

**HEART OF GEORGIA ALTAMAHA RDC REGIONAL PLAN
GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICY STATEMENTS/PRIORITIES
WITH
RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS**

Introduction

The following section of Goals, Objectives, and Policy Statements/Priorities with Recommended Consistent Implementation Actions takes each identified need and provides the guidance and framework for addressing what should be done about all of them to assure the future well-being of the region. The goals and objectives, as required by the Minimum Planning Standards, express the region's common ideals, desires, and vision for the future as determined by an extensive planning process. The policy statement/priorities provide the general guidance and direction for any government, agency, or other party to implement the plan and improve the region. The recommended consistent implementation actions go one step beyond what is required, and provide a specific menu of implementation ideas to stimulate and assist any party in developing a work program consistent with and implementing the general guidance of the policy statements/priorities. The RDC Regional Work Program in the next section includes only those recommended consistent implementation actions determined appropriate and feasible for that agency in the next five years. The previous section "Cross Reference of Implementation Strategies for Identified Preliminary Needs" is a quick reference for the user which can be used to determine how each identified need is addressed and taken to conclusion as part of the implementation strategy.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

GOAL: To encourage a coordinated and cooperative, multi-faceted economic development strategy which promotes strengths and addresses weaknesses, prepares for and facilitates sound, diversified growth and development, and improves the overall quality of life in the region.

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve/upgrade the educational levels and labor force skills within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region, including improving the literacy rate by 50 percent, through a comprehensive approach involving the local communities, business community, and the educational system.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1: Develop and support community-based efforts to address improved educational levels and labor force skills.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-1.1: Seek the establishment and implementation of Certified Literate Community Programs in all region counties with the assistance of the Office of Adult Literacy, Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education.

Action 1-1.2: Encourage the establishment of locally sponsored supportive social programs (e.g. New Connections, Family Connections, etc.).

Action 1-1.3: Encourage cooperation and collaboration of all community efforts and programs (through a council or other means) to ensure coordination and maximum effectiveness.

Action 1-1.4: Hold regular workshops for local schools, chambers of commerce, and elected officials to increase awareness of problems and opportunities for action.

Action 1-1.5: Establish leadership development programs for all counties, and include training on educational level/labor force skills improvement.

Action 1-1.6: Support, coordinate, and develop implementation of WIA programs to improve the labor force.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Encourage industry and the local business community to become involved and an integral part of improving educational and skill levels.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-2.1: Encourage industry and the local business community to require evidence of a high school diploma, transcript or GED, or enrollment in programs, before offering employment.

Action 1-2.2: Encourage the utilization of the formal Communities in Schools program and other mentoring programs to create student interest and lower drop-out rates.

Action 1-2.3: Encourage the business community to establish Work Place Literacy Programs with the aid of the technical colleges, and to reward workers for improving skills.

Action 1-2.4: Increase business community awareness through regional entities, such as the RAC and the WIA Board, and the possible establishment of award programs.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-3:

Support the continued improvement of the educational system in addressing educational/skills improvement, and ensure WIA coordination.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-3.1: Support continued expansion of facilities and programs of the state's technical colleges in the region, particularly articulation and continuing education programs.

Action 1-3.2: Promote and encourage the seamless integration of high school, technical colleges, and college curricula.

- Action 1-3.3:** Lobby for legislation or state action to protect funding of local high schools which integrate students with the technical colleges or colleges, or participate in other cooperative programs.
- Action 1-3.4:** Encourage improved quality and consistency of education in local high schools through support of better defined state standards, support, and accountability measures, and other means.
- Action 1-3.5:** Endorse the promotion of life skills training and a strong work ethics curriculum in local schools continuing education, and WIA training efforts.
- Action 1-3.6:** Encourage the implementation of exploratory/technology training in elementary/middle schools.
- Action 1-3.7:** Encourage the expansion of applied curriculum areas in high school.
- Action 1-3.8:** Advocate the location of a satellite University System campus south of I-16 within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-4:

Develop and support the regional support structure, particularly transportation and child care, necessary to encourage educational attainment.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-4.1:** Support the expansion of 5311 rural public transit systems to all region counties.
- Action 1-4.2:** Support/encourage the Coordinated Transportation System of the Georgia Department of Human Resources in the region.
- Action 1-4.3:** Encourage and promote the WIA program to assist educational and skills attainment, including provision of sufficient support services.
- Action 1-4.4:** Support and encourage the development of community and private child care facilities and programs, including those through DFCS and the technical colleges.
- Action 1-4.5:** Promote and coordinate consistent local efforts through the state Regional Advisory Council and WIA Board.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-5:

Increase exposure to career opportunities within the local schools.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-5.1:** Establish and support local “Businesses in Schools” programs.
- Action 1-5.2:** Encourage efforts to relate local school curricula and courses to examples in the work world and improve work skills.
- Action 1-5.3:** Encourage the establishment of a Job Fair and other ongoing cooperative efforts of the local business community in every region county.
- Action 1-5.4:** Emulate and duplicate the Laurens County “Seven Habits of Effective Teens (Covey)” course in all region counties.
- Action 1-5.5:** Lobby for state increase in school counselors available to local school systems, and a better focus of their responsibilities in career counseling.

OBJECTIVE 2: Improve/upgrade the infrastructure of the region to support and prepare for growth.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Support and advocate the continued improvement of the region's highway system.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-1.1:** Encourage the early completion of the Governor's Road Improvement Program four-laning within the region (U.S. 341, U.S. 441, U.S. 1, and U.S. 84, U.S. 280.)
- Action 2-1.2:** Seek funding and develop a regional transportation plan with the involvement of Georgia DOT which: 1) identifies key corridors for emphasis; 2) identifies regional gateways; and 3) provides for improved connections. (The plan should be a 5-10 year plan, with annual updates.)
- Action 2-1.3:** Advocate the upgrade of U.S. 280 as a four-laned east-west Georgia connector from I-16 and Savannah to I-75 and Columbus, and as a vital route within the Central Georgia Corridor.
- Action 2-1.4:** Advocate the upgrade of U.S. 301 as a four-laned alternative to I-95.
- Action 2-1.5:** Encourage the development of four-lane connectors from all the region's major communities to major routes/other four-lanes.
- Action 2-1.6:** Encourage the development of truck routes, connectors, and perimeter roads to provide circular routes around all of the region's major communities.
- Action 2-1.7:** Support the formation of active associations and other means of contact to keep legislators, Georgia DOT officials and board members, and other appropriate groups regularly informed of region transportation needs.
- Action 2-1.8:** Support and advocate for continued DOT funding at appropriate levels for local road/street improvements, both for existing road resurfacing (e.g. LARP) and for new paving (e.g. city and county contracts.)

- Action 2-1.9:** Advocate and encourage a mechanism to ensure coordination of locations of new public facilities with the local government, particularly new schools.
- Action 2-1.10:** Encourage and support the continued upgrade of U.S. 23 as a four-lane connector between Eastman, Cochran, and I-16.
- Action 2-1.11:** Support the development and upgrade of Georgia 15 as an intra-Georgia connector.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-2:

Develop and support the expansion of water and wastewater facilities needed in the region to support and encourage population and economic development growth (“If you can’t flush, they won’t come!”).

