels of learning, from early childhood through high school and post-secondary education. Both public and private institutions provide a foundation for life-long learning, and the following list identifies areas to support and encourage our educational system.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Greater retention rate of quality teachers must be achieved if educational initiatives are to succeed. The local government can assist by exploring incentives like affordable housing in neighborhoods with associated schools. Additionally, teachers could be given reduced rates for Athens-Clarke County facility and program usage.
- b. Additional early childhood care, learning, and transitioning, especially for infants and toddlers, is of vital importance for establishing a sound foundation for educational success. Programs offered by the Leisure Services Department should be examined to enhance opportunities outside of the typical school day, particularly geared toward younger children.
- c. Increase the number of options for affordable childcare, and integrate healthcare services into said facilities, like schools, to ensure that all youth have access to necessary treatment.
- d. Additional after-school organizations and activities, especially those that take place at schools, can make these facilities neighborhood focal points that function as community centers after hours. This may also create opportunities for more active and engaged parents. Athens-Clarke County can assist with providing a number of varied offerings through departments like Leisure Services.
- e. The local government can help promote a more positive marketing of the school system since its perception impacts the county's ability to be a regional economic leader. Issues impacting the community are directly related to both the school system and local government from an economic development standpoint, and stronger collaboration is needed.

Prosperity

- f. Education is essential and should be provided throughout a person’s lifetime, including those individuals in need like the homeless and those willing to learn like the incarcerated. The local government must continue to offer opportunities in areas outside of the local school board’s typical realm.
- g. Through increased collaboration with all local colleges and universities, Athens-Clarke County can help promote a well-educated community and workforce while highlighting the various options for additional learning for our youth upon graduation.
- h. An increased number of internships could be offered by Athens-Clarke County departments for both high-school and college students, similar to that of the Great Promise Partnership program. Also, an organizational development certificate could be awarded to students that learn about local government functions while the local government gets an opportunity to promote its facilities through participant tours. Focus could be on the varying positions within local government that do not necessarily require advanced education, emphasizing life skills.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Effective and respected early childhood through high school education that prepares students for life, including career learning and education opportunities, traditional college, or the workforce. In general, life-long learning is highly valued, resources are widely available, equity in opportunity is improved, and success is communicated.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Provide educational programming to enhance job skills and build a home-grown workforce in Athens-Clarke County.
2. Strategy: The long-term prosperity of our community will be supported by the educational function of our parks and recreational services, public libraries, museums and other cultural amenities.
3. Strategy: Establish and maintain an effective working relationship between the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government and the Clarke County School District to select mutually beneficial locations for schools and associated land uses adjacent to school properties.
4. Strategy: Encourage constructive relationships between schools and their neighbors.

Prosperity

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Educate, train and develop young people in Athens-Clarke County so that they will graduate from high school prepared to enter the local workforce.
- B. Policy: Enhance the learning environment to provide support for the variety of student needs within our community.
- C. Policy: Support teachers through a variety of methods in order to retain quality educators who feel appreciated and valued by the larger community.

Economic Development

Athens-Clarke County strives to be one of the best places to not only live or retire, but also work. Through a resilient and diverse economic base, the community should provide a broad range of jobs, and entrepreneurial endeavors that provide an opportunity for everyone to be successful. Already an economic hub for the region, Athens-Clarke County will use its strengths and unique qualities to support existing and new enterprises, while continuing to foster a strong and capable workforce.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Athens-Clarke County has low unemployment but high poverty, which may indicate a need for higher paying, living-wage jobs.
- b. Existing zoning, geographic location, and a “no growth” attitude have seemingly affected development throughout the county by contributing to the debate over how each side and/or corridor of the county is favored.
- c. Better wayfinding is needed throughout Downtown in assisting businesses with customer attraction.
- d. “Incubator” space in general has become a possible solution for various businesses, but in particular can benefit artists and musicians by providing free studio space.
- e. Athens-Clarke County appears to be in direct competition for retail with Oconee County, leaving too many empty retail spaces. Explore and implement various incentives to help counter this trend.

Prosperity

- f. There is a need for workforce development that connects qualified talent with employers' expectations. Attracting and retaining middle income jobs should lead to a more sustainable economy.
- g. A "one-stop shop" for development services may help improve the perception of supporting local business growth and retention and bring efficiency and predictability to the development review and permitting process.
- h. Retain local residents, particularly of the younger generation, who receive an education here, and could contribute significantly to the work force in areas like government, business, and non-profit.
- i. There is a need to assist local businesses and industries with a targeted action plan for engaging the community. This in turn can also provide coordination that leverages the resources available for entrepreneurial and small-business support, encouraging an increasing trend of start-up businesses.
- j. Promote success for the local food industry in Athens.
- k. Follow-up with home occupation applicants to offer advice and guidance from the Economic Development Department.
- l. Adjust and plan for changes in technology that alter the way we shop or even travel (transportation modes).
- m. Increase the number of public-private partnerships (PPP) involving local government facilities. A first step to achieving this should involve examining government-owned land for the purpose of increasing the tax base.
- n. There is an opportunity to expand upon the strong economic base anchored by our regional healthcare activity and higher education institutions.
- o. The number of utility patents produced within Athens-Clarke County presents an opportunity for continued success, but may require the need for a dedicated research park.
- p. Athens-Clarke County has commercial and industrial building space that needs to be marketed and taken into consideration when rezoning for such uses.
- q. Thousands of workers commute into the community each day. Increasing the number of jobs will allow Athens-Clarke County to function as the career hub for the region, with workers living both in and outside of the county.

Prosperity

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Greater prosperity for the entire community – individuals, businesses and local government – through diverse, quality jobs and a ready workforce. This means that entrepreneurship and small businesses flourish in a collaborative environment, that unemployment and underemployment are reduced, and that full-time workers are able to meet daily needs and live in assured self-sufficiency (affording housing, food and life necessities).

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Continue the improvement of coordination and cooperation of Athens entities concerned with economic growth and the attraction and creation of jobs.
2. Strategy: Identify best practices used by peer communities for attracting and retaining business and industry.
3. Strategy: Improve the appeal of Downtown so that it feels like everyone's neighborhood.
4. Strategy: Actively participate in and support regional planning for growth in the twelve counties of Northeast Georgia.
5. Strategy: Promote and support the growth of the industries that make Athens unique, including music, art, food, film and other creative endeavors.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Improve coordination and cooperation between Athens entities concerned with economic growth and the attraction and creation of jobs that offer wages supporting a normal standard of living for Athens-Clarke County workers.
- B. Policy: Implement ordinances, policies, and infrastructure to address impediments to locating or expanding business and industry.

Prosperity

- C. Policy: Provide the facilities, services, and incentives necessary to attract, incubate, and grow businesses across a variety of sectors.
- D. Policy: Leverage Athens' most distinctive products, like the music scene, to further position it as a destination and brand.
- E. Policy: Create a marketing plan that will better position Athens to compete for in-state and regional leisure and convention travel.
- F. Policy: Continue building a comprehensive, entrepreneur development program to complement existing retention and attraction initiatives.
- G. Policy: Encourage the development of Downtown as a vibrant and diverse center for living, visiting, and doing business.
- H. Policy: Improve accessibility to commercial/business nodes throughout the county, with special attention to the Georgia Square Mall area and Atlanta highway corridor, Hawthorne Avenue, Downtown, the Lexington Road corridor, Epps Bridge Road, North Avenue and the Barnett Shoals corridor through Athens' East Side.

Place

Making a great place for people to live, work, or simply enjoy through housing, land use, neighborhoods, agriculture, and the environment.

Housing

Support for and preservation of a range of housing choices should be continued to contribute to our rich history and the overall character of the community. As the population continues to grow, sustainable housing will be key for both new development and revitalization to protect environmental quality and manage costs. Athens-Clarke County will foster neighborhoods and housing opportunities that address the following list.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Pursue a reduction in the minimum floor area requirement for dwellings.
- b. Obtain and direct additional rehabilitation funds for abandoned single-family homes.
- c. Allowance of in-law suites or studios for owner-occupied parcels. Examine the current definition of family and whether it is too restrictive.
- d. Infill housing should be promoted and concentrated in areas near commercial nodes, providing easy access to everyday services.
- e. Create of a Renter’s Bill of Rights. Focus on education as it pertain to rentals, specifically, providing students with information brochures that outline rental rights and responsibilities.
- f. Affordable or subsidized public housing options are too few with long waiting lists. Everyone should have a quality place to live.
- g. Regulated encampments for those in poverty that provide a safe, clean place to establish temporary housing.
- h. Plans developed in advance for the renovation and repurposing of older buildings (not necessarily designated historic).
- i. Identification of ways in which to address student housing development concerns. This includes everything from aesthetics to function to the concentrated population.

Place

- j. Monitor local data to track if the average income of households aligns with the average sales price and market rate rental for housing in terms of affordability. This strengthens the call for workforce housing, as well as affordable senior housing.
- k. Provide for a variety of housing options that reflect the diversity of the community and meet the needs of our residents, including housing for families and a diverse workforce. There is a need for quality options with a variety of types, prices, and locations.
- l. Examine options for affordable housing with regard to public servants.
- m. Explore various property tax relief options for those most financially vulnerable populations.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Housing options that meet the varied needs of the community, including housing for families and a diverse workforce. The housing stock will provide quality options with a variety of types, prices, and locations.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Increase the amount of and provide access to affordable housing.
2. Strategy: Acknowledge and develop strategies to address issues related to gentrification.
3. Strategy: Explore new options for providing additional safe housing for people experiencing homelessness.
4. Strategy: Create quality housing for seniors.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Support and expand housing rehabilitation initiatives and other programs.
- B. Policy: Create quality housing for seniors, including the possible increased use of accessory dwelling units.
- C. Policy: Identify and create incentives for multi-family developments for major redevelopment, especially mixed-income.

Place

Land Use

The Future Land Use category focuses on the physical or built environment, and advances ideas for how each parcel of land in Athens-Clarke County should be developed and used. It is important to keep in mind that land use is influenced by a number of factors, including overall land mass, topography, economics, social aspects, architecture, functionality, accessibility, and density to name a few. Through a balance of new and redeveloped sites, the community aims to keep Athens-Clarke County vibrant, attractive, and inviting.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Implement inclusionary zoning techniques, like density bonuses and a relaxed mix of uses utilized in new development or redevelopment.
- b. Proactively plan for anticipated population and demographic changes while considering the various community facilities we have or want. This must take into consideration multiple generations of residents that encompass Athens.
- c. A vibrant downtown with fewer vehicles and more open space that is clean, walkable, and park-like.
- d. Examine parking standards to align with current trends and proven business needs.
- e. Ensure that mixed-use development truly provides multiple uses amongst varying architecture styles and structure sizes. First-floor commercial should only be mandated in areas found to be appropriate; however, such areas should strictly adhere to this requirement.
- f. Establish gateway corridors that leave an impression upon visitors and provide access to necessary destinations for citizens.
- g. Examine the Highway 78/316 Industrial Park or an eastside location for a Bio/Office park.
- h. Consider the use of development impact fees to help offset the costs of providing associated services.
- i. Complete the Firefly Trail to the county line at Winterville and continue to develop the Oconee Rivers Greenway trail system. For both trail programs, develop a zoning overlay to encourage compatible adjoining land use and development.

Place

- j. Establish a development credit system that can be used for tree or plaza space requirements to offset difficulties in current or future projects.
- k. Consider contingency plans for the redevelopment of the Georgia Square Mall properties, including what the area could eventually be used for: movie studio, senior living, or revitalized neighborhood.
- l. Reexamine density allowances in all zoning districts. A transitional commercial/low density “RM” zone may be warranted to buffer existing neighborhoods from heavier commercial.
- m. Ensure zoning for a grocery store downtown and in other areas identified as food deserts that are of an appropriate neighborhood scale. This type of use would include specific percentages of fresh food, pharmacy, and minimal sign advertisement.
- n. Establish incentives for new development to incorporate environmentally sustainable standards including, but not limited to, material reuse, responsible management of construction waste, etc.
- o. Re-examine the zoning ordinance with a focus on building height; appropriate locations for urban design versus areas with suburban design; mandatory mixed-use retail space; and smaller dwellings.
- p. Develop incentives to reuse existing development before new development in greenfields, including TDR’s, CID’s, TAD’s, and BID’s. Given the county’s small geographic area, redevelopment should be prioritized over greenfield development as plenty of opportunity exists to improve blight along corridors and gateways, strip malls, industrial sites, and aging apartments.
- q. Attempt to reconfigure large, existing or proposed commercial centers into “blocks” that promote walkability. There are many available lots along corridors that could be purchased directly by Athens-Clarke County in order to achieve this and in turn be marketed for development.
- r. The Greenbelt has a tendency to focus development inward, which can contribute to infill housing and higher land value. As such, affordable, undeveloped land is becoming scarce, meaning the market will continue to turn to redevelopment of parcels and general infill practices. Mobility is better in these areas and sprawl is prevented, which signals a need to prepare for such actions in the future.
- s. Development has an opportunity to locate outside of Athens-Clarke County, just over the county line, in an effort to avoid county regulations and land values, but still claim proximity to the county and its population. Practices to prevent this type of occurrence are needed.
- t. Develop the riverfront compatibly with the North Oconee River Greenway to possibly include stores, a concert venue, and additional nature walks. This in turn would help spur the creation of a downtown parks program.

