



GMRC Information Form - Local Comprehensive Plan Monitoring and Implementation Assistance

As part of our services provided in partnership with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission's (GMRC) will be conducting meetings with local staff and elected officials to remind them of their local comprehensive planning responsibilities while also informing you of available supporting resources and reviewing your latest plan materials to see how we can assist with plan implementation. Both DCA and the GMRC are committed to helping local governments achieve their visions and succeed in accomplishing plan objectives, so hopefully these meetings and these materials will prove a beneficial tool in support of your community's development.

Planning in Georgia

The Georgia Planning Act of 1989 established the framework for how local governments in Georgia plan for their future in conjunction with neighboring governments, utility providers and other stakeholders. Local comprehensive plans help governments address critical issues and opportunities while moving toward realization of its unique vision for the community's future. The planning requirements also provide technical guidance to communities in advancing the State's goals of:

- A growing and balanced economy;
- Protection of environmental, natural and cultural resources;
- Provision of infrastructure and services to support efficient growth and development patterns;
- Access to adequate and affordable housing for all residents;
- Coordination of land use planning and transportation planning to support sustainable economic development, protection of natural and cultural resources and provision of adequate and affordable housing; and
- Coordination of local planning efforts with other local service providers and authorities, neighboring communities and state and regional plans.

Local governments who develop and maintain a comprehensive plan in accordance with the minimum standards and requirements are assigned a "Qualified Local Government" (QLG) status, making them eligible for all forms of State funding and assistance. Local governments also use their comprehensive plan to monitor progress in achieving their own goals with regards to community development, effective capital improvement strategies and more.

Local Plan Deadlines

A sheet has been included listing the upcoming due dates for your community. At any time you can also go to DCA's web site (address below) to track the next required due date for your community. Please note that in some instances your community may have different due dates for your next plan update, your next Service Delivery Agreement update, and (if applicable) your annual CIE update. If at any time you need assistance finding this information or determining your status please don't hesitate to contact the GMRC planning department at the number below.

<http://dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/specifics.asp>



Local Planning Resources

If your community has an approaching deadline and needs assistance with developing any element of your plan, in part or in whole, DCA also has a variety of resources available on their web site.

<http://dca.ga.gov/development/PlanningQualityGrowth/programs/planning.asp>

You may also request assistance with *basic plan preparation from the GMRC *at no additional cost* to you. This is provided to you through our annual service contracts with DCA, allowing us to support local planning at any level for communities that retain their Qualified Local Government (QLG) status. If you're interested in having us work for you in this regard all we require is a letter from your chief elected official requesting such assistance and we'll make arrangements to incorporate this into our coming work programs. The GMRC can help as requested, even producing the full basic plan document.

**Basic Plans = The minimal level required for your particular government, which varies depending on your size and classification as determined by DCA.*

Regional Plan Compliance

Like our local governments the GMRC maintains a Regional Plan, developed as a bottom-up document that incorporates the objectives and issues identified in the local plans for all of our member communities. The Regional Plan identifies several performance measures targeted for our region which represent best practices or achievements indicative of communities actively seeking to plan and develop themselves in accordance with a defined vision. Local plans are evaluated for their consistency with the Regional Plan, which in turns helps the GMRC identify areas where they can better assist each community.

Local Plan Implementation Review and Assistance

In addition to our availability to help communities develop and maintain their comprehensive plans, the GMRC current contracts with the DCA includes an element for *Local Discretionary Assistance* which allows our office to help the local governments with any project identified within their local comprehensive plan. This work by our staff would be covered by the DCA contract, meaning no additional cost is incurred by the local government.

This can be for any variety of services within our capabilities, and the limit of time and work will only be based on our budget for the year and the volume of requests received. In the past our use of these funds have helped out with a housing survey and assessment, environmental studies and updating local ordinances. Any project that is considered consistent with the issues or work scope identified within your plan is eligible, or, if the issue is new, your plan can be amended to include references for the new project.

If you have a particular project or issue with which our department can assist then please let me know and we'd be happy to see if we can include this in our list of projects for the DCA contract. We want to make sure we help as many people as possible with this element and do our part to support your efforts in advancing your community.

Please review your community's current Short-Term Work Program to see how well you're accomplishing the tasks listed and how the GMRC might be able to assist with you with achieving any or all of the remaining tasks.

