**Priority Needs and Opportunities**

### Transportation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implement planned improvements to US 411 and existing East/West Connections throughout the region for freight carriers to more safely navigate key routes including those associated with the Appalachian Regional Port and anticipated inland port in Gainesville area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Improve and expand connections to interstates, Appalachian Regional Port, suppliers and employment centers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Additional bike and pedestrian options and connections are needed.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Expanded coordination of transit and/or regional transit routes is needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is a need to improve transit options for workforce and employee transportation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provide for safe and efficient movement of people and goods through the region to enhance economic growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Support transportation projects with regional economic development or commuter benefit, coordinated transit, workforce transportation solutions, and other regionally significant transportation improvements.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Work Program Items**

1. Coordinate land use, economic development, and transportation planning related to the Appalachian Regional Port, and participate in regional grants and studies.

2. Participate in State Coordinated Transit program as it is developed and implemented.

3. Assist with local Transit Development Plans and maintenance planning.

4. Implement local and state bicycle and pedestrian safety plans; participate in Walk to School Days; assist with Safe Routes to School Walk and Bike Audits; provide planning related to safe routes to school and walkable connections between schools and neighborhoods.

5. Provide coordination between the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in the region.

6. Participate in local, regional and state transportation and transit planning organizations, including the Georgia Transit Association and Georgia Association of MPOs, and others.

7. Provide planning and technical assistance to regionally significant transportation initiatives and local projects, particularly in support of the comprehensive plan or local plans.

8. Implement planned improvements to US 411 and existing East/West Connections throughout the region for freight carriers to more safely navigate key routes including those associated with the Appalachian Regional Port and anticipated inland port in Gainesville area.
NATURAL RESOURCES

A1. Plan, develop, map and market trails and water trails, trailheads/ access points, connections to communities, and interconnectivity within the region to provide better access to outdoor recreation and connectivity between places to live, work and play.

A2. Additional trail connectivity is needed between trailheads and downtowns (last mile connections), providing lodging, food, events, and points of interest for local users and visitors from outside the region. ***

A3. Improve safety and lighting at trailheads and access points; add additional access points for water trails.

B. Enhance the visibility and preservation of regionally important historic and cultural resources to preserve irreplaceable assets through greater citizen engagement and seeking funding opportunities.

C. Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region to meet federal and state regulations.

D. Protect and preserve water supply watersheds that form the main drinking water supply for the region.

E. Protect and preserve water quality, water sources, wildlife habitat, and recreational resources of major river corridors.

F. Protect and preserve steep mountain slopes and ridges for aesthetic and structural consideration.

G. Stormwater and flooding impacts are increasing; Georgia DNR is making available improved flood map data and modeling.

Work Program Items:

1. Plan, develop, and implement local and regional infrastructure projects; implement regional interconnectivity and redundancy water planning studies and local and regional infrastructure plans.

2. Assist with comprehensive plan updates and amendments and coordination of initial service delivery strategy reviews to ensure coordination of infrastructure.

3. Assist communities to adopt and implement conservation ordinances for development and infill.

4. Provide planning, development and grant assistance for trail and water trail projects.

5. Review and nominate new historic and cultural assets to the National Register.

6. Provide guidance and technical assistance to local governments to improve stormwater related ordinances and development guidelines and assist with funding for public improvements.

7. Improve trail connectivity between trailheads and downtowns (last mile connections) for economic development, intermodal transportation, safety and ease of use for local users and visitors. ***

8. Improve safety and lighting at trailheads and access points; add additional access points for water trails.

9. Provide planning and development assistance to expand agritourism and agribusiness opportunities; support local food hubs, farms and wineries, and growers’ initiatives.