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-2.1:** Encourage and support the expansion of water and sewer facilities by the region’s local governments.
- Action 2-2.2:** Support scientific study of water availability in the region.
- Action 2-2.3:** Support investigation and appropriate development of alternative water supplies to the Floridan Aquifer within the region.
- Action 2-2.4:** Encourage the recycling of water and use of other alternatives in industrial processes within the region.
- Action 2-2.5:** Encourage the use of water conservation measures by local governments and others in the region.
- Action 2-2.6** Support the development and use of appropriate drainage and stormwater facilities within the region.
- Action 2-2.7** Support the development and implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plans appropriate for the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-3:

Advocate and support the expansion and upgrade of the region’s telecommunications infrastructure to allow full, complete, and technologically up-to-date access by the region without handicap.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-3.1:** Advocate for state assistance (legislative, regulatory, or financial) to assure equal access (both technologically and cost-wise) to information services by rural areas.
- Action 2-3.2:** Encourage community investment and partnership as appropriate to speed development of necessary telecommunications infrastructure/services (similar to speculative industrial building development).
- Action 2-3.3** Encourage, advocate, and provide incentives for private sector telecommunications development within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-4:

Encourage and advocate the continued support, enhancement, and expansion of the rail network and service within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-4.1:** Support the continuation and improvement of the existing railroad network (principally freight routes) within the region.
- Action 2-4.2:** Support and advocate continuation of the existing short-line railroads, and the development of new short-line railroads as appropriate, in the region.
- Action 2-4.3:** Advocate and encourage the development of rail passenger service through the region.
- Action 2-4.4:** Support and encourage implementation of the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority's State Rail Plan's Macon to Atlanta route and Macon through region routes.
- Action 2-4.5:** Support and encourage the retention of Amtrak passenger service in Jesup, and the improvement of the depot/passenger facilities there.
- Action 2-4.6:** Support and encourage regular contact with legislators, DOT, the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority, and others as appropriate to keep the region's needs at the forefront.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-5:

Support the continued expansion and development of the Georgia Ports in Brunswick and Savannah.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTION:

Action 2-5.1: Provide legislative and other support to the continued expansion and development of the Brunswick and Savannah ports as a means to stimulate region development.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-6:

Support and advocate the continued expansion and development of the region's airports and available airport service.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 2-6.1: Support complete implementation and advocate full funding of the DOT State Airport Plan and its plans for local airport upgrades throughout the region.

Action 2-6.2: Encourage facilities upgrade by DOT to a Level III for the Baxley or Hazlehurst area airport to support the developing U.S. 341 corridor.

Action 2-6.3: Support expansion of the Macon and Savannah airports as benefiting the region and providing incentive for further region development.

Action 2-6.4: Support the continuing development of the Georgia Aviation College in Eastman.

Action 2-6.5: Support development of a second Georgia airport, if one is considered, in the South Georgia/Macon area.

OBJECTIVE 3: **Support the continuation and expansion of the existing economic base of the region, particularly its manufacturing base, by providing both the supportive structure and climate for economic expansion at the regional and local level.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-1:

Provide the support structure at the regional level to determine and address industry and business needs.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 3-1.1:** Establish a Business Retention and Expansion Program in each region county (or appropriate subgroup of counties), repeat the survey process every five years, and address identified needs.
- Action 3-1.2:** Establish a Regional Manufacturer's Council and Resource Center to focus on common needs and assistance.
- Action 3-1.3:** Establish a similar Regional Council(s) for retail and small businesses within the region.
- Action 3-1.4:** Lobby for the expansion of availability of services of the state's Small Business Development Center and the location of an office of that Center within the region.
- Action 3-1.5:** Develop and support small business incubator(s) within the region (including one at Altamaha Tech's Quality Manufacturing Center in Hazlehurst).
- Action 3-1.6:** Promote the availability and usage of the state's Quick Start Training Program for business and industry expansions.
- Action 3-1.7:** Seek the creation of venture capital firms within the region, possibly through cooperative efforts of banks and utilities.
- Action 3-1.8:** Involve/utilize the State Service Delivery Region 9 staff of DCA and DEcD to facilitate region actions.
- Action 3-1.9:** Utilize WIA Program to assist Region employers with labor force improvements/needs.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-2:

Develop an improved local climate for economic development expansions.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 3-2.1:** Support active, involved chambers of commerce and development authorities in each region county.
- Action 3-2.2:** Seek the establishment and nurturing of local existing industry councils region-wide.
- Action 3-2.3:** Improve local amenities and quality of life so executives/ professionals will live within region communities rather than commute, and so communities overall will be a more attractive place to live and work.
- Action 3-2.4:** Establish and support youth entrepreneurship programs (such as 4-H, Junior Achievement, the UGA program, and the like) within the region to encourage and cultivate a life long business culture.
- Action 3-2.5:** Encourage the establishment of formal Industry Appreciation recognition programs and events region-wide.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-3:

Continue strong support and seek to improve stability and viability of agriculture within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 3-3.1:** Promote through all means possible regional agricultural products (Vidalia onions, sweet carrots, pine straw, etc.).
- Action 3-3.2:** Support the expansion of fresh, vegetable and fruit farming, and other alternative crops, within the region.
- Action 3-3.3:** Encourage the expansion of the greenhouse/nursery industry within the region, including those for longleaf pine.
- Action 3-3.4:** Seek to develop more market outlets for the forest industry within the region.
- Action 3-3.5:** Encourage and seek the development of agricultural processing for the region's crops, particularly vegetables and fruits, within the region.

Action 3-3.6: Lobby for continued strong state support of the Cooperative Extension Service, its presence within each region county, and appropriate technical assistance or research facilities as needed.

Action 3-3.7: Support local farmers' efforts to solve migrant worker issues.

OBJECTIVE 4: **Support the continuing preparation of the region for the location of new industry/other economic development, and the cooperative recruitment of new industry/other economic development within the region.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 4-1:

Develop the infrastructure necessary to attract and accommodate new industry.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 4-1.1: Continue to upgrade the infrastructure of the region, particularly local water and sewer capacity, necessary to attract and easily serve new growth.

Action 4-1.2: Encourage the development of local industrial parks with in-place utilities, particularly cooperative ones.

Action 4-1.3: Encourage the development of appropriate speculative buildings within local industrial parks.

Action 4-1.4: Seek state development of a mega-site (1,000 acres or more) for industrial recruitment within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 4-2:

Develop cooperative, organized plans for the recruitment of targeted industries/other economic development to the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 4-2.1: Seek assistance and develop a cooperative regional marketing plan.

Action 4-2.2: Utilize existing or new Georgia Tech studies for a large portion of the region, with update if necessary, for industrial targeting.

Action 4-2.3: Encourage the state to aggressively market the region as a whole, and cooperatively advertise to the extent possible.

Action 4-2.4: Seek state or university assistance to identify suppliers of existing industry within the region, and target those suppliers for recruitment.

Action 4-2.5: Promote the technical colleges within the region and their flexibility for training.

