

Georgia Department of Community Affairs  
**Supplemental Planning Recommendations**

**OPTIONAL PLAN ELEMENTS**

*Each community is encouraged to go beyond the minimum required elements specified in the Local Planning Standards and supplement its comprehensive plan with other optional plan elements to make the overall plan the best possible fit for the community. Some suggested optional plan elements are suggested below, but each community is also encouraged to include optional plan elements other than those listed here.*

**Infrastructure and Community Facilities Element.** This element could include the following components:

(a) Evaluate the adequacy and useful life of the following major community facilities and infrastructure for meeting future needs of the community: water supply and treatment, sewerage system and wastewater treatment, fire protection, public safety, parks and recreation, stormwater management, and solid waste management facilities.

(b) Develop a strategy for making the most efficient use of existing infrastructure to accommodate future development in the community and ensuring these facilities are used to appropriately direct development patterns of the community. This strategy must be consistent with both the Land Use Element and the countywide Service Delivery Strategy.

(c) Include a year-by-year investment plan for improving and maintaining the community facilities and infrastructure consistent with the above strategy. This investment plan should be integrated into the Community Work Program and must include the following information for each listed investment or improvement:

- Brief description of the activity;
- Timeframe for initiating and completing the activity;
- Responsible party for implementing the activity;
- Estimated cost (if any) of implementing the activity; and
- Funding source(s), if applicable.

**Natural Resources Element.** This element would typically evaluate how new development is likely to impact the following resources and identify needed regulations or policies for their protection or management and include these in the Community Work Program: environmentally sensitive areas, water resources, watersheds, steep slopes, soil erosion, floodplains, soil plant and animal habitats, farmland. It is also recommended that the community decide what additional local measures are needed to address the Department of Natural Resources Environmental Planning Criteria (DNR Rules 391-3-16) and include these in the Community Work Program.

**Target Areas.** These are geographic areas of the community that will require supplemental local investment, special development incentives or regulations, focused community action, or other special treatment in order to address their unique features, problems or trends and maintain quality of life in the future. Each area identified should have corresponding implementation measures in the Community Work Program.

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This element would typically include evaluation of the land use patterns and trends within the jurisdiction to determine if any Target Areas currently exist or are likely to develop in the future. Your community may identify many different types of Target Areas, and creativity in identifying these areas is encouraged, balanced against community resources available to address the needs of these areas. Following are suggested types of target areas you may find in your community:

- Areas of significant natural or cultural resources, particularly where these are likely to be intruded upon or otherwise impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses is likely to occur or where the pace of development may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation;
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (such as declining strip commercial corridors);
- Large abandoned structures or sites, including those that may be environmentally contaminated;
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities (scattered vacant sites);
- Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the community as a whole.

**Community Sustainability Element.** This element provides an opportunity to assess current sustainability efforts and identify Community Work Program activities for addressing any identified needs or opportunities. Strategies to consider include waste management, energy efficiency and renewable energy generation, green building construction and renovation, water conservation and reuse, green economic development, sustainable procurement and purchasing, and local food systems.

**Disaster Resilience Element.** This element would typically include the following:

**(a) Hazard Mitigation.** It is recommended that the community formally adopt the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) into the comprehensive plan. Note that the LHMPs are required under 44 CFR 201 to be updated every 5 years. Using your LHMP, reference and summarize the risk assessment which identifies maps and describes the potential natural hazards to your community, assesses the vulnerability of life and property to those hazards, and evaluates the risk of occurrence of those hazards. Maps that identify hazard areas within the community should be included. Use that assessment as a tool in identifying specific hazard mitigation measures to be included in your Community Work Program, many of which are already identified in your LHMP, to reduce your community's vulnerability to natural hazards and promote resilience and facilitate recovery. Such measures may include floodplain development regulations, wind-resistant building design/construction, surface permeability requirements, steep slope management regulations, local acquisition of high-risk areas, subdivision ordinances that require redundancy in the street network, dune setbacks in coastal areas, etc.