Place

- u. Consider the redevelopment of Atlanta Highway as a technology corridor.
- v. Install district-specific designs across the county. There exists an Athens look and feel that new development should adapt to, not vice versa.
- w. Tie land development to designated drinking watershed areas while considering water recharge.
- x. Various areas have been identified as “food deserts”, where there is a lack of healthy, fresh food within reasonable distance to residences. This should be remedied.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: A vibrant and physically attractive community with a variety of places and equitable access to parks, open space, and other community gathering places. Development and redevelopment – with redevelopment as a priority – will be well-considered, appropriately placed, and have a positive and thoughtful economic, social, and environmental impact.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: As the fundamental framework for growth and development, refocus the Future Development Map and zoning policies to reflect the community’s shared vision and next generation of growth.
2. Strategy: Create a menu of appropriate incentives that encourage responsible redevelopment and that guide new development to follow a shared community vision of equity and sustainability.
3. Strategy: In keeping with the 1992 Oconee Rivers Greenway Ordinance, recognize the opportunities that rivers provide to enhance the community and encourage responsible, environmentally-friendly development along our river frontages.
4. Strategy: Identify a network of development nodes throughout the community that relate to transportation and other infrastructure, employment and housing. These nodes should also ensure equitable access to community spaces and services.
5. Strategy: Create plans for redevelopment and revitalization of the community’s gateways and commercial nodes that considers aesthetics and a variety of transportation options moving through the space.

Place

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Re-examine the Future Development Map.
- B. Policy: Establish corridor redevelopment incentives or zoning policies for gateway and other important corridors.
- C. Policy: Create nodal development tied to transportation, healthcare, schools, jobs, workforce, and housing.
- D. Policy: Develop zoning standards and incentives to include greenspace and other public amenities.
- E. Policy: Establish incentives for new development to incorporate environmentally sustainable standards including, but not limited to, material re-use, responsible management of construction waste, etc.
- F. Policy: Incentivize and incorporate the arts and greenspace into all new commercial developments and redevelopment.
- G. Policy: Re-examine density allowances and parking minimums in all zoning districts to determine whether these rules pose unacceptable barriers to affordable housing construction.
- H. Policy: Develop incentives to reuse existing development before new developments in Greenfields.
- I. Policy: Encourage the use of incentive options such as TDRs, CIDs, TADs, and BIDs for appropriate development.
- J. Policy: Create an inventory of local public-owned land that could be developed.
- K. Policy: Develop zoning standards and incentives to develop and/or redevelop quality multi-family options for a diverse group.
- L. Policy: Create a River District Plan and development strategy.

Place

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods are often identified by a sense of place, but in reality, are more than just a defined geographical boundary. The people who call them home experience a sense of belonging, and a location that allows them to live freely, often alongside others who share the same sense of comfort. Neighborhoods can cultivate a shared sense of opinion, one that provides direction for the future and voices concern over perceived or real threats to their quality of life. The following list relates directly to what our neighborhoods face in the future and the goal of keeping them primarily residential.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Create inviting neighborhood entrances that embrace community character and promote a sense of pride through beautification efforts.
- b. Establish formal associations in minority neighborhoods that build upon the pursuit of a diverse and inclusive community, while sponsoring a program for neighborhood leaders.
- c. Examine the use of Neighborhood Planning Units and identify potential areas for installation.
- d. Promote “cluster” residential development that reduce the overall impact on land while promoting neighborhood values.
- e. Transitional zoning is needed with respect to residential neighborhoods that abut commercial zones to lessen the adverse impact the two classifications can have on one another.
- f. Promote intra and inter-connectivity within and between neighborhoods while discouraging cul-de-sac development. This applies to both vehicular and pedestrian pathways and may not always require formal, paved improvements when associated with walkability.
- g. Basic infrastructure (roads, utilities, sidewalks, etc.) should be the standard for all neighborhoods, and a lack thereof threatens prosperity.
- h. Additional gathering and recreation facilities north of Downtown are needed.
- i. Identify areas that could potentially be developed for unique neighborhoods with smaller houses and a cohesive theme.

Place

- j. Create a public database for educating residents on neighborhood issues and zoning items.
- k. Creation and recognition of a downtown neighborhood that is inclusive of students and provides an opportunity for civic engagement.
- l. The history of action by faith-based organizations is a strength in promoting neighborhood engagement and representation.
- m. Strengthen collaboration with the University of Georgia through improved communication or more formal agreements since the University's decisions can have an impact on neighborhoods and should be discussed and mitigated accordingly.
- n. Public gathering and meeting spaces that are free and open to all can be used as centers for civic engagement. Open street events also provide an opportunity for neighborhood interaction and promote vitality.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Our neighborhoods will be vibrant, safe, and stable places where residents interact with each other and have access to a range of diverse housing types, public spaces, and services.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Partner with neighborhood schools as hubs for diverse school and neighborhood engagement. Schools are a natural, central location for effective community interaction and service delivery.
2. Strategy: Ensure equitable access to basic infrastructure, including sidewalks, lighting, street trees, etc. to enhance neighborhood safety and identity.
3. Strategy: Investigate tools (i.e. neighborhood planning units, neighborhood councils, and neighborhood leaders programs) that broaden community leadership, represent neighborhood-level issues at the county level, and promote more effective and responsive policy.
4. Strategy: Create incentives to encourage revitalization in neighborhoods and commercial developments.
5. Strategy: Increase and promote communication within neighborhoods.

Place

6. Strategy: Encourage parks, schools and community facilities to be located as focal points in neighborhoods.
7. Strategy: Apply urban design and aesthetic standards to neighborhoods and other developments as they are developed or redeveloped. These standards can reflect historic character, support walkability and active living, and incorporate open space and ecological landscaping.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Educate tenants and landlords about their rights and responsibilities.
- B. Policy: Expand sidewalk network in neighborhoods and other infrastructure such as lights, trees, neighborhood businesses, and basic infrastructure for neighborhoods.
- C. Policy: Incentivize neighborhood grocery stores, farmer's markets, co-ops, etc.
- D. Policy: Increase and promote communication among neighborhoods via listservs and other communication.
- F. Policy: Evaluate the current process for identification, adjudication, education, and funding for abatement of nuisance properties.

Agriculture

Though the smallest geographical land mass in the State of Georgia, Athens-Clarke County boasts an urban population. Still, past efforts have been made and proven successful at preserving agricultural practices. The Greenbelt has fulfilled its purpose of allowing the county to still claim a share of the agricultural economy and highlight sound sustainability initiatives like food production. Increased stewardship will negate harmful impacts, and farming practices will be encouraged, especially those embracing modern trends that result in responsible production.

Place

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Audit the viability and practicality of the AR zone.
- b. Examine a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.
- c. Create a Food Policy Council to recommend actions regarding local agricultural and nutrition practices.
- d. Define and permit farmer's markets as a zoning use and identify existing parks to locate them.
- e. Promote school farming that can in turn contribute to nutritional options on-site.
- f. Support both traditional and urban agriculture. This includes programs tied to farming and stewardship, both for the young and older generations.
- g. Increase opportunities for food trucks to provide affordable meals and fresh food options to underserved, low-income areas of the community. This should include box truck locations for mobile vending.
- h. Partner with surrounding counties to help preserve the Greenbelt by decreasing development pressure.
- i. Amend the existing conservation subdivision ordinance to effectively promote its use by developers. This will in turn offer development opportunity within the "AR" zoning district that is carefully staged while keeping the desire for a "Greenbelt" that remains mostly preserved.
- j. Continue to work with farmers to promote sustainable techniques and reduce chemical runoff into nearby environmental areas.
- k. Build a reputation for pioneering innovative techniques (vertical farms, etc.). Government buildings and sites can be a location for these initiatives.
- l. Establish an East Side Farmers Market.
- m. Further develop the idea of "local flavor."

Place

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Agriculture remains a viable and productive component of the local economy by encouraging innovative community agricultural programs and leveraging use of land for agricultural production, alternative agricultural enterprises, and ecotourism.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Actively encourage and identify ways to advance local agriculture and food initiatives, including Eastside Farmer's Market, innovative community gardens, and efforts to increase access to food and eliminate food deserts.
2. Strategy: Further develop connections with the University of Georgia agricultural programs and initiatives, Clarke County School District, Cooperative Extension Services, and Young Urban Farmers Program.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Support the initiatives of the Cooperative Extension Service programs.
- B. Policy: Identify and evaluate tax incentives on AR zoned property to incentivize maintaining AR land.
- C. Policy: Enhance and further develop connections with UGA agriculture initiatives, CCSD, and the Young Urban Farmers Program.
- D. Policy: Evaluate, establish, and expand access to community gardens.
- E. Policy: Create an Ag Council to be made up of landscape companies, nurseries, farmers and bee owners.

Place

Environment

The environment is a topic that citizens hold dear and have highlighted as an important part to of the community's future. The list compiled directly aims to address how Athens-Clarke County will be an environmentally healthy, sustainable, and aesthetically pleasing place. Through protection efforts, air, water, soil, plants and wildlife will be enhanced.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Examine alternative methods for stream protection besides natural buffers. Continue restoration of urban streams.
- b. Develop an air-quality warning system.
- c. Increase efforts related to greenspace management, including acquisition, which can also promote beautification.
- d. Sustain a culture of conservation that maximizes waste reduction, increases the life of our landfill, and ensures waste is properly handled.
- e. Focus efforts on incorporating the concept of energy efficiency into all sustainability initiatives as it can often be overlooked in comparison to more popular "green" strategies.
- f. Install composting bins/educational material around town in strategic areas.
- g. Create a tree credit program for ensuring adequate trees in specific areas as applied during development.
- h. Provide incentives for construction of energy efficient buildings.
- i. Consider the number of private garbage haulers and whether to eliminate or alter general service district operations for pick-up.
- j. Implement mandatory recycling and composting programs to extend the life of the landfill. The recycling facility should be updated. Capitalize on the existing landfill's bio-gas and use closed cell areas for alternate energy such as solar, wind, or geo-thermal. Landfill tours may be an incentive for a reduced bill.

Place

- k. Protect potentially historic plant materials and landscape structures surrounding historic properties by considering these elements when reviewing historic site plans.
- l. Encourage xeriscaping as a means of water conservation.
- m. Permit and promote the use of specific graywater systems.
- n. Make greenspaces more accessible by incorporating roadway design, bringing visibility and awareness.
- o. A Greenbelt that accommodates changes but preserves most areas.
- p. Encourage existing local industries to install effective pollution abatement technology.
- q. Support the latest Greenway Network Plan through land use and transportation initiatives.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: A forward-thinking community that protects and improves the quality and function of our land, air, and water resources, recognizing their relationship to human health and the region's ecological functioning. Stewardship of the natural environment includes exploring ways for our actions and decisions to have a positive impact on the environment and to reduce negative impacts.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Provide additional safe and affordable transportation options including walking, biking, and clean transit.
2. Strategy: Increase energy efficiency, sources, and use of renewables.
3. Strategy: Improve the health and quality of rivers and streams to meet local standards for public use and enjoyment.
4. Strategy: Reduce landfill disposal of solid waste through management, education, collection, and enforcement.

Place

6. Strategy: Decrease single-occupancy car rides by incentivizing alternative transportation.
7. Strategy: Decrease water consumption per capita.
8. Strategy: Create policies that promote building practices that utilize sustainable principles, such as adaptive reuse of buildings, energy efficiency, sustainably-sourced materials, low-impact development, ecological landscaping and responsible management of construction waste.
9. Strategy: Ensure adequate supplies of quality water through the protection of ground and surface water sources, including our rivers and streams.
10. Strategy: We will protect environmentally-sensitive corridors and utilize appropriate spaces to create a community-wide system of greenways, watersheds, and green spaces.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Decrease water consumption per capita.
- B. Policy: Improve the health and quality of rivers and streams to meet local standards for public use and enjoyment.
- C. Policy: Provide safer, affordable transportation options including walking, biking, and clean transit.
- D. Policy: Decrease single-occupancy car rides by incentivizing alternative transportation.
- E. Policy: Increase energy efficiency, sources, and use of renewables.
- F. Policy: Identify and protect rare, threatened, and unique natural resources.
- G. Policy: Achieve goal of 20% of county as protected greenspace.

Vitality

Invigorating the community spirit through Arts and Culture as well as Civic Engagement.