Action 4-2.6: Target wood-using industries for recruitment.

Action 4-2.7: Encourage and support the location of state and federal offices within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 4-3:

Encourage and assist local communities in preparation for new industry location.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 4-3.1: Encourage collaboration and cooperation by groups of counties in the region for industrial recruitment.

Action 4-3.2: Develop a regional model or template for local communities to use in developing and offering incentives to industry.

Action 4-3.3: Encourage local communities to develop a formal plan and package of incentives.

Action 4-3.4: Encourage each community to designate a formal local welcome/recruitment committee and undergo regular training utilizing DEcD.

Action 4-3.5: Encourage and assist local communities in educating the public regarding the need for economic development and industrial recruitment.

OBJECTIVE 5: **Enhance regional cooperation, increase the region's identity, and market regional opportunities more effectively for economic development purposes.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 5-1:

Provide local and regional economic development education and training for local citizen and elected leaders.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 5-1.1:** Support the Georgia Academy for Economic Development as an ongoing institute in the region under the coordination of State Service Delivery Region 9 staff.
- Action 5-1.2:** Establish a Regional Leadership Program to focus on economic development education and training and to promote regional cooperation.
- Action 5-1.3:** Encourage and support the establishment of County Leadership Programs in each, or in collaborations serving each, county of the region under the leadership of local economic development agencies and Cooperative Extension.
- Action 5-1.4:** Maintain contact with and encourage involvement of local and regional alumni of these programs.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 5-2:

Promote and enhance regional partnerships and cooperation.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 5-2.1:** Foster joint efforts between the Regional Development Center and the State Service Delivery Region 9 Office (RAC) to identify, promote, and coordinate regional economic development activities and partnerships.
- Action 5-2.2:** Consider the identification and use of a new name for State Service Delivery Region 9 and the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Development Center which would be more descriptive, evoke more natural affinity and identity, and be more readily marketable.
- Action 5-2.3:** Utilize the Regional Plan and the coordination/cooperation of Action 5-2.1 to identify and refine regional needs, projects, avenues of cooperation, and areas of common interests.
- Action 5-2.4:** Ensure coordination of the various regional groups and activities through efforts of the Regional Development Center and the State Service Delivery Region 9 Office.

- Action 5-2.5:** Encourage the establishment of county clusters or alliances to pool resources and share expenses in the development of economic development projects, and more generally, further cooperation.
- Action 5-2.6:** Utilize the region's existing economic centers as a natural focus for promoting sub-regional groupings or alliances.
- Action 5-2.7:** Seek the assistance and coordination of the region's technical colleges in providing coordination and leadership for sub-regional economic development alliances and promotion of economic development.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 5-3:

Market regional opportunities more effectively.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 5-3.1:** Create and establish, under the guidance of the aforementioned Regional Economic Development Council, a cooperative Regional Marketing Program with coordinated materials and strategies.
- Action 5-3.2:** Support establishment and maintenance of a regional marketing web sites with links to local communities.
- Action 5-3.3:** Encourage pooling of local monies for regional promotion and development of common interests with initial cooperation on advertising and multi-county infrastructure needs (e.g. developmental highways, technical colleges) with easily identifiable mutual benefit.
- Action 5-3.4:** Enhance and promote the region's quality of life, including its low crime, values, and caring neighborliness, as excellent reasons to live and work in the region.
- Action 5-3.5:** Encourage the private development of facilities to encourage, and otherwise promote, the relocation and accommodation of senior citizens to the region.
- Action 5-3.6:** Promote the region's post-secondary educational system, particularly the technical colleges, as a critical advantage for workforce training and retraining in an ever-changing world.

OBJECTIVE 6: Encourage and support downtown and small town revitalization within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 6-1:

Utilize and promote existing programs and sources of assistance.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 6-1.1:** Encourage the use of existing improvement programs, such as Main Street or Better Hometown, by local communities within the region.
- Action 6-1.2:** Encourage activation and utilization of downtown development authorities in local communities of the region.
- Action 6-1.3:** Aggressively market available grants to local communities to assist in revitalization projects.
- Action 6-1.4:** Promote usage of preservation tax incentives as an economic tool for rehabilitation in downtowns and small towns.
- Action 6-1.5:** Seek design assistance (downtown teams, etc.) available from state organizations for region communities.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 6-2:

Encourage the development of new sources, guides, and programs of assistance for local revitalization.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 6-2.1:** Develop a resource manual and update it regularly, for use by small towns and downtowns.
- Action 6-2.2:** Seek marketing studies for local communities to identify appropriate approaches and types of businesses which would thrive and need to be attracted for revitalization, with particular attention to Better Hometown and Main Street communities.
- Action 6-2.3:** Encourage local communities to develop and offer incentives for private businesses and developers locating downtown.
- Action 6-2.4:** Seek sources of low interest capital to assist in downtown/small town revitalization.

Action 6-2.5: Develop linked web sites for local communities in the region as a marketing tool.

OBJECTIVE 7: **Support the development, enhancement, and promotion of tourism within the region.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 7-1:

Identify regional and local assets for tourism and the development of local infrastructure/mechanisms to support tourism.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 7-1.1: Seek a formal survey/study to identify assets (state parks, natural areas, campgrounds, etc.) for tourism within the region.

Action 7-1.2: Encourage the establishment of local tourism boards and the use of the hotel/motel tax for financing.

Action 7-1.3: Encourage the support, development, and promotion of local festivals.

Action 7-1.4: Encourage the use of the region's natural resources for tourism events and development.

Action 7-1.5: Advocate creation and continued enhancement of state parks within the region.

Action 7-1.6: Seek state purchase and development of new public fishing and wildlife management areas within the region.

Action 7-1.7: Support and advocate efforts to develop the region as a destination for beginning/intermediate cyclists.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 7-2:

Support regional cooperation and coordination for tourism.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 7-2.1: Establish a Regional Tourism Council as a forum for cooperation and coordination.

- Action 7-2.2:** Seek state designation of State Service Delivery Region 9 as a formal and separate tourism/travel region, and with funding for a state consultant based in the region.
- Action 7-2.3:** Encourage the cooperation and development of corridor-based tourism (U.S. 341, U.S. 441, S.R. 57, S.R. 121, etc.), at least within the region.
- Action 7-2.4:** Seek state funding and develop a regional tourism marketing plan.
- Action 7-2.5:** Establish regional tourism marketing materials.
- Action 7-2.6:** Promote coordination and cooperative scheduling of local festivals.
- Action 7-2.7:** Develop a regional tourism web site.

NATURAL RESOURCES

GOAL: Encourage conservation and protection of the significant natural resources of the region in such a manner as to maintain/enhance environmental quality and the quality of life, and to encourage beneficial and sustainable economic development.

OBJECTIVE 1: Encourage conservation and protection of the critical land and water environmental resources identified as requiring or deserving local protection measures under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1:
Encourage protection of significant aquifer recharge areas in and important to the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-1.1: Encourage/assist local governments with adopting significant groundwater recharge area protection ordinances which meet DNR's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria.

Action 1-1.2: Encourage the state to map the state's significant groundwater recharge areas at a more user friendly and useable scale.