**(b) Disaster Response and Recovery.** Using your Local Emergency Operations Plan (if available), Long-Term Disaster Recovery Plan (if available), the LHMP, and other appropriate planning documents, prepare for post-disaster operations by adopting an all-hazards approach to response that clearly assigns roles and

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responsibilities to specific government entities and non-governmental partners. Identify potential resources the community could use to facilitate short-term recovery priorities (local commerce, schools, medical facilities, housing/sheltering, government operations, etc.). Prepare long-term reconstruction guidelines that create a framework to guide community decision making that may include: how to deal with non-conforming uses, prioritizing public services for reconstruction (e.g., municipal water/wastewater infrastructure vs. street signs/traffic signals), identifying potential post-disaster comprehensive plan and regulatory amendments that may move the community closer to its vision.

**Education Element.** This element could be used to identify needs and opportunities related to education and workforce readiness of the community, and include Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs and opportunities, considering such factors as local graduation rates, comparative test scores, local access to higher educational opportunities, local vocational training opportunities, and coordination among local economic development and training programs to ensure an appropriately prepared workforce.

**Greenspace Element.** This element would typically include mapping all environmentally sensitive areas of the community, including any parks or greenspace already existing. Then this map would be used to identify needed linkages to create a connective and continuous greenspace network running throughout the community. The community should then identify Community Work Program activities for establishing and maintaining the identified greenspace network, including planned land acquisitions, development restrictions, or creation of attractive parks, trails and passive recreational spaces to enhance the quality of life of community residents.

**Historic and Cultural Resources Element.** This element provides an opportunity to evaluate how new development or neighborhood decline is likely to impact important local cultural resources, such as historic landmarks and neighborhoods. The community should then identify needed regulations or policies for protection or management of these resources and include these in Community Work Program.

**Human Services Element.** This element would be used to identify needs and opportunities related to human services opportunities available to citizens of the community, and include Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs and opportunities, considering such community issues as abuse and neglect, addiction, disadvantaged children and teens, consumer protection, court services, health services, mental health, homelessness, food benefits, people with disabilities, public health, employment services, and senior citizens.

**Intergovernmental Coordination Element.** This element could be used to identify opportunities for coordination with other jurisdictions on issues of shared concern, or where there are opportunities for cost savings or improved effectiveness through joint efforts. The community should then develop Community Work Program activities for improving coordination where opportunities are identified. Organizations to consider for coordination opportunities include: adjacent local governments; independent special

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authorities and districts, such as water and sewer authorities, industrial or downtown development authorities; school boards; and federal, state, or regional agencies.

**Population Element.** This element would typically include identification of needs and opportunities related to population trends of the community, and include Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs and opportunities, considering such factors as rate of population growth, changes in age distribution, income distribution, poverty levels, educational attainment, and commuting patterns.

**Public Safety Element.** This element might be used to identify needs and opportunities related to public safety, and include Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs and opportunities, considering such factors as current adequacy and future demand for police protection, fire protection, and emergency management services within the community.

**Recreation Element.** This element would typically include identification of needs related to recreational opportunities available to citizens of the community, and identification of Community Work Program activities for addressing these needs, considering such factors as access and availability of local facilities for team and individual sports activities (softball, soccer, tennis, etc.), access and availability of passive recreational facilities (parks, walking/hiking trails, biking facilities, etc.), and other unique local recreational opportunities (fishing, boating, bird watching, etc.).

**Solid Waste Management Element.** This element provides an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of existing solid waste and recycling collection and handling systems for residents and businesses. The community should then develop Community Work Program activities for addressing any identified needs or opportunities. Components of the local solid waste management system to consider include collection infrastructure (both waste and recyclable material); disposal, including capacity assurance; land limitation/plan consistency; education/enforcement, specifically addressing littering and illegal dumping; proximity to landfills and/or waste transfer stations, and an awareness of regional disposal capacity that may drive future landfill siting action; regional manufacturers reliant on supplies of recyclable materials and management of debris generated by natural or man-made disasters or service interruptions.