Arts and Culture

Athens-Clarke County has always been rich in cultural resources that contribute to its unique character and increase its reputation in the world. Cultural resources include art, music, film, and historic preservation, but are not limited to those interests. In an effort to protect, support, improve, and generate the resources of our unique culture, Athens-Clarke County has identified the following list of needs and opportunities related to this aspect of quality of life.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Incentivize and incorporate the artistic and green space into all new developments.
- b. Attract and develop “creative” jobs.
- c. Attract more large festivals and entertainment, including sports tournaments.
- d. Development of an outdoor amphitheater that can help increase tourism related to arts and music.
- e. The preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures offers benefits both financially and environmentally. Historic structures also contribute to heritage tourism.
- f. Downtown has become unaffordable for musicians and accompanying venues though it is clearly the hub for associated events and concerts. Affordable housing and commercial space is needed to maintain the music scene.
- g. Music needs to be recognized and embraced for its contribution to the community. Too often generational differences can be a challenge in understanding the various cultural resources available, like music, which signals a lack of effective communication and promotion. One solution could be increased collaboration between local college programs and local schools.

Vitality

- h. Athens has much to offer in the form of existing facilities, like the art museum, theaters, and botanical garden, but more could be done. A large, comprehensive destination arts complex; free studio space; education centers for business aspects; or even integrated arts and cultural assets into the surrounding environment (Greenway) are strong possibilities. Arts exhibits could be incorporated into every Athens-Clarke County building lobby.
- i. Embrace and preserve the Athens identity of uniqueness and keep it local. There exists a special vibe, or energy within the creative scene. The culture, history, and environment of the community continue to promote Athens as an arts and cultural destination. Commitment must entail defining core values and principles and developing outcomes from there.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: All aspects of culture and the arts – including music, theater, visual arts, heritage resources and other cultural initiatives – are the authentic expression of the people and place, representing an ever-present community good that contributes to nurturing and attracting diverse talent.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Measure economic impacts of arts, culture, and heritage tourism.
2. Strategy: Explore public/private partnerships to ensure growth in the number of artistic venues over time.
3. Strategy: Identify the root challenges to accessing the arts for specific segments of the population and develop strategies to overcome barriers and measure progress.
4. Strategy: Identify opportunities for outdoor music and arts festivals and ticketed events that build on Athens' history of music and arts

Vitality

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Develop, foster, implement and fund a historic and heritage resources master plan.
- B. Policy: Identify barriers to inclusion and engagement in the arts through an assessment tool.
- C. Policy: Evaluate the current health of the local arts economy and set 5- 10- and 20-year growth goals accordingly.
- D. Policy: Promote, fund, and implement the public art master plan.
- E. Policy: Create additional public spaces and venues for the arts, particularly outdoor and in proximity to Downtown.

Civic Engagement

Each and every resident of Athens-Clarke County is entitled to experience a strong sense of vitality through civic participation. By protecting and practicing those aspects of life held closely by individuals, families, friends, neighborhoods, etc., society as a whole is lifted to an advanced level of engagement.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Expand the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI) to include information beyond planning and zoning alerts.
- b. Improve the local government websites. Create an app for Athens-Clarke County.
- c. Continue to evaluate and encourage diversity on government associated boards/committees, including actively engaging in efforts to market vacancies and seek out those populations that may otherwise not be aware of such opportunities and the qualifications they may possess.
- d. Indoor and outdoor accessible gathering spaces that provide civic engagement opportunities.
- e. Improvements to government openness and responsiveness, especially with regard to policies that directly impact neighborhoods and will assist in additional advocacy opportunities.
- f. Coordinate the multiple marketing techniques for Athens by the University of Georgia, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, and Athens Downtown Development Authority.

Vitality

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Residents should feel strong connections to each other and be engaged in the community's overall well-being.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Create gathering opportunities in spaces that are available and accessible to all, encouraging community interaction and civic engagement.
2. Strategy: Create mechanism by which UGA and Athens-Clarke County can communicate regularly and work together to address mutual needs.
3. Strategy: Encourage a more easily navigable government system.
4. Strategy: Encourage activities that strengthen individual neighborhood identity and establish connections between neighborhood groups and the broader community.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Foster a collective community identity that is inclusive and reflects our unique diversity.
- B. Policy: Continue to identify common goals among UGA and Athens.
- C. Policy: Encourage more government openness and transparency through strategically placed personnel, offices, and systems that interface with the public.
- D. Policy: Expand and coordinate local leadership academies.

Foundation

Building and maintaining a solid foundation from which services are rendered to the public through Transportation, Infrastructure, and Government Operations.

Transportation

The community seeks a balanced approach to transportation initiatives that are influenced by a number of factors. Multiple modes of transportation are encouraged for the pedestrian, bicyclist, transit rider, and driver. Incorporating street infrastructure that accommodates all users will not only relieve traffic congestion, but accomplish the movement of goods and services. Through context sensitive street design, health and safety are promoted, and the desired sense of community is maintained.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Implement the various philosophies of Complete Streets in conjunction with both existing standards and any previous related studies.
- b. Improve upon the efficiency of bus stop times by examining frequency and locations. Multiple payment options should be integrated onto buses.
- c. Provide better transportation accommodations for the disabled.
- d. Study two-way traffic flow on streets currently designated as one-way.
- e. Recognize existing in-town alleys and the need to keep them.
- f. Respond to the growing demand for passenger rail service to Atlanta.
- g. Support a shuttle service that connects passengers in Athens with MARTA several times per day.
- h. Embed the Greenway Network Plan into transportation decisions.
- i. Create a pedestrian/bicycle network separate from roadways. Support a bicycle rental program.

Foundation

- j. The airport should provide travel to distant places and multiple hubs. Explore increased industrial usage of the airport.
- k. Resolve vehicular congestion throughout the county. The Loop 10 interchanges need modification and are often backed-up.
- l. Develop an innovative transportation infrastructure that supports transportation diversity, equitable access, and environmental stewardship.
- m. Repair streets and sidewalks that will increase safety while beautifying streets. A sidewalk bank should be used to help with costs.
- n. Offer incentives for use of park-and-ride lots, like allowing flexible work schedules to help with traffic congestion or a successful and sustainable carpool program.
- o. Align future transportation initiatives with already existing or proposed services.
- p. Provide high quality transportation nodes, or transit-oriented developments in association with previously completed studies. This may also spur the use of underutilized transit routes.
- q. No person should have to have a vehicle to get from place to place within the county. Retail establishments should be accessible by all modes of transportation.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Increased range of transportation options – including walking, biking, transit, and driving – that provide efficient, safe, affordable and equitable access throughout the community and connect to the region and the world (through rail and air service).

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Support Greenway corridor efforts as informed by both government-sponsored and community-driven analysis.
2. Strategy: Support bike and pedestrian infrastructure as informed by government and community-driven analysis.

Foundation

3. Strategy: Maintain high levels of transit service throughout the community and develop a sustainable model for funding and equitable access.
4. Strategy: Participate in regional cooperative efforts to enhance commuting options to Atlanta and region.
5. Strategy: Recognize the role of emerging technology, such as autonomous vehicles, smart grids, etc. in transportation planning.
6. Strategy: Grow and advance commercial air service into Athens-Clarke County.
7. Strategy: Develop an over-arching transportation plan that incorporates all modes of transportation and their related facilities and recognizes linkages between mobility and quality of life.
8. Strategy: Explore traffic calming features that slow the speed of automobile traffic and enhance safety and aesthetics.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Support bike and pedestrian infrastructure through respective master plans.
- B. Policy: Pursue sustainable modes of transit options throughout the community.
- C. Policy: Develop an over-arching transportation plan that brings together all existing studies, reports, and strategies into a single-source for reference and resource review.
- D. Policy: Pursue comprehensive transportation safety program.
- E. Policy: Continue to build out broadband networks through expanded fiber installation and improved tech.

Foundation

Infrastructure

Adequate infrastructure, including all utilities, should be an essential part of our growing, diverse population. Keeping environmental sustainability in mind, emerging utilities should be available to all areas of the county. Emphasis should be placed on technologically advanced initiatives and incorporating those utilities into proposed construction to ensure Athens-Clarke County remains ready to provide the services needed for the future.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. There is a need for smarter utilities including broadband internet and improved mobile access, benefitting the next generation of business.
- b. Attain cleaner air throughout the county, which can also mean reducing unpleasant smells, with specific focus on Downtown.
- c. Coordinate sewer easements with greenways to improve connectivity.
- d. Promote the placement of utilities underground as services are repaired or installed to move away from overhead facilities.
- e. Address deficiencies in water/sewer distribution while also exploring creative methods to increase capacity.
- f. Consider shared methods for screening solid waste and recycling collection facilities. Such facilities could potentially use green roofs and/or solar panels.
- g. Continue to address public restroom facilities in Downtown Athens.
- h. Small lot sizes make storm water compliance challenging. Maintenance within neighborhoods with regard to existing facilities is also difficult to keep up with and must be addressed.
- i. Create a Technology Infrastructure Commission that can look into issues regarding contracts and number of utilities offered in Athens, as well as provide openness to the public.
- j. Significantly increase sustainable energy practices.
- k. Examine the quarry for possible reuse as a reservoir and leisure amenity.

Foundation

- l. Consider simple dirt paths to expand walking and biking connectivity.
- m. Practice land use that is directly linked to watersheds.
- n. Provide clearer explanation of how stormwater fees are calculated and why a per-lot impervious surface rate is not utilized. Make a storm water easement GIS layer available to the public.

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: Well-maintained infrastructure is strategically expanded and upgraded in full consideration of environmental sustainability to unlock economic potential and help meet the needs of individuals.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Improve community understanding of the importance of sustained reinvestment in public infrastructure assets.
2. Strategy: Ensure adequate water supply to meet current and future demand through conservation (demand management), water recycling/reuse and additional water storage.
3. Strategy: Increase communications and information connectivity for all residents.
4. Strategy: Reduce flooding risk and improve the quality of streams and rivers through proactive and innovative stormwater program.
5. Strategy: Coordinate sanitary sewer expansion with the future land use framework.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Repair and replace infrastructure assets commensurate with physical depreciation.
- B. Policy: Improve downtown streetscape and infrastructure and downtown physical and IT infrastructure.

Foundation

Government Operations

The local government plays a crucial and necessary role in setting the foundation for community success and sustainability. Although many initiatives pertaining to the comprehensive plan are the responsibility of the local government, operations within this institution are not immune from examination and improvement. By consistently challenging the traditional norm in public administration, the community will achieve sustainability and a greater future.

Based upon the following Needs and Opportunities (Ideas and Obstacles)...

- a. Create or establish an inventory of local government-owned land that could be developed.
- b. Acceptance of online payments government-wide.
- c. Understand that Athens-Clarke County no longer functions as a “small town” anymore and cannot keep operating as such.
- d. More career ladder opportunities for employees along with greater retirement plan match.
- e. Examine tiered water system payments for departmental functions.
- f. Promote a neighborhood score card that allows for self-scoring of the services but then gives insight into the scoring conducted by the government and allows comparison of the two.
- h. Improve intergovernmental collaboration to address extenuated timelines, duplication of efforts, or conflicting goals.
- i. Consolidation of government departments into more strategically located facilities that are modernized to meet growing space constraints and provide improved customer service.
- j. Examine new public/private partnerships similar to the Washington Street Parking Deck.
- k. Offer various incentive programs for employees including a program for which money saving ideas are rewarded. Additional conference attendance if presenting and marketing Athens-Clarke County. Perhaps flexible work schedules and free transit would help boost morale.
- l. Explore opportunities to increase diversity within the government.

Foundation

A goal has been identified...

- Goal: An open, inclusive, and responsive government that plans for the future and explores innovative ways to realize the community's vision. Government operations shall adapt to change and consistently challenge the traditional norms in public administration practices.

With the following implementation strategies...

1. Strategy: Actively encourage and facilitate citizen involvement in the planning and decision-making processes of our government.
2. Strategy: Proactively provide opportunities for bringing all residents into formal and informal service roles in order to reflect the diversity of the community.
3. Strategy: Create a process for promoting community awareness and involvement in land use issues affecting neighborhoods.
4. Strategy: Identify community planning districts to increase involvement in the planning and implementation of improvements at the neighborhood level.
5. Strategy: Involve public sector agencies in the community planning district process.

Which support the adoption of policies that...

- A. Policy: Provide opportunities for residents to learn about local government services, initiatives, and events.
- B. Policy: Document and share our actions designed to cultivate a culture of innovation by piloting new ideas and adopting those with demonstrated benefits.
- C. Policy: Improve internal efficiency and effectiveness.
- D. Policy: Promote transparency through improved access to information.