Action 1-1.3: Support state's continuing scientific investigation of the region's groundwater supplies and recharge areas, including how best to protect significant aquifer recharge areas, and their importance in relation to our region and its water usage.

Action 1-1.4: Promote increased awareness of the region's significant aquifer recharge areas and their importance.

Action 1-1.5: Coordinate with and encourage state and other regions' efforts to protect the Floridan Aquifer recharge areas.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Seek to conserve protected river corridors and other waterways, while encouraging wise and appropriate uses.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-2.1:** Encourage/assist local governments with adopting river corridor protection ordinances which meet DNR's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria.
- Action 1-2.2:** Support maintenance of natural flows in the region's rivers, particularly the Altamaha.
- Action 1-2.3:** Advocate maintenance of river water levels and flows in the Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Altamaha rivers, including upstream releases of impounded waters, to allow year-round recreational uses.
- Action 1-2.4:** Encourage development of more public recreational areas and access along the region's rivers.
- Action 1-2.5:** Utilize region's rivers for nature-based/adventure tourism.
- Action 1-2.6:** Encourage state purchase of greenways and wildlife habitats along the region's rivers.
- Action 1-2.7:** Support and encourage development and implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans appropriate to the region.
- Action 1-2.8:** Support the efforts of the Altamaha River Partnership to promote and develop appropriately the Altamaha River.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-3:

Seek to encourage conservation of the region's prime farmland and forest land.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-3.1:** Encourage local government protection of existing prime farmland.
- Action 1-3.2:** Support and encourage local governments to locate development near existing development and available services/infrastructure.

Action 1-3.3: Increase awareness and knowledge of the location and importance of the region's prime farmland.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-4:

Encourage protection and natural functioning of the region's wetlands and floodplains.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-4.1: Encourage/assist local governments with adopting wetlands protection ordinances which meet DNR's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria.

Action 1-4.2: Encourage local government participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, including adoption of floodplain protection ordinances.

Action 1-4.3: Encourage formal study and mapping of floodplains region-wide by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

OBJECTIVE 2: **Foster better scientific and public understanding of significant natural resources and their need for protection within the region.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Encourage an increased environmental awareness within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 2-1.1: Advocate increased state funding and development of scientific studies, data, and environmental education materials on the state's natural resources.

Action 2-1.2: Support and encourage local creation of environmental parks and outdoor classrooms.

Action 2-1.3: Encourage state creation and utilization of mobile classrooms, such as the Coastal Ark, through a cooperative effort with Partners in Education or other programs/groups.

Action 2-1.4: Encourage the state to develop, fund, and distribute more public service announcements.

Action 2-1.5: Encourage increased utilization of the Nature Conservancy of Georgia to provide public information on the region's natural resources, particularly the Altamaha River.

OBJECTIVE 3: Utilize important natural resources of the region for public recreation and other compatible uses which conserve the resources, increase public access, and promote appropriate, sustainable economic development.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-1:

Pursue development of large, quality public recreation areas utilizing and conserving the region's important natural resources.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 3-1.1: Encourage the state, or other public and private agencies, to purchase and develop lands within the region for wildlife management areas, state parks, or natural areas.

Action 3-1.2: Encourage the establishment of greenway connections/corridors between existing and new wildlife management areas/parks of the region, especially along the rivers.

Action 3-1.3: Encourage development of more public recreational areas and access along the region's rivers, including Altamaha River Partnership activities.

Action 3-1.4: Advocate and encourage creation of large environmental learning centers/nature parks, such as Moody Forest in Appling County, within the region through the state Department of Natural Resources, the University System of Georgia, or other appropriate public or private agencies.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-2:

Support marketing of hunting, fishing, and nature-based/adventure tourism opportunities within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 3-2.1: Support and assist in development of regional marketing materials.

- Action 3-2.2:** Support and assist in development of map(s) showing the region's recreation facilities, boat landings, and parks.
- Action 3-2.3:** Encourage and support local tourism boards in their efforts to promote hunting, fishing, and nature-based/adventure tourism opportunities.
- Action 3-2.4:** Enlist the aid of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Georgia Department of Economic Development in development and marketing of promotional materials.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

GOAL: Encourage the identification, preservation, adaptive use, and utilization of the region's significant historic resources to help preserve the region's rural character and further its beneficial and sensitive economic development.

OBJECTIVE 1: Foster an increased knowledge, recognition, and awareness of significant historic resources in the region, and enhance efforts for their preservation, utilization, and adaptive use.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1: Seek to identify, preserve and promote significant historic resources of the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-1.1:** Encourage/assist local governments, historical societies, and other local groups in updating/expanding cultural resource surveys.
- Action 1-1.2:** Nominate/encourage significant historic structures, sites, and districts for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, particularly in downtown commercial areas.
- Action 1-1.3:** Support local governments in updating/expanding historic resource elements of local comprehensive plans, and otherwise incorporating historic preservation into local planning and zoning regulations.
- Action 1-1.4:** Encourage the establishment of local recognition programs and markers for historic sites.
- Action 1-1.5:** Assist with petition for state marking of significant sites through the Georgia Historical Society, where appropriate.
- Action 1-1.6:** Conduct a more visible public information and education program (including newspaper articles, public service announcements, use of public access television stations, and a speaker's bureau for civic organizations through local chambers) on available programs, rehabilitation incentives, and historic preservation technical assistance.

Action 1-1.7: Encourage/support the preservation/use of a landmark structure in each community for public use.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Encourage/assist the establishment of local capacity to document and assist in the preservation of local historic resources and promote regional cooperation.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-2.1: Support local historical societies, heritage groups, and museums.

Action 1-2.2: Involve/engage the Georgia Historical Society, the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation and other similar organizations within the region.

Action 1-2.3: Utilize the RDC's Historic Resources Advisory Committee for liaison and training of local volunteers and for coordination.

Action 1-2.4: Encourage compilation of local histories, oral-video histories, and other documentation of historic resources.

Action 1-2.5: Target realtors, accountants, and other professionals for workshops regarding historic preservation tax incentives.

Action 1-2.6: Support the development of heritage education curricula in local school systems.

OBJECTIVE 2: **Enhance the utilization and incorporation of historic preservation as a means to assist and facilitate economic development, and to retain the region's rural character.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Seek preservation of the region's rural character in conjunction with sustainable economic development.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 2-1.1: Encourage the preservation/adaptive use of the existing built environment and its incorporation into/for new developments/uses.

