

Northwest Georgia Regional Vision and Goals

Vision Statement

The Northwest Georgia Regional Plan guides the region's development and conservation of land, resources and infrastructure; helps align local, regional and state planning and funding; expands access to economic opportunities, adequate and safe housing, outdoor recreation and basic infrastructure; supports education pathways and programs that meet the region's needs and residents' goals; supports intergovernmental coordination; and improves Northwest Georgia's opportunities for health, economic growth, and prosperity.

Regional Goals

Natural and Cultural Resources: To identify, conserve and protect the environmental, natural, historic and cultural resources of Northwest Georgia; To improve the visibility of the region's resources and to include them in local and regional plans and projects.

Community Facilities and Services: To ensure the provision of adequate community facilities and services throughout the region to implement local and regional community and economic development objectives, land use plans and service delivery strategies.

Housing: To ensure that all residents of Northwest Georgia have access to affordable, decent, and safe housing.

Land Use: Present current and future land use development patterns and recommended conservation areas as a guide for wise growth in conjunction with local land use plans and policies.

Transportation: Ensure coordinated transportation planning within this region and with adjacent regions to provide access to work, housing, healthcare and education for all residents and to serve regionally important economic development objectives.

High Speed Internet: Increase coverage and accessibility of high-speed internet for residential, commercial, and industrial areas, with a focus on rural areas (2017 CEDS).

Traditional Infrastructure: Ensure communities in the region have adequate basic infrastructure to implement their community and economic development objectives (2017 CEDS).

Local and Regional Coordination: To promote effective planning and coordination of efforts between neighboring local governments, local and regional service providers and authorities, adjacent regions and state agencies.

Human Capital: Improve workforce skills particularly in high skill, high paying occupations and industries; increase access to the entire range of educational opportunities for employment in skilled and professional positions through enhanced educational opportunities and active career counseling; Ensure appropriate human services are available to meet the needs of the region's current and future workforce (2017 CEDS).

Economic Development: Implement the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and local economic development strategies and plans.

Regional Policies

The Guiding Principles that follow include policies necessary to provide ongoing guidance and direction to regional leaders for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision or addressing Regional Issues and Opportunities. The Guiding Principles are categorized by the same planning elements used to categorize the foregoing Regional Issues and Opportunities.

Economic Development

GP1.1 We will support programs for retention, expansion and creation of businesses and industries that are a good fit for our region's economy in terms of job skill requirements and linkages to existing businesses.

GP1.2 We will make educational and training opportunities readily available to all residents to enable them to improve job skills, adapt to technological advances, or pursue life ambitions.

GP1.3 We will target reinvestment to declining, existing neighborhoods, vacant or underutilized sites or buildings in preference to new economic development projects in previously undeveloped areas.

GP1.4 We will take into account impacts on infrastructure and natural resources in our decision making on economic development projects.

GP1.5 We will encourage the development of downtowns as vibrant centers of the region's communities in order to improve overall attractiveness and quality of life.

Housing

GP2.1 We will strive to eliminate substandard or dilapidated housing in our region's communities.

GP2.2 We will encourage development of housing opportunities that enable residents to live close to their places of employment.

GP2.3 We will support and promote an adequate range of safe, affordable, inclusive, and resource-efficient housing in our region's communities

GP2.4 We will increase opportunities for low-to-moderate income families to move into affordable owner-occupied housing.

Natural and Cultural Resources

GP3.1 We will encourage new development to locate in suitable locations in order to protect scenic and natural resources, environmentally sensitive areas, or significant historic or archaeological resources from encroachment.

GP3.2 We will ensure safe and adequate supplies of water through protection of ground and surface water sources.

GP3.3 We support the protection and revitalization of historic areas in our region's communities.

Community Facilities and Services

GP4.1 Our region's communities will make efficient use of existing infrastructure and public facilities in order to minimize the need for costly new/expanded facilities and services.

GP4.2 Creation of recreational facilities and set-aside of greenspace are important to our region's communities.

GP4.3 We will promote enhanced solid waste reduction and recycling initiatives.

GP4.4 We will strive to ensure that all the region's residents, regardless of age, ability, or income, have access to critical services.

Intergovernmental Coordination

GP5.1 We will seek opportunities to share services and facilities with neighboring jurisdictions when mutually beneficial.

GP5.2 We will work jointly with neighboring jurisdictions on developing solutions for shared regional issues (such as growth management, watershed protection).

GP5.3 We will consult other public entities in our area when making decisions that are likely to impact them, and we will provide input to other public entities in our area when they are making decisions that are likely to have an impact on our jurisdiction.

Transportation

GP6.1 We will make decisions that encourage walking, biking, car-pooling, and other alternative transportation choices.

GP6.2 We will target transportation improvements to support desired development patterns for the region.

Land Use

GP7.1 Our region's communities will use land efficiently to avoid the costs and problems associated with urban sprawl.

GP7.2 We will strive to preserve the rural character of our region and to provide the opportunity for agricultural and forestry activities to remain a vital part of the region.

GP7.3 We encourage development that is sensitive to the historic context, sense of place, and overall setting of the region's communities.

GP7.4 We are committed to redeveloping and enhancing existing commercial and industrial areas in preference to new development in previously undeveloped areas.

GP7.5 We will promote the protection and maintenance of trees and green open space in all new developments.

Regional Development Map, Areas Requiring Special Attention, Regionally Important Resources

The Goals Section will also include the Regional Development Map and Areas requiring Special Attention Map and Narrative. The Areas Requiring Special Attention map will include updated Regionally Important Resources. These updated resources may include the following:

1. Blueways
2. All trails, including Pinhoti, in correct place
3. Trail of Tears
4. Other Cherokee/Native American sites
5. Civil War sites/routes
6. Other types of historic sites that may have received recent designation
7. Scenic Byways
8. Water Supply Watersheds
9. Remove proposed Greenways if the greenway has been built. For example: the Silver Comet Trail, Pinhoti trail
10. Proposed Silver Comet Trail extension to Cave Springs
11. State Wildlife Management Areas-update boundaries
12. Forest Service boundary updates

The update of the Regionally Important Resource Map will be done concurrently with the update of the Regional Plan.