Foundation

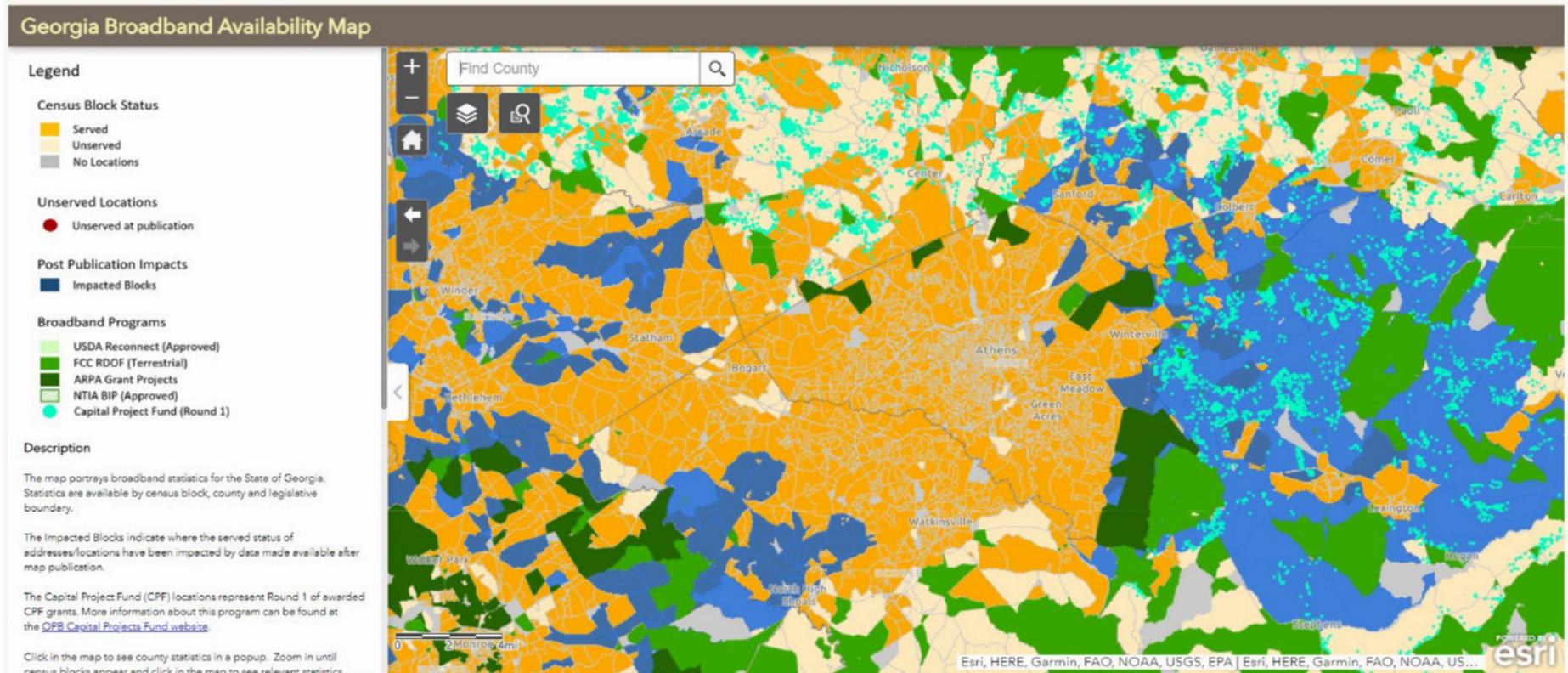
- E. Policy: Attract, retain, and reward talented and empowered employees.
- F. Policy: Foster opportunities for residents to engage with their local government.

Required Elements

Broadband Element

The State of Georgia requires all communities to evaluate broadband internet coverage within their community. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has created a map of broadband coverage for the entire state. This map, shown below, demonstrates that most of Athens-Clarke County is served by broadband infrastructure. Statistics are based on a broadband definition of 25 Mbps down and 3 Mbps up, and where the broadband service is available to more than 80% of locations in a census block. Census blocks that did not meet this definition are delineated as 'Unserved'. Several federal programs to expand broadband infrastructure, shown in green below, are expanding broadband access into poorly served areas of the County. The map only depicts access to broadband infrastructure. Households need a subscription to actually use this broadband, and the Covid-19 pandemic revealed subscription gaps in Athens-Clarke County that inhibit some households from using the internet.

2022 Georgia Broadband Availability Map



Required Elements

Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element for Athens-Clarke County highlights initiatives identified by the community to encourage prosperous growth through financial stability, proactive marketing, and consistent business development. As one of the fifteen topics divided among the five common themes in this document, Economic Development is essential to ensuring a high quality of life. Previous elements within the 2023 Comprehensive Plan have already highlighted Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs and Opportunities directly related to the topic of Economic Development. Because Athens-Clarke County has been classified as a Georgia Job Tax Credit Tier 1 local government, it is vital that this mandatory element address factors such as diversity of the economic base, quality of the local labor force, effectiveness of local economic development agencies, and program and tools, as outlined in the minimum standards and procedures for local comprehensive planning.

Athens-Clarke County has also included a copy of the Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) produced by the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. This document serves as a key instrument in guiding Athens-Clarke County and the surrounding counties toward economic prosperity from a regional perspective. The CEDS can be found in the appendix section of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, and serves as the official component of the Economic Development Element.

The following is a list of associated facts and data tracked by the Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Department. This data serves as context during discussions and decisions pertaining to Community Goals, Needs and Opportunities, and the Community Work Program.

- 24.6% poverty rate as of 2020, the 21st highest poverty rate among GA Counties (source: US Census Bureau, Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates SAIPE)
- Unemployment rate as of April 2022: 2.3% (source: GDOL Monthly UI data)
- University of Georgia is the County's largest public sector employer, with approx. 10,800 employees. (source: UGA)
- Piedmont Athens Regional Medical Center is ACC's largest private employer, with approx. 3,300 employees. (source: PARMC)
- Number of workers in the Athens-Clarke County labor force as of April 2022: 60,951 (source: GDOL Monthly UI data)
- About 41,500 workers commute into ACC to work. About 22,000 workers live & work in ACC. About 21,000 live in ACC and commute to a different county for work. (source: 2019 ESRI data)
- 45.4% of Athens-Clarke County residents have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (source: US Census Bureau Quick Facts).
- Economic Output: \$6.64 billion real GDP as measured in 2020, ranked 13th in the State of Georgia, decreasing as reflected in national trends (source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis) as of 4th Quarter 2021 (source: GA DOL):

Required Elements

The Economic Development Department also states that they are currently seeing a number of expansions of existing enterprises. A need has been identified to identify and preserve quality industrial sites during community land use planning - especially those sites that are relatively flat with existing water and sewer service.

In light of this information, the Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Department has chosen to focus development efforts on five strategic sectors:

- Biotech/Pharmaceuticals
- Healthcare Services
- Advanced Manufacturing (characterized by high automation and a highly skilled workforce)
- Craft Beverages and Brewing (due to their capacity to create good jobs and attractive “third places” for people to gather)
- Creative Economy (e.g. Makers, Music, Movies, etc.)



Sector	Athens-Clarke County Total Employment	% of Total ACC Employment	Avg. Weekly Wage
Gov't: Federal, State, Local	19,476	27.6%	\$1,158
Health Care & Social Assistance	10,535	14.9%	\$1,417
Retail Trade	8,609	12.2%	\$748
Accommodation & Food Services	7,807	11.1%	\$430
Manufacturing	5,161	7.3%	\$1,238



Required Elements

Housing Element

The Housing Element for the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County consists of multiple forms of information from two different sources. The Federal Government designates Athens as a Community Development Block Grant Entitlement Community. Therefore, the Unified Government is required to submit a Consolidated Plan as the appropriate strategy for addressing housing. This is a separate effort from that of the comprehensive plan, and is administered by the Athens-Clarke County Housing and Community Development Department. The Consolidated Plan can be found in the appendix section of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, and serves as the official component of the Housing Element.

As one of the fifteen topics divided among the five common themes in this document, Housing is essential to the ensuring a high quality of life. Previous elements with the 2023 Comprehensive Plan have already highlighted Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs and Opportunities, as well as associated Community Work Program items directly related to the topic of Housing.

The following is a list of associated facts and data directly related to Housing in Athens-Clarke County. This information was sourced from the Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor and the American Community Survey. Unless otherwise stated, all information references Athens-Clarke County—not the Athens Metropolitan Statistical Area. In all, use of the various assessment statistics was meant to inform community discussion and, ultimately, decisions pertaining to Community Goals, Needs and Opportunities, as well as the Community Work Program.

Unlike some parts of the country, Georgia and Athens-Clarke County have seen growth in the size of a household from 2.35 people per household to 2.97. Even with this growth, Athens-Clarke County trails the state household size of 3.25, likely due to its status as a college

town for a major university. The presence of the University may also help explain why Athens-Clarke County has also seen a growth in single-person households, which now make up fully one third of community households. Given this trend, Athens-Clarke County may want to further examine housing construction trends and zoning regulations to ensure that the County’s housing stock is suitable for a wide variety of household sizes.

	2000	%	2020	%
Single-Person Households	11,808	29.7	17,247	34.3%
Household Size	2.35	-	2.97	-
Owners	16,681	42.0	20,388	40.5%
Renters	23,025	58.0	29,896	59.5%

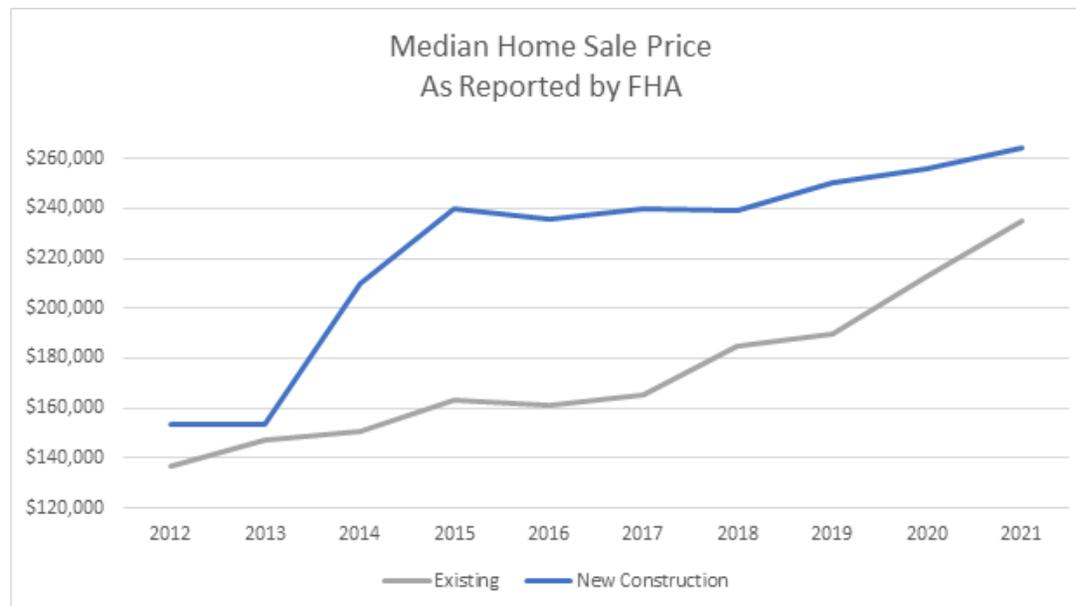
Source: American Community Survey

The following tables show that median household incomes, median home sale prices, and fair market rents have all risen over time. A household making the median area income of \$40,363 should be paying no more than \$1,009 in monthly rent or mortgage payments. Based on the following data, it appears that households in Athens are feeling the pressure of increasing prices, even if prices have not risen to the degree that they have in other parts of the country. Meeting the housing needs of Athens-Clarke County’s current and future residents will remain an ongoing conversation.

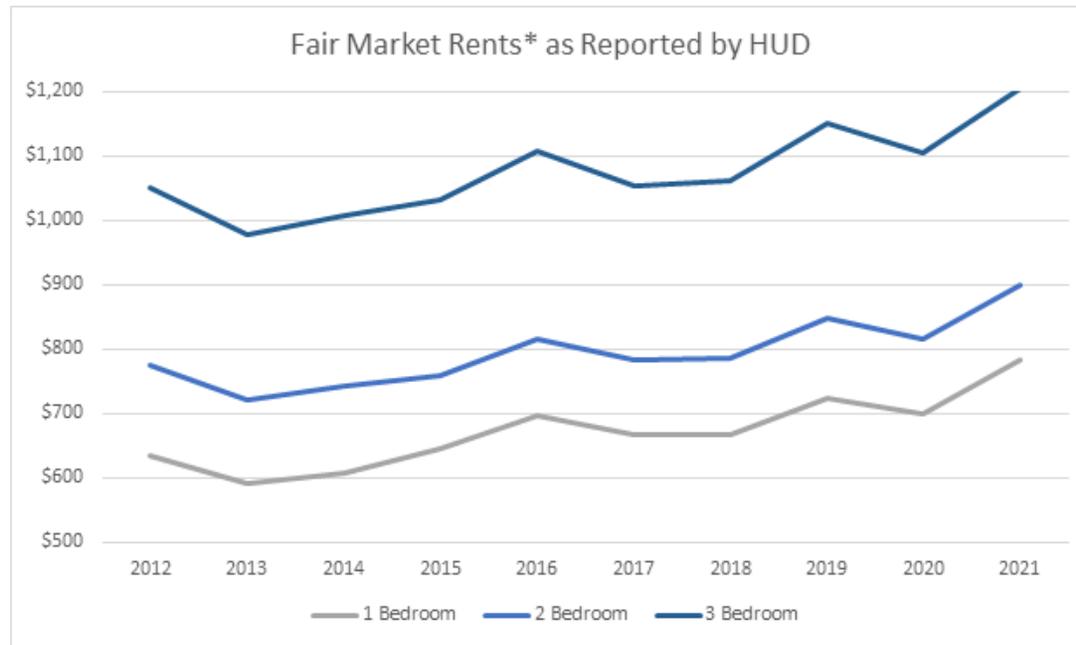
Required Elements

	2000	% of total households	2020	% of total households
Households Making Below \$50,000 Annually	28,693	72%	29,014	58%
Median income	\$ 28,403	-	\$ 40,363	-
Affordable Mortgage/Rent based on Median Income (30% of monthly income or less)	\$710	-	\$1,009	-

Source: American Community Survey



Required Elements



* defined as the 40th percentile rents for standard quality units.