- Action 2-1.2:** Encourage/support research, alternative marketing/crops, local processing, or other means to maintain agriculture as a viable economic activity in the region.
- Action 2-1.3:** Encourage/support the visibility and community understanding of agriculture's importance in the region through school/chamber farm tours, recognition programs, and events, such as Ag Days or Farm-City Day.
- Action 2-1.4:** Encourage/support the nomination/recognition of the region's long-standing farms into the state's Centennial Farm Program.
- Action 2-1.5:** Encourage/support farmstead preservation/interpretation within the region to provide examples of disappearing resources and events such as tobacco barns, cane grinding, and the like.
- Action 2-1.6:** Encourage/support the designation of some of the region's rural highways into the state's Scenic Byways Program.
- Action 2-1.7:** Encourage local creation of community plays celebrating the region's heritage, such as "Mama's Quilt" in Jeff Davis County, and "Tales of the Altamaha" in Toombs County.
- Action 2-1.8:** Support the continued development/reactivation/presentation of the "Lighterd Knot" outdoor drama at Little Ocmulgee State Park or other appropriate venues.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-2:

Utilize historic preservation as a tool to assist with downtown revitalization and improvement in the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-2.1:** Encourage and support local participation in the Better Hometown, Main Street, and similar programs.
- Action 2-2.2:** Develop/provide models/case studies and other technical assistance on downtown success stories and topics of interest to local governments, downtown development authorities, and chambers of commerce.

- Action 2-2.3:** Encourage/support the activation and utilization of downtown development authorities as a vehicle/focus for downtown revitalization efforts.
- Action 2-2.4:** Encourage/support the creation of National Register districts in downtown commercial areas as an avenue for utilization of state and federal historic rehabilitation tax incentives.
- Action 2-2.5:** Encourage/assist local groups to pursue development of economic niche/marketing studies (by Georgia Tech, Bill Russell, etc.) for downtowns to provide development strategies that will stimulate/guide/and make rehabilitations successful.
- Action 2-2.6:** Organize/conduct a regional conference(s) on downtowns, possibly through GSAMS.
- Action 2-2.7:** Encourage/assist local governments and affiliated organizations with grants funding applications to programs, such as TE, the Local Development Fund and others, which can assist with downtown revitalization/improvement.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-3:

Encourage the development/utilization of historic preservation for tourism within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-3.1:** Establish/promote/support heritage-related festivals within the region.
- Action 2-3.2:** Coordinate scheduling and promotion of local heritage festivals on a regional basis under proposed tourism council.
- Action 2-3.3:** Provide chambers of commerce and welcome centers, on at least a regional basis, with regular list of festivals/dates.
- Action 2-3.4:** Encourage/support local tourism boards to aggressively promote historic resources and walking/riding tours, and to develop appropriate tour brochures and other materials.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

GOAL: **Seek to provide the public facilities, infrastructure, and governmental services within the region which will serve existing and future residents, address deficiencies, and provide the framework and attraction for sound quality growth and development, while respecting the natural and built environments and encouraging cooperation among local jurisdictions.**

OBJECTIVE 1: **Continue to support and advocate the improvement and upgrade of all modes of transportation within the region to enhance safety, service, and efficiency; increase interconnections; and facilitate sound growth and development.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1:
Support the continued improvement of the highway system within the region, its interconnection with other regions and states, and its usefulness for attracting and supporting economic development.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-1.1: Promote/encourage/support early completion of the Governor’s Road Improvement Program and its four-laning of U.S. 341, U.S. 441, U.S. 1, U.S. 84, and U.S. 280 within the region.

Action 1-1.2: Promote the four-laning/upgrading of U.S. 280 within the region and as a vital route within the Central Georgia Corridor.

Action 1-1.3: Promote the four laning/upgrading of U.S. 301 from South Carolina to Florida as an interstate highway alternative.

Action 1-1.4: Support the marketing of Georgia 121 once again as the “Woodpecker Trail” as an alternative interstate route, including lobbying for its improvement where needed and support of its possible designation as a scenic byway.

Action 1-1.5: Explore and support opportunities for other regional highway designations as scenic byways.

- Action 1-1.6:** Support the marketing and other improvement efforts of Georgia 57 as the “Wiregrass Trail.”
- Action 1-1.7:** Support/encourage continued state funding and encourage increases in programs like the City/County Contract Program to assist with paving the many unpaved roads within the region, and like the LARP program to assist with the high cost of maintenance of existing paved roads within the region.
- Action 1-1.8:** Encourage the development of four-lane connectors from all of the region’s major communities to major routes/other four-lanes.
- Action 1-1.9:** Encourage state assistance with planning and constructing downtown congestion relief, and the development of truck routes, connectors, and perimeter roads to provide circular routes around all of the region’s major communities.
- Action 1-1.10:** Support the formation of active associations and other means of contact to keep legislators, Georgia DOT officials and board members, and other appropriate groups regularly informed of region transportation needs.
- Action 1.1-11:** Encourage and support the continued upgrade of U.S. 23 as a four-lane connector between Eastman, Cochran, and I-16.
- Action 1.1-12:** Support the development and upgrade of Georgia 15 as an intra-Georgia connector.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Support and advocate the continued expansion and development of the region’s airports and available airport service.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-2.1:** Support complete implementation and advocate full funding of the DOT State Airport Plan and its plans for local airport upgrades throughout the region.
- Action 1-2.2:** Encourage facilities upgrade by DOT to a Level III for the Baxley or Hazlehurst area airport to support the developing U.S. 341 corridor.

- Action 1-2.3:** Support expansion of the Macon and Savannah airports as benefiting the region and providing incentive for further region development.
- Action 1-2.4:** Support the continuing development of the Georgia Aviation College in Eastman.
- Action 1-2.5:** Support development of a second Georgia airport, if one is considered, in the South Georgia/Macon area.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-3:

Encourage and advocate the continued support, enhancement, and expansion of the rail network and service within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-3.1:** Support the continuation and improvement of the existing railroad network (principally freight routes) within the region.
- Action 1-3.2:** Support and advocate continuation of the existing short-line railroads, and the development of new short-line railroads as appropriate in the region.
- Action 1-3.3:** Advocate and encourage the development of rail passenger service through the region.
- Action 1-3.4:** Support and encourage implementation of the Georgia Passenger Rail Authority's State Rail Plan's Macon to Atlanta route and Macon through region routes.
- Action 1-3.5:** Support and encourage the retention of Amtrak passenger service in Jesup, and the improvement of the depot/passenger facilities there.
- Action 1-3.6:** Support and encourage regular contact with legislators, DOT, the Georgia Passenger Rail Authority, and others as appropriate to keep the region's needs at the forefront.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-4:

Advocate and support alternative transportation within the region to the extent possible.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-4.1:** Support the operations and expansion of 5311 rural public transit systems to all region counties, with consolidation/coordination where feasible.
- Action 1-4.2:** Support the Coordinated Transportation System of the Georgia Department of Human Resources in the region, but advocate changes to support local 5311 public transit systems and local cost efficiencies.
- Action 1-4.3:** Encourage the development of pedestrian/bike paths in region cities, and the development of more state bike routes through the region.
- Action 1-4.4:** Advocate continued inter-city passenger bus service through the region.
- Action 1-4.5:** Develop a regional bike/pedestrian plan and utilize for transportation and economic development of the region.

OBJECTIVE 2: Continue the development and expansion of public utilities in the region, both traditional and technological, which support and encourage population and economic growth.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Develop and support the expansion of water and wastewater facilities needed in the region to support and encourage population and economic development growth.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-1.1:** Encourage and support the expansion of water and sewer facilities by the region's local governments.
- Action 2-1.2:** Support scientific study of water availability in the region.

