DCA Update on Proposed Local Planning Standards

DCA has posted the latest draft of the proposed local planning standards on the GeorgiaPlanning.com website (see http://www.georgiaplanning.com/documents/MinimumStandardsProposed3-25-05.pdf), along with a table summarizing the comments received during the public comment period that ended on March 2, 2005 (see http://www.georgiaplanning.com/documents/CommentsTable3-25-05.pdf). The Board of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs will meet to consider the proposed revisions at 10:30 a.m. on April 6, 2005, in the Boardroom (Room 303) at the DCA Offices at 60 Executive Park South, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30329. Upon adoption, the proposed rules will become effective on May 1, 2005. As currently proposed, the standards allow for a one-year transition period for local governments that have already begun preparing their comprehensive plans by the time of the effective date, or that have a recertification date falling between May 1, 2005 and May 1, 2006. Correspondence laying out the available options for each local government that might be affected in this way will be mailed out on April 6th (or as soon as the revised standards have been adopted if not on April 6). After adoption, the revised standards will be posted in their usual locations on the DCA website and on GeorgiaPlanning.com.

DCA will continue to seek public input from planners and other interested parties on the companion "State Planning Recommendations" that are now under development. For the planners of the state, the best opportunity to give DCA your comments is the upcoming GPA Spring Conference on April 28-29 in Decatur, where the Office of Planning and Quality Growth will present draft recommendations and seek input from conference attendees. For more information, contact Debbie Miness at dminess@dca.state.ga.us or call the Office of Planning and Quality Growth at 404-679-5279.
In the last newsletter, I reported that the GPA board of directors had approved an agreement for planning commissioner training certification, and that GPA received an award from APA’s Chapter President’s Council for outstanding service to members. On March 3rd, DCA Commissioner Mike Beatty signed the agreement, so we now begin the additional work of putting that program into place. And on March 21st I accepted the chapter award in San Francisco at the National Planning Conference of APA.

Since my last report, members of GPA’s legislative committee have been busy monitoring legislation in the General Assembly. After considerable input, our Chair of the Legislative Committee Deborah Miness, AICP, prepared and submitted a letter raising our concerns about SB 30, an inverse condemnation bill before the General Assembly. While that bill is not expected to pass this year, it may come up again next year. We also monitored SB 86, which if passed would limit local government powers of eminent domain for economic development purposes. Our preoccupation with SB 30 meant we did not make written comments on SB 86, which at the time of this writing had passed the Senate and was pending in the House. The Georgia Municipal Association staunchly opposed SB 86, and we were likely to (given enough time) suggest there would be adverse implications for planning and redevelopment should such legislation pass. The swift pace at which legislation can move in the General Assembly has taught us that we probably need to ramp up our legislative monitoring in next year’s session.

The national conference in San Francisco was productive in terms of chapter activities. In addition to the two days of meetings prior to the conference, I attended the delegate assembly (which recommends APA’s policy guides), the exchange among Professional Development Officers (PDOs), met with APA Board members and other chapter presidents in our APA region, and spoke with incoming and outgoing presidents of APA and AICP.

In my opinion, the new leadership at APA will serve us very well. Carol Rhea, AICP, is our representative on the APA Board of Directors. She organized the lunch meeting among our region’s Chapter Presidents in San Francisco. She listened intently and is reporting some of our concerns (especially related to the differences between APA-generated membership roster and newsletter distribution list) to APA staff and the board. David Siegel, AICP, is our new APA president; I met Dave during my days in Oregon and am confident he will guide national in the proper direction over the next two years. Our new AICP President, Sue Schwartz, FAICP, has long been a friend of the Georgia Chapter, and we can look forward to good leadership from her as well.

I extend my kudos to the chairs and members engaged in committee efforts, and our district directors for keeping members informed and involved with regional functions and activities. The urban design committee (convened by Paul Soudi, Chair) met on March 30th, and Paul Forgey arranged to have a meeting of the historic preservation committee in Thomasville concurrent with the state preservation conference there. Phil Clark has organized a regional lunch May 11 in Macon. Board members David Sutton, AICP, and Pam Thompson, AICP, organized and held a Community Planning Institute session in Albany March 24-25. We thank the faculty members who volunteered time again; these include perennial presenters Pat Chapman and our newsletter editor Bill Ross. The GPA Board will meet May 13 in Macon. Please contact me or any other member of the Board if you have concerns or suggestions about the direction of GPA.