Finally, an assessment of residential parcels in Athens-Clarke County using Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor Data was performed to gauge the degree of influence that residential investors, particularly those who do not live within the borders of Athens-Clarke County, have on residential property. Nearly half of residential parcels are owned by owner-occupants, while the other half is split between investors who live in Athens-Clarke County and investors who live outside the County. Local ownership tends to keep wealth within the community, so tracking the share of local ownership over time may be useful for community policy-making decisions.

Residential Parcel Ownership Type	Parcels	%
Local Owner-Occupant	15,192	47.4
Local Investor	7,799	24.3
Outside Investor	9,085	28.3
TOTAL	32,076	100

Source: Athens-Clarke County Tax Assessor

Required Elements

Land Use Element

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires all local governments with zoning regulations to prepare a land use element as part of their comprehensive plan. This land use element must consist of a map showing future development patterns or land uses and a narrative explaining the map. Per these requirements, Athens-Clarke County has developed a Future Land Use Map and accompany narrative to guide development in the County for the next 20 years. This map, along with the rest of the comprehensive plan, is updated every five years, as required by the State of Georgia.

Per the Athens-Clarke County Code of Ordinances, all zoning actions (rezone, special use, and planned development) must be reviewed and considered against the adopted Future Land Use Map, possibly resulting in a Future Land Use Map amendment in order to proceed with consideration of the requested zoning action.

As one of the fifteen topics divided among the five common themes in this document, proper Land Use is essential to ensuring a high quality of life. Previous elements within the 2023 Comprehensive Plan have already highlighted Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs and Opportunities that directly relate to the topic of Land Use.

While determining appropriate amendments to the Future Land Use Map, Staff invited the public to consider four basic themes when looking toward the future. The following considerations, as divided among the (4) themes were meant to initiate creative responses to present any foreseeable issues in land use directly impacting Athens-Clarke County. These discussions are reflected in the Future Land Use Map on page 52.

Environment Theme Considerations:

- Conservation of rural areas (aka “Greenbelt”)
- Protection of environmentally sensitive areas
- Management of community trees
- Water quality and storm water

Economic Development

- Location of industrial and commercial lands
- Provision of “shovel-ready” industrial land

Housing Theme Considerations:

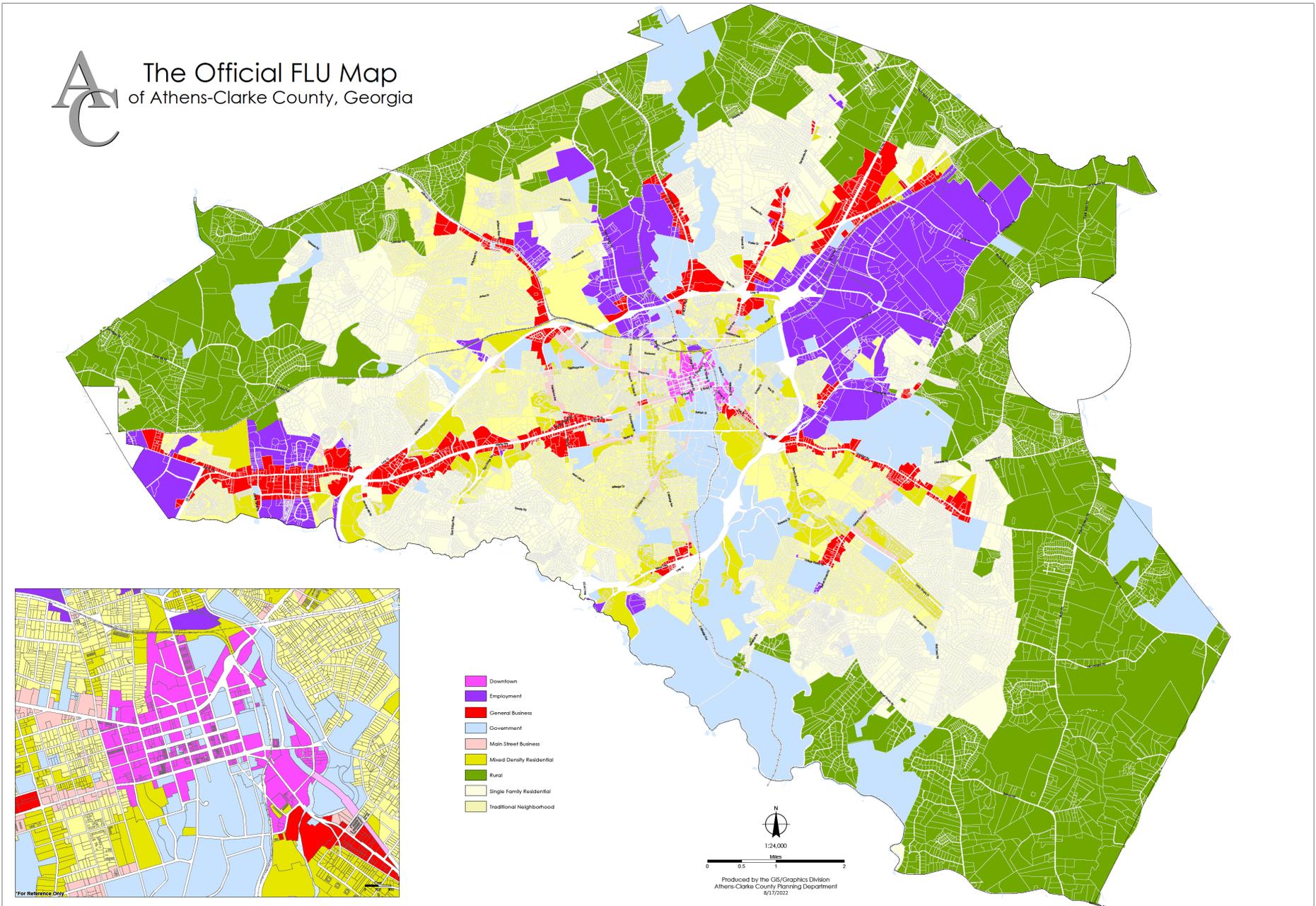
- Use of accessory dwelling units
- Multi-family and single-family density limits
- Examination of minimum floor area size
- Variety of available housing types

Design

- Downtown and multi-family design standards
- Complete streets and corridor enhancements (including lighting, landscaping and visual aesthetics)
- Commercial signs
- Development design issues (architecture, parking lots, retaining walls, etc.)
- Development standards, with attention to coordination with engineering requirements

Required Elements

 The Official FLU Map
of Athens-Clarke County, Georgia



Required Elements

Future Land Use Designations

Although the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has outlined standard Future Land Use categories, Athens-Clarke County has long established alternative designations based on the character the community wishes to enact. To that end, the following list of designations represent those found on the proposed Future Land Use Map, and each is further described by definition. For clarity, each unique designation is also identified in parenthesis by the equivalent standard DCA category.

General Business (standard “Commercial” category)

These are commercial areas that serve a variety of needs for the residents of the region. It is intended for small- and large-scale retailing and service uses that are auto-oriented, such as Atlanta Highway, Lexington Road and US 29 North. Pedestrian-oriented design is particularly appropriate when these streets contain neighborhood-shopping areas or are adjacent to multifamily housing or residential neighborhoods. Pedestrian circulation in these centers is a primary concern, therefore, connectivity within and to surrounding areas should be encouraged. Internal pedestrian walkways should be provided from the public right-of-way to the principal customer entrance of all principal buildings on the site. Walkways should connect focal points of pedestrian activity such as, but not limited to, transit stops, street crossings, building, store entry points, and plaza space. Walkways shall feature adjoining landscaped areas that contribute to the establishment or enhancement of community and public spaces. The street level facade of these areas should have a scale and architectural elements that relate to pedestrians. Buildings should be oriented to the street corridors which should be lined with street-trees. Small and medium scale retail stores should frame the streets with large-scale retailers located behind with focus given to pedestrian circulation rather than automobiles. Parking lots should not be located at the street front and shared parking should be encouraged.

Mixed-Density Residential (standard “Residential” category)

These are residential areas where higher density residential development is allowed and intended. Limited nonresidential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated into these areas (e.g. churches, schools, daycare facilities, small businesses and offices). Buildings should be oriented towards the street and include streetscape enhancements. Their design should include connections between uses, good pedestrian connections, and compatibility with public transit. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation.

Downtown (standard “Mixed Use” category)

Retail, office and entertainment uses are encouraged, as is high-density multifamily housing. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. As parking is handled on a district level, off-street parking for individual commercial development is not intended. Parking structures with commercial uses on the street-level frontage are encouraged rather than surface parking lots. This area should have strict design requirements to protect historic integrity and to ensure that new buildings develop in a form and architectural style compatible with existing downtown character.

Employment Center (standard “Industrial” category)

These are areas of industry, office, research parks, and flex-space mixed uses. Large-scale employment areas, which include large industrial areas, manufacturing, office parks, and research centers, is incompatible with housing. Smaller-scale employment areas are appropriate to be in close proximity to a neighborhood area. Design standards regulating building placement, landscaping, and buffering should apply. Small amounts of retail may be compatible in some areas.

Required Elements

Government (standard “Public/Institutional” category)

These areas are in use or proposed for use by federal, state, or local government agencies, including the University of Georgia and Clarke County Board of Education. Many of these locations are intended to serve the community, and should encourage walkability, landscaping and neighborhood-oriented transportation alternatives.

Main Street Business (standard “Mixed Use” category)

These are commercial areas where development of a storefront commercial type is encouraged. The uses are generally small-scale, but larger-scale uses can be integrated within a Main Street Business classification if a small-scale storefront is developed along the street facade, with the larger development located behind. Larger-scale uses should only be developed in instances where they are compatible with the adjacent uses. Retail and office uses should dominate the ground floors of the Main Street Business facades, with residential uses encouraged on second and third stories. Auto-oriented uses, such as vehicle repair and maintenance, drive-through restaurants, and vehicle sales, are not included in this designation. Walkability and pedestrian scale are important and the development should be oriented to the street with sidewalks, street trees, and pedestrian access provided.

Rural (standard “Agriculture/Forestry” category)

Rural lands are intended to have very low residential density. To maintain open space, clustering of dwellings is encouraged with common open spaces protected by conservation easements. Agricultural functions are encouraged, as well as other compatible uses, such as limited low-impact commercial uses, equestrian facilities and other animal boarding uses.

Single Family Residential (standard “Residential” category)

These are residential areas with single-family detached housing. Limited non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale may be incorporated in these areas (e.g. churches, schools, personal care homes and daycare facilities).

Traditional Neighborhood (standard “Residential” category)

These are medium density neighborhoods with traditional qualities including well-connected street systems, sidewalks, street trees, and a variety of housing types. Homes are often built close to the street with front porches. Garages are set back farther than the homes and porches. Traditional Neighborhood areas support single-family residences, duplexes which resemble large homes, and townhouses. Strict design standards should be implemented to ensure appropriateness of design and to protect neighborhood character. Limited commercial and other non-residential uses designed at a neighborhood scale are encouraged, but only in areas close to principal and minor arterial routes that have good access to transit.