10. Implement the 2013 Regional Local Food Assessment.
## EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of connection as a region between education and workforce development providers and industry (8 dots)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expand partnerships with business and industry, Chamber of Commerce and other community leadership organizations, to show the impact of the College and Career Academy model. *****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add more College and Career Academies and expand use of programs like Southwire and FutureFest to connect industry to the education system. *****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lack of connection as a region between education and workforce development providers and industry. *****</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Work Program Items

1. Coordinate business and industry, education and workforce development at a local level, to develop coordinated career pathway programs and/or develop additional College and Career Academies.
2. Implement the High Demand Career Initiative Assessment recommendations
3. Implement the CEDS
4. Implement the Advanced Manufacturing Strategy
5. Support and expand dual enrollment opportunities for all available colleges/ universities, and where possible connect programs and course offerings through virtual learning technology.
6. ________________________________________________________________________________

7. ________________________________________________________________________________

8. ________________________________________________________________________________
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
There is a lack of soft skills in the workforce such as dependability, being on time, strong communication skills.

There is a need to improve partnerships between industry/business, workforce development providers, and educational institutions both K-12 and post-secondary.

Downtowns need a flexible and workable alcohol ordinance.

There is a need to expand College/Career Academies and integrated Career Pathways.

The Appalachian Regional Port is an asset for industry and employers in the region.

Implement the Comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS):

Human Capital

Workforce Skills: Increase the number of residents skilled in advanced manufacturing (and middle-skill, living wage occupations) in order to meet current and changing needs of northwest Georgia employees.

Educational Attainment: Expand the number of students in the region that are prepared for future employment in skilled and professional positions through enhanced educational opportunities and active career counseling.

Human Services: Ensure appropriate human services are available to meet the needs of the region’s current and future workforce.

Community Assets

Tourism and Film Industry: Increase tourism, visitor spending, and revenue earned from the film industry in northwest Georgia.

Quality of Life: Enhance quality of life amenities in the region to retain talent and gain a competitive advantage when recruiting new businesses and industry.

Housing: Ensure adequate housing is available to meet the needs of the northwest Georgia workforce, which is affordable, decent, and safe.

Essential Infrastructure

Industrial Properties: Ensure northwest Georgia has sufficient, ready to develop industrial properties available to meet the region’s current and future needs.

Transportation: Advocate for transportation projects that are critical for regional economic development.

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

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

Business Climate

Improved Business Climate: Increase entrepreneurship and innovation by supporting business development in existing and emerging sectors.

Work Program Items:

1. Assist communities to develop and redevelop infrastructure for economic development prospects
2. Assist communities to work with providers to implement increased broadband and internet coverage
3. Assist communities with ordinances related to economic development and downtown development
4. Implement needs identified in the comprehensive plan, urban redevelopment plan or other local plans to support job creation and retention and private investment.
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LAND USE and DEVELOPMENT/ CONSERVATION

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Appalachian Regional Port will bring new development in a Multi-County Area. **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There is a lack of large-acreage developable parcels near highways and rail. **</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Separate industry from residential areas to avoid conflicts. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Industry is now more interested in use the use of rail in addition to trucking. *</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Too much sprawl development, with lack of emphasis on infill development to maximize existing infrastructure and investment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Little encouragement for private greenspace conservation in development; more balanced approach is needed to incentivize or direct development toward conservation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for the region that respects local land use plans and development plans</td>
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</table>

Work Program Items

2. Assist communities to update local ordinances related to land use, conservation and development.
3. Provide outreach and assistance on good development practices, partnering with DCA, GAZA, GPA and other regional and statewide agencies.
4. Assist communities to implement their comprehensive plan and local plans, and with applications to PlanFirst designation.

5. 