Jerry Weitz, AICP
President
Get Involved in GPA

Georgia Planning Association (GPA) is your statewide planning organization! GPA members are part of a vital profession of private, non-profit and public sector individuals who together with other professionals keep the State of Georgia a unique and important place to live, work and play.

GPA needs members to serve as Officers, District Directors and Committees that advance our associations work program. GPA and planners are doing great things in our state! We should pity accountants, programmers or auditors. Who wants to do that stuff all day? The work of planners and GPA is interesting and important to the environment and quality of life for current and future citizens of Georgia.

So what can you do to be more involved with GPA? Become a member of the GPA Board or volunteer to work on a committee. GPA is seeking members to run for offices on the GPA Board of Directors and on all committees as diverse as Transportation to Website. We are also considering new Environmental and Housing committees.

What will you do on a committee? You may produce new materials for the GPA website, plan the next GPA conference, write an article on a current topic for a GPA newsletter or represent GPA to advise a community in the state. The work of GPA is varied, interesting and flexible to your schedule.

GPA needs smart, energetic planners to figure out ways to improve the services we provide to members and advance planning in Georgia. You must be a member of GPA in good standing to participate.

A list of all committees is provided below. Taking the step to work in your state planning association is easy. Just review the opportunities below, identify a role that is interesting to you and send your contact information (name, organization, telephone, address and e-mail) to: Dan Reuter, 40 Courtland Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30303 or dreuteri@atlantaregional.com

Thank you!

Dan Reuter
GPA President-Elect

The GPA Volunteer Rap
GPA rocks, it’s cool and fun. Planners work together to get things done. Coordinating, sharing and learning new tricks. We figure out what makes a community click.

GPA needs you to energize the state. Together we can make our planning great. Come one, come all to work with your peers. Together in GPA we have no fears!

GPA Committees

Awards
Bylaws
Economic Development
Ethics Committee
Finance

GPA Officers and District Directors

District 5 Director
District 6 Director
District 7 Director
District 8 Director
District 9 Director
District 10 Director
Planning Official
Planning Official

VP /Program
VP/Chapter Services
Secretary
Treasurer
AICP Director at Large
AICP Director at Large
Non-AICP Dir. at Large
Non-AICP Dir. at Large
Non-AICP Dir. at Large
District 1 Director
District 2 Director
District 3 Director
District 4 Director