Required Elements

Compatibility Matrix Zoning Districts

Future Land Use Designations	AR	RS-40	RS-25	RS-15	RS-8	RS-5	RM-1	RM-2	RM-3	C-R	C-O	C-N	C-G	C-D	E-O	E-I	I	IN	G	P
General Business									X		X	X	X		X			X	X	X
Downtown									X					X				X	X	X
Main Street Business								X	X		X	X			X			X	X	X
Employment Center															X	X	X	X	X	X
Government																		X	X	X
Mixed Density Residential						X	X	X			X	X							X	X
Traditional Neighborhood			X	X	X	X	X				X	X							X	X
Single-Family Residential		X	X	X	X														X	X
Rural	X									X									X	X

Required Elements

Transportation Element

The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County is a member of the Madison/Athens-Clarke/Oconee Regional Transportation System (MACORTS), and as such, has included information regarding this metropolitan planning organization's transportation strategy in the appendix. The 2045 MACORTS Long Range Transportation Plan was approved October 9, 2019, and meets the requirements for completing this section of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan. The 2040 MACORTS LRTP can be found in the appendix section of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan, and serves as the official component of the Transportation Element. This information is supplemented by all other related transportation information found throughout this plan. It should be noted that MACORTS is currently in the process of updating the 2045 Plan.

When compiling data and developing content for the comprehensive plan, a multitude of other existing documents were considered, even though not formally recognized as a part of the overall effort. It is worth mentioning in this particular element of the plan that various connections can be made between information put forth within and the objectives outlined in associated documents like the Transportation Corridor Concept Map, Athens Transit Development Plan, Athens Transit Feasibility Study, Greenway Network Plan, Airport Capital Improvement Plan, and Athens in Motion Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan. The Unified Government has also completed two major corridor studies (Prince Avenue; Oak/Oconee Street) in the past ten years, and is already in the process of completing two more (Lexington Road; Atlanta Highway). Each of these initiatives demonstrates a strong commitment to improved transportation throughout Athens-Clarke County, especially when coupled with dedicated funding like the recently approved Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST).

As one of the fifteen topics divided among the five common themes in this document, Transportation is essential to ensuring a high quality of life. Previous elements within the 2023 Comprehensive Plan have already highlighted Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs and Opportunities, as well as associated Community Work Program items directly related to the topic of Transportation.

The following list is an example of the many transportation initiatives Athens-Clarke County has planned over the next 10 – 20 years, depicting a strong commitment to various improvements. This project list was taken from the official 2045 MACORTS Long Range Transportation Plan, but only indicates Athens-Clarke County specific tasks. The Community Work Program is separate from this list, and highlights different items that may or may not correlate to the LRTP. The LRTP is not to be considered part of the Community Work Program.

Required Elements

Final Projects Selected for LRTP 2045 MTP Projects

2045 MTP #	GDOT PI#	Project Name	County	Cost Band	Median Cost
P-1	122600	SR 10 LP at Lexington Road Interchange	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 15,198,303
P-2	0013715	SR 10 LP over Middle Oconee River Bridge	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 10,732,931
P-3	0013716	SR 10 LP at SR 8 / US 29 Bridge Replacement	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 9,831,643
P-4	0013806	SR 10 / US 78 Bridges over North Oconee River Replacement	ACC	2019- 2025	\$ 7,277,373
P-5	0015645	Belmont Road Bridge over Shoal Creek Replacement	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 1,370,000
P-8		Atlanta Highway Safety & Access Management (78 to Mall)	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 5,629,934
P-9		Alps Road Widening	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 9,049,858
P-10		SR 10/West Broad St Safety & Access Mngmt - Ph 1 (Mid Oconee to Hancock Ave)	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 4,169,087
P-14		Hawthorne Avenue Widening Ph 1 (5-lane Broad St to Oglethorpe)	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 34,381,033

Required Elements

2045 MTP #	GDOT PI#	Project Name	County	Cost Band	Median Cost
P-15		Mitchell Bridge Rd / Timothy Rd Realignment	ACC	2026 - 2035	\$ 4,118,357
P-16		Milledge Avenue Safety Improvements	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 18,432,335
P-17		SR 10 LP at College Station Rd Intersection Improvements	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 5,024,640
P-18		Tallassee Road at Lavender Road Realignment	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 2,883,074
P-19		Lexington Road Safety & Access Management	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 8,553,606
P-20		SR 10 LP at Tallassee Road Interchange Improvement	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 21,847,145
P-21		SR 10 LP at Chase Street Interchange Improvement	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 16,909,393
P-22		Timothy Road Corridor & Safety Improvements - Ph 1 (Epps Bridge to Atl Hwy)	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 9,683,863
P-23		SR 10 / W. Broad St Safety & Access Mngmt - Ph 2 (median divided from Hancock to Pulaski)	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 4,015,972

Required Elements

2045 MTP #	GDOT PI#	Project Name	County	Cost Band	Median Cost
P-24		US 129 / Jefferson Road Safety Improvements (SR 10 LP to Lavendar Rd)	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 5,338,260
P-25		SR 10 LP at US 29 Interchange	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 49,882,576
P-26		Whitehall Rd / Simonton Bridge Rd Bridge Project	ACC	2019 - 2035	\$ 16,495,111
P-27		Fowler Drive Safety Improvements (Freeman Dr to Dville Rd)	ACC	2026 - 2035	\$ 4,218,906
P-29		Gaines School Rd Safety & Access Mgmt	ACC	2019 - 2045	\$ 20,943,422
P-33		Spring Valley Rd Safety Improvements	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 18,186,412
P-34		Hawthorne Avenue Widening - Ph 2 (Oglethorpe to Prince)	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 17,226,221
P-35		Jefferson River Rd Safety Improvements	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 11,720,117
P-36		SR 10 LP at US 441 Interchange	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 10,481,048

Required Elements

2045 MTP #	GDOT PI#	Project Name	County	Cost Band	Median Cost
P-37		Timothy Rd Corridor & Safety Improvements - Ph 2 (Epps Bridge south to SR 10 LP)	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 22,253,057
P-42	0007938	Barnett Shoals Rd Improvements (Whitehall Rd to Bob Godfrey)	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 1,294,717
P-43		S. Lumpkin St at West Lake Drive Roundabout	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 4,077,283
P-46	0007937	Whitehall Rd Widening (Milledge Ave to Oconee Co Line)	ACC	2036 - 2045	\$ 3,077,895
P-78	122890	SR 10 LP at Atlanta Highway Interchange	ACC	2019 - 2025	\$ 43,105,856

Community Work Program

2018-23 Work Program Progress & 2023-2028 Work Program Proposal

The Community Work Program translates the community's Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs, and Opportunities, identified in this Comprehensive Plan Update, into specific action items to be completed from 2023-2028. It also includes a Report of Accomplishments on the 2018 Comp Plan's Community Work Program. This element of the Comprehensive Plan serves as both a state-mandated planning tool and a strategic implementation guide.

The following project list provides information about each project including a project description, parties responsible for implementation, estimated costs, and an estimated completion date. This list is intended to guide the Unified Government's decisions about project priority and budgeting during the five year implementation period. It also provides a means of measuring progress and performance.

Since this document is produced and executed by the local government, only those projects within the realm of government responsibility are listed. The Community Work Program is not meant to highlight the day-to-day functions of staff but rather those activities that stand out as significant initiatives aimed at addressing policy, processes, or procedures; conducting studies; departmental goals; or capital project completion (to name some examples). It should be noted that project costs, timelines, and completion priority are subject to change over the five year implementation period based on how conditions evolve over the implementation period.



2018-23: Summary of Completed Projects

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Agriculture	Develop an Expanded Organics Collection Program	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$300,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Civic Engineering	Community Engagement Specialist	2018-2020	PIO	\$75,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Cultural Resources	Consider implementation of Athens Cultural Affairs Commission Master Plan	2018-2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Economic Development	Southern Network for Economic Mobility	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Economic Development	Southern Network for Economic Mobility	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Environmental	Review the erosion and sedimentation ordinance to determine effectiveness	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	COMPLETE
Environmental	Review the current mass grading ordinance to determine effectiveness	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	COMPLETE
Environmental	Landfill Expansion	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$3.2M	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Quarterly Newsletter Insert in Water Bills	2018-2020	PIO	\$7,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Animal shelter volunteer facilitator	2018-2020	Central Services	\$42,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Next Phase of Pay Study	2018-2020	H.R.	\$100,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Employee Volunteer Program	2018-2020	H.R.	\$5,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Relocate I.T. Office	2018-2020	I.T.	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Learning Management System	2018-2020	Org. Dev.	\$50,000-80,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Housing	Investigate standards whereby accessory dwelling units may be integrated with owner occupied housing in RS zones	2021-2023	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Housing	Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)	2018-2023	HCD	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Infrastrucutre	Energy Program Analyst Position	2018-2020	Central Services	\$67,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Infrastrucutre	Bio-solids reduction and reuse Master Plan	2018-2020	Public Utilities	\$200,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23: Summary of Completed Projects

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Infrastructure	Fiber Technician	2018-2020	T&PW	\$58,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Explore whether rezones are more appropriate than designation changes for non-conforming areas of the FDM	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Provide staff assistance and guidance on implementation of Envision Athens	2018-2023	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Conduct a study regarding the possibility of a historic district for Milledge Cir. / Castalia Ave.	2018-2019	Planning	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Conduct a comprehensive study of the Hancock Neighborhood	2018-2019	Planning	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Examine changes to the Plans Review Process involving electronic submittals and records	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Safety	Public Safety Software Migration	2018-2020	I.T.	\$50,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Social Services	Municipal Case Management System	2018-2020	Courts	\$43,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Increased service frequency on two routes	2018-2020	Transit	\$500,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Design for the rehabilitation of the airport's primary runway	2018-2020	ACCUG	\$250,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	MACORTS Long Range Plan Update	2018	Planning	\$50,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Runway 9/27 Rehabilitation and Overlay	2018	Airport	\$10,179,200	FAA/State/Local	COMPLETE
Transport	Transit Service Expansion Project	2018-2023	Transit	\$940,000	TSPLOST	COMPLETE
Transport	Whitehall Rd. at S. Milledge Ave. Project	2018-2023	T&PW	\$2,500,000	TSPLOST	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Health	QR Fitness Trails	2018-2020	Leisure Services	\$5,500 / trail	TBD	ABANDONED; community priorities have changed
Health	Review and implement the Athens Wellbeing Project	2018-2020	ACCUG	\$25,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Safety	Increase safety and training programs to reduce accidents, costs and to meet FTA mandated Public Transportation Safety Program guidelines	2018-2020	Transit	\$60,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Safety	Juvenile Court Peer Court	2018-2020	Courts	\$20,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Safety	Enhance emergency treatment capabilities as the next phase of improving services	2018-2020	Fire Dept.	\$30,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 9; Phase I: EMT-Basic is funded; Phase II: EMT-Advanced funding will be requested upon completion of Phase I
Safety	Comprehensive ACC Continuity of Operations	2018-2020	Emergency Mgmt.	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Safety	Animal Control Officer Weekend Service	2018-2020	Central Services	\$50,000	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 15; postponed due to insufficient staff
Safety	Juvenile Court Family Treatment Court Program Coordinator	2018-2020	Courts	\$62,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Safety	Increase staff training and improve emergency response planning by utilizing modern technology and practices	2018-2020	Corrections	\$68,000	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 28; postponed due to insufficient funding
Safety	Emergency Preparedness Public Education Campaign	2018-2020	Emergency Mgmt.	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 10; postponed due to insufficient staff
Safety	Public Safety Software Migration	2018-2020	I.T.	\$50,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Safety	Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Course	2018-2020	Emergency Mgmt.	\$10,000	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 11; postponed due to insufficient staff
Social Services	Probation Services Training	2018-2020	Courts	\$15,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Social Services	Probate, Juvenile, and Magistrate Case Management System	2018-2020	Courts	\$40,000	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 18; postponed due to insufficient staff
Social Services	Municipal Case Management System	2018-2020	Courts	\$43,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Social Services	Judicial Data Exchange Maintenance	2018-2020	Courts	\$40,400	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Social Services	Accountability Court Senior Case Management Specialist	2018-2020	Courts	\$26,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Education	Continue the bi-annual meetings of the School Board and Mayor and Commission	2018-2023	ACCUG/CCSD	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; not for carryover
Education	Partner with community resources and education facilities to provide training programs for incarcerated individuals	2018-2020	Corrections	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Economic Development	Establish a formal data measurement process to evaluate the effectiveness of economic-development incentives	2020	ACCUG	Varies	Varies	ONGOING; not for carryover
Economic Development	Leverage resources to develop a database with incentives of contaminated/abandoned properties that could be rehabilitated without demolition	2021-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; carried over as Item 1
Economic Development	Athens Sustainability Industry Partnership (ASIP)	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$1,500	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Economic Development	Traditional Economic Development Infrastructure Development	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$50,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 2
Economic Development	Airline recruitment marketing initiatives	2018-2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Economic Development	Southern Network for Economic Mobility	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Economic Development	Building an Innovation Ecosystem	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 3; Phase I: Innovation Needs Assessment Complete; Phase II: Develop work program based on study results
Economic Development	Economic Development Ambassadors	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; not for carryover
Economic Development	Identify methods to economically capitalize on the opportunities for medical research, training, and health care services.	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	TBD	N/A	ONGOING; carried over as Item 4
Housing	Investigate standards whereby accessory dwelling units may be integrated with owner occupied housing in RS zones	2021-2023	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Housing	Review taxing mechanisms and other policies to address gentrification	2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 29; postponed due to changing community priorities
Housing	Georgia Initiative for Community Housing (GICH)	2018-2023	HCD	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Explore the desirability of using Form Based Codes with development regulations	2018-2023	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 31; postponed due to changing community priorities
Economic Development	Southern Network for Economic Mobility	2018-2020	Econ. Dev.	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Land Use	Investigate lower minimum parking space requirements	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 32
Land Use	Explore minimum dwelling size regulations	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 33
Land Use	Explore opportunities and possible impacts associated with the creation of a second agricultural/residential zoning classification with increased density options	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 34; postponed due to changing community priorities
Land Use	Explore whether rezones are more appropriate than designation changes for non-conforming areas of the FDM	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Consider implementation of the C-N(Est.) zone, as recommended in a previous corridor study	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 35; postponed due to changing community priorities
Land Use	Provide staff assistance and guidance on implementation of Envision Athens	2018-2023	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Atlanta Hwy. Corridor Study	2018-2019	Planning	\$200,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 37
Land Use	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Lexington Rd. Corridor Study	2018-2019	Planning	\$200,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 38