- Action 2-1.3:** Support investigation and appropriate development of alternative water supplies to the Floridan Aquifer within the region.
- Action 2-1.4:** Encourage the recycling of water and use of other alternatives in industrial processes within the region.
- Action 2-1.5:** Encourage the use of water conservation measures by local governments and others in the region.
- Action 2-1.6:** Support the development and use of appropriate drainage and stormwater facilities within the region.
- Action 2-1.7:** Encourage interconnection/mutual aid and coordinated planning between nearby water systems of the region, especially to support growth corridors.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-2:

Advocate and support the expansion and upgrade of the region's telecommunications infrastructure to allow full, complete, and technologically up-to-date access by the region without handicap.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-2.1:** Seek state funding and conduct a feasibility study to inventory and identify the region's information services and communications capabilities and shortfalls.
- Action 2-2.2:** Advocate for state assistance (legislative, regulatory, or financial) to assure equal access (both technologically and cost-wise) to information services by rural areas.
- Action 2-2.3:** Encourage community investment and partnership as appropriate to speed development of necessary telecommunications infrastructure/services (similar to speculative industrial building development).
- Action 2-2.4:** Encourage, advocate, and provide incentives for private sector telecommunications development within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-3:

Support and advocate the continued access of the region and its governments to solid waste facilities affordable and conducive to sound population and economic growth.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-3.1:** Support the continued operations of existing Subtitle D landfills within the region.
- Action 2-3.2:** Support and advocate federal/state regulations encouraging recycling, and particularly the development of stable markets.
- Action 2-3.3** Assist local governments with state solid waste planning requirements.

OBJECTIVE 3: Assure retention and enhancement of quality public safety and health facilities and services to serve existing and future populations in the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-1:

Seek to retain quality health facilities and services and access to critical care in local communities of the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 3-1.1:** Advocate and encourage full state/federal reimbursement to rural hospitals.
- Action 3-1.2:** Encourage critical access designation by the state of smaller hospitals in the region.
- Action 3-1.3:** Encourage regional affiliations of hospitals within the region to larger regional medical centers in nearby metropolitan areas.
- Action 3-1.4:** Encourage state assistance to attract/retain quality medical personnel to rural areas.
- Action 3-1.5:** Encourage exploration of other areas of cooperation and coordination between neighboring counties and hospitals.

Action 3-1.6: Provide grant-writing and other assistance to those wanting to improve public health facilities, such as health departments.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 3-2:

Support the continued enhancement of public safety services within the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 3-2.1: Encourage the provision of E-911 services region-wide, particularly through cooperative efforts where feasible.

Action 3-2.2: Encourage the development of street naming/property numbering systems region-wide.

Action 3-2.3: Advocate and encourage establishment of a coordinated program of state and federal support and funding for local fire departments, and assist local governments with related grant applications.

Action 3-2.4: Advocate and encourage continued state/federal support for police staffing and needed equipment programs, and assist local governments with grant applications for these programs.

Action 3-2.5: Encourage state legislative/constitutional action to make coordination/consolidation of local sheriff/police departments more feasible.

Action 3-2.6: Encourage funding and implementation of Resource Officers in local schools.

Action 3-2.7: Promote/support better coordination and funding of local Emergency Management Agencies and technologically advanced local warning systems.

Action 3-2.8: Support Homeland Security planning and implementation activities of local emergency management agencies and others as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE 4: **Seek the development, upgrade, and expansion of leisure services and facilities, including libraries, cultural and recreational facilities, programs, and other amenities, which offer expanded opportunities for the population, and enhance the region's attractiveness for growth and development.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 4-1:

Seek the development of improved recreational facilities in the region which will serve existing and future populations and are conducive to economic growth.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 4-1.1:** Encourage and support improvement of local and state recreational facilities within the region.
- Action 4-1.2:** Encourage state acquisition and development of additional wildlife management areas, state parks, and natural areas within the region.
- Action 4-1.3:** Encourage development of more public recreational areas and access along the region's rivers.
- Action 4-1.4:** Encourage utilization of the region's rivers for nature-based/adventure tourism.
- Action 4-1.5:** Encourage the establishment of greenway connections/corridors between existing and new wildlife management areas/parks of the region, especially along the rivers.
- Action 4-1.6:** Encourage coordinated use of local public recreational facilities, including those of school systems.
- Action 4-1.7:** Encourage and support consolidation of local recreation facilities, programs, and departments.
- Action 4-1.8:** Support regional efforts to provide a venue within the region large enough to host regional and statewide sporting and other major events.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 4-2:

Support the development of quality libraries, cultural facilities, and amenities in the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 4-2.1:** Encourage and advocate increased state funding for libraries, including facilities, equipment, and services.

- Action 4-2.2:** Encourage and support increased technological and academic access through the region's libraries.
- Action 4-2.3:** Encourage and support arts council development throughout the region with cooperation where appropriate.
- Action 4-2.4:** Support the development and improvement of museums within the region.
- Action 4-2.5:** Encourage and support local creation of community plays celebrating the region's heritage, such as "Mama's Quilt" in Jeff Davis County, and "Tales of the Altamaha" in Toombs County.
- Action 4-2.6:** Support the continued development/presentation of the "Lighterd Knot" outdoor drama at Little Ocmulgee State Park.
- Action 4-2.7:** Support continuing development throughout the region of multi-purpose auditoriums, both through new construction and rehabilitation as appropriate, especially at regional technical college campuses.

OBJECTIVE 5: **Support the development, upgrade, and expansion of local and regional government services and facilities to provide and enhance effective and efficient governmental operations which meet existing and future needs and which promote quality growth and development.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 5-1:

Seek the development of improved governmental facilities and services in the region which will serve existing and future populations and are conducive to economic growth.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 5-1.1:** Encourage and support improvement of local and regional governmental facilities, infrastructure, and services.
- Action 5-1.2:** Support the development and improvement of professionally managed governmental operations.
- Action 5-1.3:** Support and assist local governments in developing programs or participating in state programs which advance or recognize the community's growth and development or status.

Action 5-1.4: Support and assist the development of any local or regional efforts which enhance the delivery of services, cooperation, or the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery.

Action 5-1.5: Provide any needed technical assistance to local governments which enhances their governmental operations and assists with meeting their obligations to the local citizens or other level of government.

HUMAN SERVICES (AGING)

GOAL: Provide for a coordinated system of services to older Georgians and their families within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region to promote their independence and well-being.

OBJECTIVE 1: To provide older persons with the alternatives necessary to live as independently as possible and to avoid unnecessary institutionalization and social isolation.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1:
To promote health and improve nutritional status of senior citizens, and provide services which maintain health.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-1.1: Provide to eligible participants at a senior center/congregate setting, a meal which complies with Dietary Guidelines for Americans, provides at least 33 1/3% of the Required Daily Allowance (RDA) for one meal.

Action 1-1.2: Provide to eligible participants at their place of residence, a meal which complies with Dietary Guidelines for Americans, at least 33 1/3% of the RDA for one meal.

Action 1-1.3: Provide informational programs promoting wellness, healthy lifestyles, and disease prevention in a group setting.