Fall Conference
Historic Preservation
Legislative
Member Services
Minorities
Newsletter
Planning Officials Development
Planners’ Luncheons
Professional Development
Student Services
Spring Conference
Transportation
Urban Design
Website
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>CONTACT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18th</td>
<td>Practical Guide To Zoning and Land Use Law in Georgia</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nbi-sems.com">www.nbi-sems.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 20th – 22nd</td>
<td>CDFA Annual Conference Building Bridges Between Finance and Economic Development</td>
<td>Phoenix, AZ</td>
<td><a href="http://www.cdfa.net">www.cdfa.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28th – 29th</td>
<td>Spring GPA Conference</td>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlebeau@atlantaregional.com">rlebeau@atlantaregional.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2nd – 4th</td>
<td>Effective Zoning Administration Techniques</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td><a href="http://epd.engr.wisc.edu/webG541">http://epd.engr.wisc.edu/webG541</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 5th – 7th</td>
<td>Preserve and Play: Preserving Historic And Entertainment Sites</td>
<td>Chicago, IL</td>
<td><a href="http://www.preserveandplay.org">www.preserveandplay.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7th</td>
<td>Blue Grass and Green Trees</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td><a href="http://www.treesatlanta.org">www.treesatlanta.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 9th – 21st</td>
<td>AICP Exam Testing Dates</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:AICPexam@planning.org">AICPexam@planning.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>May 12th</td>
<td>Revitalization Tools: Urban Redevelopment Act / Opportunity Zones Training</td>
<td>Tifton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ceidson@dca.state.ga.us">ceidson@dca.state.ga.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 18th – 20th</td>
<td>GEDA Spring Workshop</td>
<td>Jekyll Island</td>
<td><a href="http://www.geda.org">www.geda.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31st</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:ROSSATCR@cs.com">ROSSATCR@cs.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>June 2nd</td>
<td>Revitalization Tools: Urban Redevelopment Act / Opportunity Zones Training</td>
<td>Dalton</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ceidson@dca.state.ga.us">ceidson@dca.state.ga.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 25th – 28th</td>
<td>GMA Annual Convention</td>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td>Janice Eidson (678) 686-6256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 31st</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:ROSSATCR@cs.com">ROSSATCR@cs.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 4th – 5th</td>
<td>GAZA Conference</td>
<td>Brasstown Valley</td>
<td><a href="http://www.georgiazoning.org">www.georgiazoning.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 11th</td>
<td>Revitalization Tools: Urban Redevelopment Act / Opportunity Zones Training</td>
<td>Suwanee</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ceidson@dca.state.ga.us">ceidson@dca.state.ga.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13th – 14th</td>
<td>Preservation Maintenance: Understanding And Preserving Historic Buildings</td>
<td>Austin, TX</td>
<td><a href="http://www.npi.org">www.npi.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15th</td>
<td>AICP Fall Exam Registration Deadline</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:AICPexam@planning.org">AICPexam@planning.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 21st – 23rd</td>
<td>GEDA Annual Conference</td>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td><a href="http://www.geda.org">www.geda.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 28th – 30th</td>
<td>Fall GPA Conference</td>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rlebeau@atlantaregional.com">rlebeau@atlantaregional.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 30th</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 7th – 19th</td>
<td>AICP Exam Testing Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 30th</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:ROSSATCR@cs.com">ROSSATCR@cs.com</a></td>
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I want to give GPA members an update on what is happening with two of GPA’s recent award winners; the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corporation and Jones County PLAN that are in District 5.

**Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corporation**

The Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway passes major archaeological/historical attractions yet to be fully developed, such as the large 3000-year-old Rock Hawk effigy in Putnam County, first surveyed by the Smithsonian Institute in 1878. The Rock Hawk effigy improvement was of the highest priority to the Georgia Department of Transportation, which normally administers Scenic Byway grants for the US Department of Transportation in Georgia. On November 1, 2004 the Secretary of the US Department of Transportation announced that the HPSB was awarded a grant of $442,093 for the Effigy. With matching funds the total amount is $550,000. The Effigy will be the centerpiece of many attractions in this area adjacent to the Scenic Byway. As part of the larger plan the 700-acre site owned by Georgia Power, UGA and the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) between Lake Oconee and GA 16 near Wallace Dam is being further developed to include hiking and biking educational trails which will pass attractions such as a variety of wildlife, and significant historic and archaeological sites, some over 10,000 years old. Georgia Power already has a campground there with picnic areas and a beach and a Wildlife Management Area exist. An abundant variety of scenery and wildlife from rare plant species to bald eagles also exists in the area. The trail also passes near the infamous Devil’s Pulpit and Devil’s Footprint on the Flat Rock outcropping. This project is a partnership between Georgia Power, DNR, UGA, the Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway Corp., Lake Oconee Property Owners Association and Putnam County. Over $200,000 has been raised by grants, contributions and in-kind effort from partners for the trails, educational signs and archaeological and historical research. Current Historic Piedmont Scenic Byway related projects and activities are shown below:

1. Protection and development of the 700-acre Rock Hawk Effigy area is covered above.
2. Work with DOT to add bike and pedestrian paths along GA 44 from Eatonton to Reynolds Plantation and create Bike & Pedestrian paths in Eatonton and in other parts of Putnam County. A brochure covering existing bikeways is available at the Chamber of Commerce office in Eatonton.
3. USDA grant won last year for nature/history/archaeology research and educational purposes.
4. **Find It** grant won last year for historical survey of Putnam County, which has now been completed by UGA.
5. Putnam photos of historical & archaeological sites featured at UGA’s Circle Gallery.
6. Putnam cemetery book with histories (partnership with Historical Society) is underway.
7. Ordinance passed in advance of Scenic Byway (with enforcement officer) to control litter, solid waste, public nuisance, etc.
9. Highway improvements—DOT has repaved the Scenic Byway from the Putnam High School to the Oconee River and will replace bridges over the Oconee, Crooked Creek & Rooty Creek. Multi-use trail planned from Eatonton Courthouse Square to the High School.
10. Development of scenic historic tours with Chamber of Commerce.
11. Old color hand-drawn maps of Putnam for sale: 1864 Sherman’s troop movement, 1878 homes and churches, late 1800s cemeteries and churches, all cemeteries past and present.
12. Website established: www.scenicbyway.org is linked to various sites.
13. Ordinance passed to prevent new billboards.
14. Timber Companies agreed to an alternating timber buffer.
15. DOT adding wildflowers along the Scenic Byway.
16. Over two dozen news articles on our Scenic Byway have appeared in the middle Georgia and Atlanta papers plus on two TV shows.