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Land Use	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Epps Bridge Pkwy. Corridor Study	2018-2019	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 39; postponed due to changing community priorities
Land Use	Conduct a study regarding the possibility of a historic district for Milledge Cir. / Castalia Ave.	2018-2019	Planning	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Conduct a comprehensive study of the Hancock Neighborhood	2018-2019	Planning	\$25,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Development of Modified Design Standards for Commercial-Downtown / Multi-Family Projects	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 40; postponed due to changing community priorities
Land Use	Historic Preservation Ordinance Review and Evaluation	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 41; Phase I: Reformatted Design Standards Complete; Phase II: HPC Strategic Planning Underway
Land Use	Billboard inventory and Sign Ordinance Review	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 42; Phase II: Billboard Inventory Complete; Phase III: Sign Ordinance Review is underway
Land Use	Examine changes to the Plans Review Process involving electronic submittals and records	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Land Use	Possible establishment of a formal review process for single-family dwellings	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 43; postponed due to insufficient staff

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Land Use	Possible establishment of a formal review process for single-family dwellings	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 43; postponed due to insufficient staff
Land Use	Assist in the review and implementation of inclusionary zoning changes	2018-2020	Planning/HCD	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 36; Phase 1 for Multi-Family Completed; Phase II for Single-Family underway
Land Use	Systematically implement recommendations of the Prince Ave. Corridor Study	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 44
Land Use	Systematically implement recommendations of the Oak/Oconee St. Corridor Study	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 45
Land Use	Comprehensive analysis and update of the Future Development Map	2018-2020	Planning	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 46
Neighborhood	Explore the creation of neighborhood planning units	2021-2023	Planning	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 47; postponed due to changing community priorities
Agriculture	Develop an Expanded Organics Collection Program	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$300,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Environmental	Oconee Rivers Greenway Project	2018-2023	Leisure Services	\$10,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 20; N. Oconee Greenway 60% Complete; Additional phases in design

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Environmental	Firefly Trail Project	2018–2023	ACCUG	\$16,752,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 21; Final Trail Section in Property Acquisition Phase
Environmental	Divert 60% of waste from the landfill	2018	Solid Waste	TBD	TBD	ABANDONED; waste management goals will be revisited in new strategic plan
Environmental	Divert 75% of waste from the landfill	2020	Solid Waste	TBD	TBD	ABANDONED; waste management goals will be revisited in new strategic plan
Environmental	Set aside 20% of the county land area as protected greenspace	2018-2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 30; Approximately 13% of County is protected greenspace
Environmental	Reduce impact that invasive species have in the county	2021-2023	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Environmental	Support policies and actions to restore natural hydrologic processes	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; not for carryover
Environmental	Identify and prepare for local impacts associated with climate change	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; not for carryover
Environmental	Review the erosion and sedimentation ordinance to determine effectiveness	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Environmental	Review the current mass grading ordinance to determine effectiveness	2018-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	COMPLETE
Environmental	Investigate methods to restrict the use of plastic bags at points of sale and the sale of plastic bottles	2021-2023	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 24
Environmental	Landfill Expansion	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$3.2M	TBD	COMPLETE
Environmental	Landfill Leachate Treatment (secondary option to recirculation)	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$3M	TBD	ABANDONED; treatment system not required by GA EPD
Environmental	New Recovered Material Processing Center (RMPPF)	2018-2020	Solid Waste	\$9M	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 25; will be built as soon as approved SPLOST funds come in
Environmental	Enhanced Landscape Services for ACCUG Buildings	2018-2020	Central Services	\$43,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 7; incomplete due to lack of funds
Environmental	Greenway Network Landscape Maintenance Expansion	2018-2020	Central Services	\$77,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 8; incomplete due to partial funding
Cultural Resources	Downtown Riverfront Study	2018-2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 49; postponed due to changing community priorities

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Cultural Resources	Consider an ordinance or policy to protect historic architectural materials, urban archaeology, and historic landscapes	2021-2023	ACCUG	N/A	N/A	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 41; postponed due to changing community priorities
Cultural Resources	Pursue grants or other forms of funding to begin safely archiving historic public documents	2021-2023	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Cultural Resources	Consider implementation of Athens Cultural Affairs Commission Master Plan	2018-2020	ACCUG	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Cultural Resources	Expand the Counselor in Training (CIT) program	2018-2020	Leisure Services	\$35,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Cultural Resources	Athens Cultural Trail, connecting public art, historic locations, and cultural resources	2018-2021	ACAC	\$300,000	Local/SPLOST	ONGOING: carried over as Item 22; Downtown Art Walk Phase Underway
Civic Engineering	Community Engagement Specialist	2018-2020	PIO	\$75,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Airport Capital Improvements Program	2018-2023	Airport	\$1,531,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; not for carryover; due for completion in 2022
Transport	Transit Vehicle Expansion and Replacement Project	2018-2023	Transit	\$4,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; not for carryover

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Transport	Bus Stop and Transfer Facilities Improvements Project	2018-2023	Transit	\$500,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 60; bus stop upgrades complete; transfer station sites pursuing funding
Transport	Transit Service Expansion Project	2018-2023	Transit	\$940,000	TSPLOST	COMPLETE
Transport	Pavement Rehabilitation	2018–2023	T&PW	\$25,600,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; not for carryover
Transport	Tallassee Rd. Bridge Replacement Project	2018-2023	T&PW	\$6,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 50; Construction Underway
Transport	Downtown Transportation Improvements Program	2018-2023	T&PW	\$7,097,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 56; Construction Underway
Transport	Whitehall Rd. at S. Milledge Ave. Project	2018-2023	T&PW	\$2,500,000	TSPLOST	COMPLETE
Transport	Bicycle Improvements Program	2018-2023	T&PW	\$6,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 51; various multi-use paths and bike infrastructure are in engineering phases
Transport	Pedestrian Improvements Program	2018-2023	T&PW	\$11,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 51

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Transport	W. Broad Area Pedestrian Improvements	2018-2023	T&PW	\$4,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 52; moving into ROW and Construction Phases
Transport	Lexington Hwy. Corridor Improvements	2018-2023	T&PW	\$4,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 57; Design Phase is Underway
Transport	Atlanta Hwy. Corridor Improvements	2018-2023	T&PW	\$4,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 58; Design Phase is Underway
Transport	Prince Ave. Corridor Improvements	2018-2023	T&PW	\$4,000,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; carried over as Item 59; Design Phase is Underway
Transport	Acquisition of Private Streets Project	2018-2023	T&PW	\$340,000	TSPLOST	ONGOING; not for carryover
Transport	Plan and implement pedestrian infrastructure and practices to enhance safety and experience	2021-2023	T&PW	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 51; Complete Streets Policy Approved
Transport	Become a Silver Level Bicycle Friendly Community	2020	T&PW	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover; should be completed by Nov. 2022
Transport	Investigate design standards for residential streets to minimize pavement width and enhance public safety	2021-2023	T&PW	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover; should be completed by Oct. 2022

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Transport	Explore the potential for expanding transit into adjoining counties	2018-2023	Transit	TBD	TBD	ABANDONED; lack of interest from adjoining counties
Transport	Increase access to Fixed Route Transit with new routes and with zone based dial-a-ride deviated route services	2018-2020	Transit	\$400,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 61; Dial-A-Ride expansion complete; New routes postponed until staffing is sufficient
Transport	Increased service frequency on two routes	2018-2020	Transit	\$500,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Design for the rehabilitation of the airport's primary runway	2018-2020	ACCUG	\$250,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	MACORTS Long Range Plan Update	2018	Planning	\$50,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Transport	Runway 9/27 Rehabilitation and Overlay	2018	Airport	\$10,179,200	FAA/State/Local	COMPLETE
Infrastructure	Energy Program Analyst Position	2018-2020	Central Services	\$67,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Infrastructure	Bio-solids reduction and reuse Master Plan	2018-2020	Public Utilities	\$200,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Infrastructure	Fiber Technician	2018-2020	T&PW	\$58,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Infrastructure	Rehabilitate and replace assets to maintain economic value	2018-2020	Public Utilities	TBD	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 14; next phase Brooklyn Creek Sewer Replacement
Infrastructure	Water Reuse	2018-2020	Public Utilities	\$60M	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 12; Phase I: Pump Station under construction; Phase II: Re-use piping
Government Operations	Quarterly Newsletter Insert in Water Bills	2018-2020	PIO	\$7,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Increase Public Education, Marketing, and Outreach programs for public awareness of transportation options	2018-2020	Transit	\$60,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Government Operations	Improve customer service	2018-2020	Public Utilities	\$15,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 13; Phase I: Implement recommendations of WBO Audit Complete; Phase II: Acquire new billing software underway
Government Operations	Animal shelter volunteer facilitator	2018-2020	Central Services	\$42,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Government Operations	Stormwater education	2018-2020	T&PW	\$80,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Government Operations	Branding Initiative for ACCUG	2018-2020	PIO	\$100,000	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 6; postponed due to lack of funds
Government Operations	TVs in Transit System Buses	2018-2020	PIO	\$75,000	TBD	ABANDONED; ACC Transit installed digital signage and cameras instead
Government Operations	Tyler Munis Reporting Software	2018-2020	Finance	\$800,000	TBD	ONGOING; carried over as Item 19; Phase I: Finance Implementation Complete; Phase II: HR Implementation underway
Government Operations	Judicial I.T. Administrator	2018-2020	Courts	\$74,950	TBD	POSTPONED; carried over as Item 17; postponed due to insufficient funding
Government Operations	Performance Measurement/Metrix Software	2018-2020	HR	\$10,000	TBD	ABANDONED; using Munis HRIS instead
Government Operations	Next Phase of Pay Study	2018-2020	HR	\$100,000	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Employee Volunteer Program	2018-2020	HR	\$5,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2018-23 Report of Accomplishments

Category	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Status
Government Operations	Great Place to Work Certification	2018-2020	HR	\$3,500	TBD	ABANDONED; insufficient staff
Government Operations	Create redundant, high availability networks	2018-2020	I.T.	\$12,000	TBD	ONGOING; not for carryover
Government Operations	Relocate I.T. Office	2018-2020	I.T.	TBD	TBD	COMPLETE
Government Operations	Purchase data analytics software for reporting inefficient and ineffective processes	2018-2020	Operational Analysis	\$5,100	TBD	ABANDONED; insufficient staff
Government Operations	Explore opportunities to increase diversity among appointed boards/committees/authorities etc.	2018-2023	Mayor & Commission	N/A	N/A	ONGOING; not for carryover
Government Operations	Learning Management System	2018-2020	Organizational Development	\$50,000-80,000	TBD	COMPLETE

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

The 2023-28 Community Work Program carries forward the remaining community Goals, Strategies, Policies, Needs, and Opportunities from the 2018 Community Work Program, and folds in the items identified as part of the current Comprehensive Plan Update. This combined list is translated into specific action items to be completed during the next five year implementation period (2023-2028).

The following project list provides information about each project including a project description, parties responsible for implementation, estimated costs, and an estimated completion date. This list is intended to guide the Unified Government's decisions about project priority and budgeting during the next five year implementation period. It also provides a means of measuring progress and performance.

Since this document is produced and executed by the local government, only those projects within the realm of government responsibility are listed. The Community Work Program is not meant to highlight the day-to-day functions of staff but rather those activities that stand out as significant initiatives aimed at addressing policy, processes, or procedures; conducting studies; departmental goals; or capital project completion (to name some examples). It should be noted that project costs, timelines, and completion priority are subject to change over the five year implementation period based on how conditions evolve over the implementation period.