Action 1-1.4: Promote better health by providing accurate and culturally sensitive nutrition, physical fitness, and/or health information.

Action 1-1.5: Provide for individual advice and guidance to persons who are at nutritional risk.

Action 1-1.6: Provide basic medical services under medical supervision to individuals who can be cared for at home.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

To provide for services and information which assure access and coordination of all senior citizens to available programs and services.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-2.1: To provide assistance in the form of access to, or care coordination, where the older person and/or caregivers are experiencing diminished functional capacities which require services by formal service providers in the home.

Action 1-2.2: Provide Information and Assistance to individuals which a) gives information on services and opportunities available; b) assesses the problems and capacities of individuals; c) links individuals to such opportunities/services; and d) ensures that individuals receive the services needed.

Action 1-2.3: Provide transportation assistance as needed.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-3:

To provide services which address functional limitations of those senior citizens living at home.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-3.1: Provide homemaker/personal care assistance to persons with inability to perform one or more IADL's: preparing meals, shopping for personal items, managing money, telephoning, light housework, bathing.

Action 1-3.2: Provide services such as senior day care centers, including care for Alzheimer's patients, and In-Home/Out-of-Home Respite for older persons in order to provide a brief period of rest or relief for family members or other caregivers.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-4:

To provide legal and ombudsman services which protect and enhance the rights, dignity, autonomy and financial security of older Americans.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-4.1: Provide information to individuals regarding their eligibility for benefits, assistance with pursuing claims or benefits, and advocacy on behalf of the beneficiary.

Action 1-4.2: Provide legal advice, counseling and representation by an attorney or other persons acting under the supervision of an attorney.

Action 1-4.3: Provide services which protect and improve the quality of care and quality of life for residents of long-term care facilities through advocacy for and on behalf of residents and through the promotion of community involvement in long-term care facilities.

OBJECTIVE 2: **To continue the Regional Development Center's Area Agency on Aging (AAA) as a visible, effective focal point for advocacy for older Georgians within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region.**

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Continue to make the general public and legislators aware of increased demands, needs, and major issues of senior citizens.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 2-1.1: Prepare and keep current the Area Agency on Aging Area Plan.

Action 2-1.2: Provide decision makers with information necessary to make decisions on program/activity/funding which affects the elderly.

Action 2-1.3: Support Georgia's Silver Haired Legislators in the region.

Action 2-1.4: Support the Senior Advocacy Project which in turns provides AAA with legislative information.

Action 2-1.5: Participate in Senior Week at the Capitol.

Action 2-1.6: Conduct annual public hearings on senior needs/issues, such as affordable health care and safe, affordable housing.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-2:

Support the RDC's Area Agency on Aging as a viable and coordinated center or focal point for services to older Americans.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 2-2.1: Maintain designation of the Regional Development Center as the Area Agency on Aging within the Heart of Georgia Altamaha region.

Action 2-2.2: Seek appropriate levels of state and federal funding to continue providing a well-rounded, consistent, and coordinated program of services affordable for older Americans.

Action 2-2.3: Encourage/support continuing utilization of the AAA for coordination of all programs, including new ones, of services for senior citizens.

HOUSING

GOAL: Seek the provision of an adequate supply of available and affordable housing of all types, in both quality and quantity, which meets the needs of the population and which supports sound growth and development.

OBJECTIVE 1: Encourage and support the increased supply and improved quality of safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in the region both to upgrade the existing housing stock and to support growth and development.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1:
Support the continued improvement/expansion of the existing supply of safe and sanitary housing, especially low-and-moderate income housing.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-1.1:** Encourage/support local government usage of existing grant/loan programs, such as the Community Development Block Grant program and the Community Housing Improvement Program.
- Action 1-1.2:** Utilize the Department of Community Affairs to assist local governments in defining specific housing needs, developing community-wide plans, and taking advantage of existing state resources.
- Action 1-1.3:** Support local housing authorities with provision of data and other assistance to document needs and apply for financial assistance.
- Action 1-1.4:** Encourage/support the utilization of code enforcement by local governments to improve the quality of housing, particularly through shared services.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Advocate/support the provision of appropriate, adequate migrant/seasonal housing and the resolution of surrounding issues.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-2.1:** Encourage/support local utilization of existing programs and facilitate assistance available from state and private agencies for migrant/seasonal housing.
- Action 1-2.2:** Encourage/support the adoption/enforcement of housing codes by local governments.
- Action 1-2.3:** Assist local governments in examining/updating local land use regulations to accommodate flexibility and solutions in providing affordable housing.

OBJECTIVE 2: Provide and support an environment and framework of governance and public investment which supports and encourages quality housing in the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-1:

Encourage/support the establishment of a regulatory framework in the region which encourages planned, managed growth and quality housing.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-1.1:** Encourage/support the adoption and enforcement of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes by local governments of the region.
- Action 2-1.2:** Encourage/support the adoption of land use regulations which facilitate compatible housing types, allow innovative development, and stimulate private investment in quality housing by local governments of the region.
- Action 2-1.3:** Assist local governments in developing, updating, and implementing their adopted comprehensive plans.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-2:

Encourage/support/promote an environment of public investment and governance within the region at the local level which encourages quality housing developments.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-2.1:** Encourage/support formal beautification efforts of the local governments to improve community appearance, enhance the landscape, and otherwise encourage quality developments.
- Action 2-2.2:** Advocate local/regional promotion of quality retirement developments, communities, and facilities with amenities.
- Action 2-2.3:** Advocate/support local public and private investment in water and sewer facilities, sidewalks, exercise/recreation facilities, health and other community facilities which will be conducive to quality housing developments and neighborhood improvement.
- Action 2-2.4:** Encourage/support location of quality housing convenient to community facilities and amenities.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 2-3:

Assist the local governments of the region in addressing manufactured housing in such a manner as to recognize its importance in providing affordable, quality housing while ensuring compatibility with other housing types.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 2-3.1:** Assist local governments in adopting/amending land use regulations which contain housing standards for all types of housing to manage/accommodate manufactured housing and ensure compatibility.
- Action 2-3.2:** Encourage/support local governments in amending/adopting land use regulations to allow and otherwise utilize manufactured housing to replace dilapidated housing.

LAND USE

GOAL: Seek to encourage a pattern of planned growth and development which respects natural and historic resources, effectively meets economic and population needs, and enhances the quality of life within the region.

OBJECTIVE 1: Seek to encourage planned, managed growth in the region respective of the built and natural environments through appropriate land use regulation, and coordinated public investment and governance.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-1: Establish a regulatory framework of coordinated land use management regulations, and other ordinances and measures to provide for planned, managed growth and development region-wide.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action 1-1.1: Encourage/assist all local governments of the region with establishing appropriate land use management regulations, particularly zoning, subdivision regulations, and environmental protection ordinances.

Action 1-1.2: Encourage/support the adoption and enforcement of Georgia's Uniform Construction Codes by local governments of the region.

Action 1-1.3: Encourage coordinated planning and land use management among governments of the region.

Action 1-1.4: Assist local governments of the region in consulting, updating, and implementing their adopted comprehensive plans.