(Continued on page 6)
As you can see, the Historic Piedmont Scenic By-way Corporation and others in Putnam County have been busy promoting their scenic by-way. We as planners need to work with our communities to help promote the scenic by-way system in Georgia.

If you want more information on the Historic Piedmont Scenic By-way or how to plan and implement a successful scenic by-way, contact Larry Moore at larry-moore@plantationcable.net

Jones County PLAN

Another award winning organization that has made its presence felt in Jones County PLAN. Since winning the 2001 GPA award for Excellence in Community Planning, it has accomplished the following:

- Developed a strategy to help eliminate “crimes against the environment” campaign to partnership with Keep Jones Beautiful.
- Researched and recommended amendments to the local zoning ordinance for signage, buffering/landscape at gateways for Gray and Jones County.
- Assisted in update of the local comprehensive plan.
- Developed database and PowerPoint presentation for driving tour of the county.
- Reactivated Forward 2000 Leadership Program and moved program under the auspices of the Chamber.
- Assisted in securing TEA grant for $500,000 for alternative transportation routes, lighting, and sidewalks in Gray, Haddock and Clinton.
- Conducted year-long study of community water and sewer needs and made recommendations to the City and County.
- Researched and made available for public distribution information on affordable housing and initiated housing study.
- Provided documentation in support of developing affordable housing for seniors.

In addition, there have been other community organizations created as a result of Jones County PLAN and they are:

- Gray Station Better Hometown, Inc.
- Haddock Community Action Program, Inc. (H-Cap)
- History and Heritage, Inc.
- Jones County Family Connections
- Operation Early Intervention
- Development Authority of Jones County
- Jones County/Gray Community Adult Leadership Program

If want to learn more about how your community can establish a successful grassroots organization such as Jones County PLAN, please contact Sandra McKinney atjcgcchcom@jonescounty.org

A Road By Any Other Name is a Street

The Need for Transportation Corridor Studies

By Dan Cohen, Pond & Company

The State of Practice

Traditional transportation practice defines streets and roads according to functional classification which consists of a hierarchy that includes interstates, arterials, collectors and local roads. Roads are described according to the number of lanes, volumes of traffic, and types of trip generators. The role of a road is discussed in terms of linear infrastructure that allows for the efficient and safe movement of goods and people. Traffic is discussed in terms of levels of service, and congestion is something that can be made acceptable through universally applied improvements to the physical condition of the road such as regulated access from adjacent properties, signalization and turning movements.

On the other hand, architects and urban designers tend to categorize roads as streets, not based on public utility, but rather as a public place that contributes to the community. Streets are, from this point of view, social spaces that should provide a balance among multiple modes and needs including pedestrians, bicycles, mass transit and the automobile. Streets are viewed less as thoroughfares and more as contributors to the vitality of an area. As such, streets need to be safe places that have great character (i.e., wide sidewalks, street trees and defined edges). Streets need to also reflect the economic potential and appropriate land-use intensity of the area.

From either frame of reference, growing communities in Georgia are faced with issues of congestion and mobility. Almost by definition, an area that supports a large concentration of economic and social activities is going to

(Continued on page 7)
be congested. The resolution, or perhaps the accommodation, of congestion is what separates desirable places people want to travel through, live, work and shop in from the places people want to avoid. It is the avoidance of communities and transportation networks that leads to an unhealthy atmosphere and eventual economic deterioration.