2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
1	Create database of brownfields for potential redress	2023-2024	Economic Development, Office of Sustainability, GIO	Staff Time	General Fund
2	Infrastructure Expansion to marketable economic development sites	2023-2028	Econ. Dev, Public Utilities	TBD	General Fund, Grants, Loans
3	Create work program based on Innovation Ecosystem Needs Assessment Study	2023-2024	Econ. Dev, UGA Innovation District, UGA Small Business Dev Center, Goodwill Industries, goodBiz, SCORE, the Minority Business & Nonprofit Assoc, NE GA Black Chamber of Commerce, Athens Area Chamber of Commerce	TBD	General Fund, Grants
4	Identify methods to economically capitalize on opportunities for bioscience, pharmaceuticals, and health services	2023-2028	Economic Development	Staff Time	General Fund
5	Evaluate zoning code to ensure a balance of housing types are constructed and available	2023-2025	Housing & Community Development, Planning, Economic Development	Staff Time	General Fund
6	Branding initiative for ACCGov	2024	Public Information Of	\$100,000	General Fund, Capital Fund
7	Enhanced Landscape Services for ACCUG Buildings	2023-2028	Central Services	\$43,000	General Fund, Hotel/Motel Tax
8	Greenway Network Landscape Maintenance Expansions	2023-2028	Central Services	\$77,000	General Fund

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
9	Enhance EMT emergency treatment capabilities	2024-2025	Fire	\$30,000	General Fund
10	Emergency Preparedness Public Education Campaign	2023-2028	Emergency Mgmt.	\$60,000	General Fund
11	Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) Course	2023-2028	Emergency Mgmt.	\$10,000	General Fund
12	Installation of Water Re-Use System	2023-2028	Public Utilities	TBD	Grants, Enterprise Fund
13	Improve Customer Service	2024	Public Utilities	\$1.7M	Grants, Enterprise Fund
14	Replace Sewer and Water Infrastructure	2023-2028	Public Utilities	TBD	Grants, Enterprise Fund
15	Animal Control Officer Weekend Service	2024-2026	Animal Services	\$67,000	General Fund
16	Hire Animal Foster Care Coordinator	2023-2024	Animal Services	\$42,000	General Fund

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
17	Judicial I.T. Administrator	2025	Courts	\$75,000	General Fund
18	Probate, Juvenile, and Magistrate Case Management System	2023	Courts	\$40,000	SPLOST
19	Tyler Munis Reporting Software	2023-2024	Finance/HR	\$2.1M	GMA Direct Lease Financing Program, General Capital Projects Fund
20	Oconee Rivers Greenway Project	2023-2028	Leisure Services	TBD	T-SPLOST, SPLOST, Grants
21	Firefly Trail Project	2023-2026	Leisure Services	\$7.5M	T-SPLOST
22	Athens Cultural Trail	2023-2028	Athens Cultural Affairs Commission	TBD	SPLOST, General Fund
23	Develop Solid Waste Strategic Plan	2023	Solid Waste	Staff Time	Landfill or Collections Enterprise Funds
24	Investigate methods to restrict the use of plastic bags at the point of sale and reduce the sale of plastic bottles	2023-2025	Solid Waste	Staff Time	Landfill or Collections Enterprise Funds
25	New Recovered Materials Processing Center	2026-2028	Solid Waste	\$9M	SPLOST

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
26	Landfill Expansion (Cell 2A, 2B)	2023-2027	Solid Waste	TBD	Loans
27	CHARM Creative Re-Use Space	2026	Solid Waste	\$1M	SPLOST
28	Increase Staff Training and Improve Emergency Response Planning	2023-2028	Corrections	\$68,000	General Fund
29	Review taxing mechanisms and other policies to address gentrification	2023-2028	ACCUG	Staff Time	General Fund
30	Set aside 20% of the county land area as protected greenspace	2023-2028	ACCUG	TBD	SPLOST, Grants
31	Explore the desirability of using Form Based Codes with development regulations	2024-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
32	Investigate lower minimum parking space requirements	2024-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
33	Explore minimum dwelling size regulations	2024-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
34	Explore opportunities and possible impacts associated with the creation of a second agricultural/residential zoning classification with increased density options	2024-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
35	Consider implementation of the C-N(Est.) zone, as recommended in a previous corridor study	2024-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
36	Assist in the review and implementation of inclusionary zoning changes	2023-2024	Planning, HCD	Staff Time	General Fund
37	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Atlanta Hwy. Corridor Study	2023-2028	Planning, SPLOST Office	\$200,000	General Fund, SPLOST
38	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Lexington Rd. Corridor Study	2023-2028	Planning	\$200,000	General Fund, SPLOST
39	Provide staff assistance and guidance for the Epps Bridge Pkwy. Corridor Study	2023-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
40	Development of Modified Design Standards for Commercial-Downtown / Multi-Family Projects	2025	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
41	Historic Preservation Ordinance Review and Evaluation	2023-2024	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
42	Billboard inventory and Sign Ordinance Review	2025	Planning, Attorney's Office	Staff Time	General Fund
43	Possible establishment of a formal review process for single-family dwellings	2023	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
44	Systematically implement recommendations of the Prince Ave. Corridor Study	2023-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
45	Systematically implement recommendations of the Oak/Oconee St. Corridor Study	2023-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
46	Comprehensive analysis and update of the Future Land Use Map	2023-2024	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
47	Explore the creation of neighborhood planning units	2026	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
48	Set aside 20% of the county land area as protected greenspace	2023-2028	Planning	Staff Time	General Fund
49	Downtown Riverfront Study	2023-2028	ACCUG	Staff Time	General Fund

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
50	Tallassee Rd Bridge Replacement	2023	TPW	\$8.5M	SPLOST, GTIB Grant, TSPLOST
51	Bike and Pedestrian Improvement Program	2023-2028	TPW	\$8M	T-SPLOST, General Fund
52	W. Broad Area Pedestrian Improvements	2023-2025	TPW, GDOT	\$5.9M	GDOT, SPLOST
53	Vision Zero Implementation	2023-2028	TPW	TBD	Grants, General Fund
54	Become a Silver Level Bicycle Community	2023-2028	TPW	TBD	Grants, General Fund, T-splst, splst
55	Livestream Pipe Replacement	2023-2028	TPW	\$30M	Grants, SPLOST, TSPLOST, Stormwater Enterprise Fund
56	Downtown Transportation Improvement	2023	SPLOST Office	\$7.1M	T-SPLOST
57	Lexington Hwy. Corridor Improvements	2023	SPLOST Office	\$4M	T-SPLOST

2023-28 Comp Plan Community Work Program

Number	Project	Year	Responsibility	Cost Estimate	Funding Source
58	Atlanta Hwy. Corridor Improvements	2024	SPLOST Office	\$4M	T-SPLOST
59	Prince Ave. Corridor Improvements	2023	SPLOST Office	\$4M	T-SPLOST
60	Construct Bus Route Transfer Stations	2025	Transit	\$9M	FTA Grants, TSPLOST, General Fund
61	Increase access to fixed route transit and zone based dial-a-ride deviated route services	2025-2028	Transit	\$1.5M	FTA Grants, General Fund

*M denotes millions of U.S. Dollars (e.g. \$1.5M = \$1,500,000.00)

Required Participation

Athens-Clarke County hosted a series of public meetings to involve stakeholders and members of the public including regular meetings of the Steering Committee and meetings with the general public across the County. The following schedule, legal ad, and sign-in sheets serve as evidence of this process.

The Athens-Clarke County Planning Department held the following Steering Committee Meetings during the Comprehensive Plan update process:

March 16, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
March 31, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
April 21, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
May 26, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
June 16, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
July 28, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
August 18, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium
September 22, 2022 5:30-7:00 ; 120 W. Dougherty Street Auditorium

The Mayor & Commission received an overview and comment on the Comprehensive Plan Draft at their work session on November 10, 2022.

The Planning Commission considered the plan document at their November 3rd meeting, December 8th meeting, and will do so again at their January 2023 meeting.

Public NoticesPublic Notices

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSIONS
REGARDING THE
2023 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR
ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY**

The Athens-Clarke County Planning Department has released a draft of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan for Athens-Clarke County for public review and comment. The public is invited to review the plan document posted on the Planning Department's website: www.aocgov.com/Updates-to-the-Comprehensive-Plan.

A series of public informational sessions regarding the 2023 Comprehensive Plan hosted by Planning Department staff have been scheduled for the following dates, times, and locations.

Monday Dec. 10, 5:30 – 7:00 PM; ACC Fire Station #1 (900 Galeharpe Avenue)
Tuesday Dec. 13, 5:30 – 7:00 PM; ACC Fire Station #2 (265 Cleveland Road)
Thursday Dec. 15, 5:30 – 7:00 PM; ACC Fire Station #7 (2350 Barnett Shoals Road)
Saturday Dec. 17, 10:00 AM – Noon; ACC Fire Station #3 (1190 South Milledge Avenue)
Monday Dec. 19, 5:30 – 7:00 PM; ACC Fire Station #5 (1650 Donelsonville Road)

Planning Staff will present at these sessions to provide information regarding the plan document and process, and to answer questions. Comments will be received during those sessions, and public comment can also be submitted by emailing the Planning Department at planning@ocgov.com, and using "2023 Comprehensive Plan" in the subject line.

A paper copy of the 2023 Comprehensive Plan draft is available for review in the offices of the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department, 120 W. Dougherty Street. For more information, please contact the Planning Department at 706-613-3515 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

This is the 12th day of December, 2022
By: Brad Griffin, Planning Director

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Required Participation

2023 Comprehensive Plan Public Input DECEMBER 17, 2022

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	ADDRESS
Michael McLanden	201-2 Hamilton Rd, Athens
Brian Seelos	1063 Ivywood Drive Athens GA 30606
Ashley Seelos	1063 Ivywood Drive Athens, GA 30606
Leah Lozada	450 Providence Rd. 30606
Kimberly Koelke	345 Ashbrook Ln
Jay Kalka	345 Ashbrook Lane
Jeb Bradberry	120 Fortson Ga 30606
Richard Aaron	591 Milledge Ter 30606
Maurice Theriot	137 Ashbrook Drive 30605
Barbara Barnett	330 Athens Rd, Winterville, GA 30683

2023 Comprehensive Plan Public Input DECEMBER 17, 2022

SIGN-IN SHEET

NAME	ADDRESS
M. Davis	mcdavisg@bellsouth.net 148 Spruce Valley Rd. Athens
Tawana Mattox	295 Fairway Dr. Athens GA
Sally Kimmel-Sheppard	314 Beechwood Dr. Athens sally@amishinathens.com
dr.tawanamattox@gmail.com	

References

Mayor and Commission Strategic Plan FY23-25

The ACCGov Strategic Plan outlines goals, strategies, and initiatives that ACCGov will work to implement between fiscal years 2023 – 2025 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025). Goals and strategies were developed by the Mayor and Commission at a series of retreats in the fall of 2021. Initiatives were developed by ACCGov staff and reviewed and prioritized by the Mayor and Commission in January 2022. The Mayor and Commission approved the Strategic Plan and its goals, strategies, and initiatives in March 2022. Progress on the strategic plan initiatives will be updated and available at: <https://www.accgov.com/strategicplan>

Housing & Community Development Consolidated Plan

The 2021-2025 ACC Consolidated Plan is a 5-year plan that describes the ACCGov's community development priorities and multiyear goals based on an assessment of housing and community development needs, an analysis of housing and economic market conditions, and resources available to the community. The plan can be viewed here: <https://www.accgov.com/DocumentCenter/View/77608/ACC-ConPlan-FY21-FY25>

Northeast Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (NEGRC) serves as the Economic Development District (EDD) for the 12-county Northeast Georgia Region, through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). To retain EDD designation, NEGRC regularly maintains and updates the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for Northeast Georgia, including Athens-Clarke County, with guidance from local public and private stakeholders. The document can be viewed here: https://negrc.org/uploads/sites/4/2022/09/CEDS_2022_FINAL_WEB-1.pdf

MACORTS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

The Madison-Athens-Clarke-Oconee Regional Transportation Study serves as the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Athens area. This MTP is the 20-year plan that sets the goals and objectives, and strategies, and identifies specific projects to address the transportation needs within the MPO area to ensure mobility for people and goods. This update, required every five years, includes the identification of the existing conditions within the MPO, as well as the future conditions through the planning horizon year of 2045. The plan can be viewed here: <http://www.macorts.org/files/MA-CORTS-2045-MTP-FINAL-10-9-19smaller.pdf>

Greenway Network Plan

The Greenway Network Plan was created in 2016 and updated in 2020 to establish a clear vision going forward for all associated land and facilities of the Greenway, as well as provide planning, design, and overall management coordination for system of parks, trails, and waterways. The entire document can be found here: <https://www.accgov.com/7143/Greenway-Network-Master-Plan>

Public Utilities Strategic Plan FY23-25

The Public Utilities Strategic Plan has been developed to guide the management of the County's water resources. It outlines the Department's mission, vision, and high-level goals over the next 3-5 years as well as a roadmap for meeting these objectives. The document can be found here: <https://www.accgov.com/10496/Public-Utilities-Department-Strategic-Pl>