Action 1-1.5: Continue to expand and refine the use of geographic information systems and databases within the region.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY 1-2:

Encourage a pattern of development which respects and conserves valuable agricultural land, the rural character, and important natural and historic resources of the region.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action 1-2.1:** Encourage and support local government location of development, particularly industrial and commercial, within or near existing municipalities and infrastructure service areas.
- Action 1-2.2:** Encourage and support the expansion of the region's infrastructure, particularly transportation, water, and sewer, in a manner to support and accommodate growth near existing growth centers and other municipalities of the region.
- Action 1-2.3:** Continue to promote, develop, and support the stability and viability of the region's agricultural base through all means possible. (See Economic Development Policy Statement/Priority 3-3)

**TARGET AREA 1
PROTECTED RIVER CORRIDORS**

GOAL: Encourage conservation and protection of the region's river corridors in such a manner as to maintain/enhance their quality and natural flow, and to encourage wise and appropriate use.

OBJECTIVE TA1(1): Encourage conservation and protection of the river corridors identified as requiring or deserving local protection measures under DNR's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY TA1 (1) -1: Seek to conserve protected river corridors, while encouraging wise and appropriate uses (See Natural Resources Policy Statement/Priority 1-2).

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action TA1 (1)-1.1:** Encourage/assist all local governments with adopting river corridor protection ordinances which meet DNR's Minimum Environmental Planning Criteria (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.1).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.2:** Support maintenance of natural flows in the region's rivers, particularly the Altamaha (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.2).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.3:** Advocate maintenance of river water levels and flows in the Ocmulgee, Oconee, and Altamaha rivers, including upstream releases of impounded waters, to allow year-round recreational uses (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.3).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.4:** Encourage development of more public recreational areas and access along the region's rivers (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.4).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.5:** Utilize region's rivers for nature-based/adventure tourism (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.5).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.6:** Encourage state purchase of greenways and wildlife habitats along the region's rivers (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.6).
- Action TA1 (1)-1.7:** Support and encourage development and implementation of Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plans appropriate to the region (See Natural Resources Action 1-2.7).

TARGET AREA 2

U.S. 341 CORRIDOR BETWEEN BAXLEY AND HAZLEHURST

GOAL: Seek to encourage within the corridor the planned and managed provision of the public facilities and infrastructure which will serve and encourage existing and future growth, and address deficiencies; and provide the planning and physical framework for sound quality growth and development, while encouraging cooperation among jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE TA2(1): Seek to encourage planned, managed growth and the provision of public utilities through appropriate land use regulation, and coordinated public investment and cooperation.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY TA2 (1)-1: Develop and support the coordinated expansion of public facilities and infrastructure needed to support and encourage population growth and economic development within a proper regulatory framework for planned, managed growth.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

- Action TA2 (1)-1.1:** Encourage/assist all local governments within the corridor with establishing appropriate land use management regulations, especially zoning regulations and environmental protection ordinances.
- Action TA2 (1)-1.2:** Encourage coordinated planning, economic development, and land use management among local governments along the corridor.
- Action TA2 (1)-1.3:** Encourage and support the expansion of infrastructure along the corridor, particularly water and sewer, in a manner that supports the planned location of commercial and industrial development and utilizes/expands existing municipal infrastructure service areas.
- Action TA2 (1)-1.4:** Support development and expansion of the Tri-County Industrial Park, the Appling County Industrial Park West and the industrial lands east of Hazlehurst along the corridor.
- Action TA2 (1)-1.5:** Encourage and support interconnection of infrastructure services between Baxley, Graham, and Hazlehurst.

**TARGET AREA 3
LAURENS COUNTY (I-16 EXITS 49, 51, AND 54)**

GOAL: Seek to encourage a pattern of planned growth and development in Laurens County, particularly near I-16, that meets population and economic development needs in a timely, orderly, and effective manner without outpacing available infrastructure capacities.

OBJECTIVE TA3(1): Seek to encourage planned, managed growth that will lead to timely and orderly development through appropriate land use regulation and coordinated public investment.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY TA3 (1)-1: Support a pattern of planned, managed growth and development through the provision of a framework of coordinated infrastructure provision and land use management regulations that encourages growth in a planned, orderly fashion.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action TA3 (1)-1.1: Encourage/assist local governments with establishing appropriate land use management regulations, in particular zoning, subdivision regulations, and environmental protection ordinances. (See Land Use Action 1-1.1)

Action TA3 (1)-1.2: Encourage coordinated planning and land use management among local governments.

Action TA3 (1)-1.3: Encourage and support expansion of local government infrastructure, particularly transportation, water, and sewer, in a manner that connects growth with existing and planned infrastructure service areas.

Action TA3 (1)-1.4: Encourage and support local government location of development, particularly industrial and commercial, near existing or planned infrastructure service areas.

**TARGET AREA 4
DUBLIN (NORTHWEST SECTION OF LAURENS COUNTY)**

GOAL: Seek to encourage a pattern of planned, managed growth that effectively meets the needs of the growing population of Dublin and environs without overtaxing available infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE TA4(1): Seek to encourage planned, managed growth provided in an orderly manner through appropriate land use regulations and location of infrastructure services.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY TA4 (1)-1: Establish a regulatory framework of coordinated land use management regulations, and other ordinances and measures that encourages a pattern of growth consistent with available infrastructure.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action TA4 (1)-1.1: Encourage/assist all local governments with establishing appropriate land use management regulations, particularly zoning, subdivision regulations, and environmental protection ordinances (See Land Use Action 1.1.1).

Action TA4 (1)-1.2: Encourage coordinated planning and land use management between local governments.

Action TA4 (1)-1.3: Advocate location of development, primarily residential, within or near existing infrastructure service areas.

Action TA4 (1)-1.4: Support the expansion of infrastructure, particularly transportation, water, and sewer, in a manner that attracts and accommodates growth towards existing infrastructure areas, while protecting important natural resources.

**TARGET AREA 5
TOOMBS COUNTY
(BETWEEN LYONS AND VIDALIA ALONG GA. HWY 130 AND U.S. 1 NORTH)**

GOAL: Seek to encourage planned, managed growth and development which respects current land use patterns, effectively meets economic development and population needs, and enhances the quality of life of the surrounding area.

OBJECTIVE TA5(1): Seek to encourage planned, managed growth in the area that respects the current environment through appropriate land use management and coordinated public investment and governance.

POLICY STATEMENT/PRIORITY TA5 (1)-1: Provide a framework of coordinated infrastructure provision and land use management regulations that is conducive to planned, managed growth and development.

RECOMMENDED CONSISTENT IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS:

Action TA5 (1)-1.1: Encourage/assist local governments with establishing appropriate zoning and other land use management regulations.

Action TA5 (1)-1.2: Encourage local governments to coordinate planning and land use management.

Action TA5 (1)-1.3: Encourage location of industrial and other development within or near existing or planned infrastructure service areas, including the new Toombs County Gateway Center (U.S. 1 industrial park).

Action TA5 (1)-1.4: Support necessary expansion of infrastructure, primarily water, sewer, and possibly transportation, in such a manner that directs growth towards existing and planned service areas.