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**INFRASTRUCTURE**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>More State, federal funding and incentives are needed for additional deployment of broadband or other internet services in rural or unserved areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Greater funding and public and employer support are needed for Keep Georgia Beautiful affiliates, litter pickup and public education.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is a need to develop alternative energy sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There is a need to better match needed infrastructure with funding sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Provide enough, economical public water supply, treatment, and distribution services and waste water collection and treatment services to accommodate future growth.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Develop and maintain infrastructure in developed areas in support of the Regional Development Map.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Improve telecommunication services to expand accessibility and speed of service to residential, business, health care and government sectors throughout the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assist local governments in the region to participate in the Georgia Broadband Ready Program including preparation of Broadband Elements in the comprehensive plan, promulgation of the model broadband ordinance, determining unserved areas, application to the Broadband Ready program, and grant application assistance for state and federal assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Manage solid waste facilities to emphasize long term benefits and maximize waste reduction consistent with the Georgia and local Solid Waste Management Plans; provide information on state and federal recycling promotion or grant programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Improve the quality of local schools to bring them closer to state and national measurements in testing and retention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Develop a coordinated service delivery system for meeting the priority needs of senior citizens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Improve the access to primary care for underserved areas of the region.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Expand services for low-income, disabled, homeless individuals,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Expand mental health and substance abuse services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Work Program Items**

1. Implement comprehensive plans and projects that are in accordance with approved service delivery strategies.
2. Plan and develop infill projects that use existing infrastructure.
3. Assist communities to apply for Broadband Ready designation including model broadband ordinance and updating their comprehensive plan.
4. Develop regionally significant infrastructure programs and resources, partnering with funding agencies.
5. Implement the CEDS, regional water plans, and the regional plan for infrastructure needs.
6. Assist communities with recycling programs.
7. Assist communities with development of solar energy projects.
8. 
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is a lack of safe, affordable housing at a variety of income levels and diverse housing types seniors, work force, and all residents. A variety of multifamily and single-family housing options for rental and ownership is needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There is a need to incentivize the redevelopment of blighted or vacant industrial areas for residential use when adjacent to connected to downtowns.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is a need to encourage in-town residential development and redevelopment for greater access to Live, Work, Play options.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There is a need to assist blighted historic neighborhoods with tax incentives, code enforcement and redevelopment incentives</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The existing housing stock is aging, and may be dilapidated, substandard or abandoned; this housing may also be served by water, sewer and utilities and lot prices may be increasing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Foreclosed and vacant lots or subdivisions, particularly in rural areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Greater funding for handicap &amp; senior home improvements to allow for independent living.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Too much new construction and price points too high for blue collar or entry level employees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Affordable, workforce housing subsidy and financing, other incentives to fill this unmet need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Work Program items:

1. Assist communities to update ordinances related to infill, types of housing, and areas of development to promote a variety of housing options  
2. Conduct housing assessments to provide local, regional data on housing needs and inventory, so that the type of housing that is developed more closely matches the needed diversity and mix of housing for the community and region.  
3.  
4.  
5.  
HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

There is a lack of mental health treatment. ********

There is a need to promote sidewalk and trail connectivity (subdivisions, rural areas) for new development.

There is a need to provide more opportunities for physical activity & walking/ biking opportunities/ connectivity to destinations. **

There is a problem with drugs, specifically opioids, in the region.**

There is a need to promote and market the region’s healthy thriving hospitals. **

There is a lack of access to healthy food options **

High poverty rates equals an unhealthy lifestyle- cheap food, lack of health insurance

There is a need to expand local trail systems such as the Rivers to Ridges Gordon Trails system. *

There is a lack of grief counseling. *

There is a need for more parks and greater connectivity of trails to parks, downtowns, residential areas. *

The limited availability of rural health care is still a problem (access, poverty, lack of insurance). *
REGIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Greater regional collaborative lobbying for regional highway planning/improvement is needed. ***

There is an opportunity for regional and multi-county coordinated planning for the Appalachian Regional Port and related infrastructure and development. **

There is a lack of coordination between Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in the region (Chattanooga-North Georgia, Greater Dalton, Bartow, Rome-Floyd, Atlanta Regional Commission). *

A need of cooperation, coordination, and communication across jurisdictional boundaries.

A need for multijurisdictional cooperation on common/key issues such as water, transportation, economic development as a way of building partnerships across jurisdictional boundaries.

The opportunity is to increase coordination/cooperation with private industry.

Economic Development of Tourism not crossing district boundaries.

There is a lack of focus on regional recreation resources.

Greater coordination of transit and transit providers.