**Toward an Integrated Corridor Approach**

Multi-modal corridor studies identify the mix of transportation improvements that can be most effective in moving people and goods in specific travel corridors. Corridor planning studies address needs identified in the long-range plan, refines the understanding of those needs, and evaluates potential transportation strategies to address them. The end result is the selection of an investment strategy based on a well defined purpose and need for the corridor that fits within the regions financial capacity.

A Purpose and Need Statement sets the stage for consideration of alternatives which are traditionally transportation-based. To capture fully a more integrated land use-transportation approach, the "Purpose" could be expanded to include goals and objectives based on sound land use and urban design principles that are necessary for a successful solution to the problem. The "Need" could be expanded to include a core set of indicators that support the problem statement (Purpose).

A suggested set of land use and design indicators for the Atlanta region (see sidebar on Mobility 2030) might include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Urban Design Indicators</th>
<th>Data to be collected</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Data to be collected</td>
<td>Source of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Setback</td>
<td>Average building setback in feet</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidewalk Distance in Relationship to Buildings</td>
<td>Attached, detached, parking separation</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tree Canopy</td>
<td>Size and extent of tree plantings</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of Sidewalk</td>
<td>Adjacent use sidewalk connections with public sidewalks</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Grid</td>
<td>Number of intersecting streets per mile along corridor</td>
<td>Count from map and field check</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amenities</td>
<td>Street furniture/Shelters</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use Indicators</th>
<th>Data to be collected</th>
<th>Source of Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Data to be collected</td>
<td>Source of Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwelling Units (DU)</td>
<td>Dwelling units within 1/4 mile of corridor</td>
<td>GIS Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Demographics</td>
<td>Population characteristics</td>
<td>U.S. Census</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU Density</td>
<td>DU’s per square mile</td>
<td>GISs Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>Jobs with 1/4 mile of corridor</td>
<td>GISs Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Per DU</td>
<td>Jobs divided by dwelling units</td>
<td>GISs Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DU Proximity to Retail</td>
<td>Dwelling units with 1/4 mile of retail</td>
<td>GISs Calculation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to Change</td>
<td>Relative condition of corridor-rating potential to change</td>
<td>Field Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recent Corridor Activity</td>
<td>Map of turnover/major renovations within the past two years</td>
<td>GISs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unlike state transportation agencies, local governments have the authority to guide and manage land use and can apply a variety of measures to manage transportation congestion. As part of the comprehensive planning process, local governments could adopt transportation corridor ordinances to address development and guide design along corridors. Transportation corridor guidelines could also be adopted in a comprehensive plan as a policy that preserves and protects rights-of-way and enables multi-modal transportation enhancements to occur.

The State Department of Transportation (GDOT) regulates access to and from private property along state routes, which effects parcel size and hence redevelopment efforts. In addition, GDOT maintains no roadway design distinction between a road classified as an urban arterial or a rural arterial. Since the core roadway/street system in metropolitan regions is largely built out and constrained, an emphasis on an automobile modal element solely to operate the system safely and efficiently needs to be expanded. With fewer new roadways being built, the need for effective, comprehensive strategies is greater than ever before.

**Conclusion**

As Georgia continues to grow, especially in the metropolitan areas, the importance of balancing the needs of new development, pedestrians, bicycles, transit and the automobile grows in importance. Creating attractive and viable communities necessitates that roads and streets be designed to carry traffic and to be sympathetic with existing and proposed community development patterns and the context of it surroundings. Determining criteria for good roads and streets requires paying attention to travel characteristics, urban design fundamentals and appropriate land uses. Establishing correlations among these variables will not only help build a better transportation network, but better places for people to live, and that is an investment that Georgia's communities should not ignore.

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**Elements of a Corridor Plan**

The Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC) corridor plans will identify major capital and operational solutions for the corridor. These solutions will then be used as the basis for making project funding decisions in future transportation plan updates.

Recommendations along a corridor should include:

1) land use policy recommendations
2) access management plans
3) traffic flow monitoring technologies
4) signal coordination
5) bicycle and pedestrian facilities
6) bus rapid transit (BRT) services
7) new parallel reliever roads
8) intersection realignments
9) additional general purpose lanes
10) HOV lanes
11) toll lanes
12) truck lanes

ARC intends to consider achievement of land use goals based on these studies in making funding decisions in future Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs).

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This is one of a series of articles on planning strategies and issues with a focus on growth issues in Georgia published through the Georgia Municipal Association. We previously published *New Tools for Planning* by Dan Reuter in the February GPA newsletter.

Check out this and other articles at <www.gmanet.com>, or access them directly at:

*A Road By Any Other Name is a Street: The Need for Transportation Corridor Studies*, by Dan Cohen

*Regulating Manufactured Housing, a Practitioner's Perspective* by Jerry Weitz

*Developing a Community Vision in Your Local Plan* by Deborah Miness
http://www.gmanet.com/general/default.asp?pagetype=vision_20050215&menuid=ResearchID

*Avoiding Conflicts of Interest in Zoning Actions* by David C. Kirk

In the months ahead, check the GMA website as new articles are published.
A few of the planning commissioners who attended Thursday's Spring 2005 Planning Institute admitted to not knowing what is included in their county comprehensive plan.

Yet the legal document, required in each county by the 1989 Growth Strategies Act, serves as the basis on which decisions for development plans must be made by county planning commissions.

Chrissy Marlowe, a specialist with the Department of Community Affair’s Office of Planning and Quality Growth, said Thursday that before changing any zoning regulations or revising land use plans, planners should align proposed changes with the comprehensive plan.

“If you want to protect your-self from litigation, be consistent,” Marlowe said. She was one of several instructors at the Community Planning Institute, a two-day training program at Grand Island in Lee County, that will certify planning commissioners.

Marlowe, a planning commissioner in Athens-Clark County, said DCA is establishing new minimum local planning standards, effective May 1, that will highlight public participation, allow for more creativity in planning and encourage the development of a 10-year vision in each community.

“It should be a lot more intuitive way of planning for your community” Marlowe said.

The 60 people who attended the training, organized by Lee County Planner Pamela Thompson and David Sutton, who is with the Community Planning Institute in Cleveland, included planning commissioners, elected officials, planning staff members and developers from a total of 34 Georgia counties and cities.

Those who attended Thursday's training will be the first group to become certified planning commissioners, pending approval of state legislation that promotes standard statewide training and certification. The legislation is being pushed by the Georgia Planning Association and the Department of Community Affairs, both of which sponsored Thursday's event.

Lee County Planning Commissioner Tommy Heldenberg said the training will help commissioners learn how to not just sustain Lee County growth, but also control it over the next 10 years.

“In past years, I don't think we've done the best job we could have in planning for the future,” said Heldenberg, who joined the commission in January. He has not read the county's comprehensive plan, but now intends to.

Lee County's plan, last updated in 1992 and due to be updated by February 2007, must be updated every 10 years. But new U.S. Census Bureau data released after 2000 that must be considered in the development of the revised plan afforded Lee County an extension on its deadline, Thompson said.

An elected official, Dougherty Commissioner Charles Lingle, who attended the training, said, “I just lack a good working knowledge of what we need to do.” He said the Albany-Dougherty comprehensive plan must be updated in 2006.

What he heard from planning experts on Thursday were “common sense issues.” Lingle said it’s a matter of putting “yourself in the place of developers and the neighborhood.”
We've got a deal for you! Starting this year, you can place your business card ad on GPA's website -- [www.georgiaplanning.org](http://www.georgiaplanning.org) as well as (or alternately) advertise in the bi-monthly newsletter. The prices are:

**Newsletter ad placement** - $180/yr  
**Website ad placement** - $360/yr

As an introductory (and maybe permanent) offer, however, you can continue your ad in the newsletter AND put it on the website for a total combined cost of $300. YES, THAT'S RIGHT! Both ads for $300, which is less than a web ad alone!!

To continue advertising in the newsletter and/or add on the web, you need to send your artwork for the business card ad to me via email to: ROSSATCR@cs.com

Make a check out to Georgia Planning Association as appropriate, and mail it to:

Bill Ross  
ROSS+associates  
2161 Peachtree Rd, NE Suite 806  
Atlanta, GA 30309
Change of Address: The Georgia Chapter does not maintain address lists. All lists are maintained at the national office and are mailed to the local chapters each month. If you have moved, e-mail: address-change@planning.org, go to Member Login at www.planning.org, or write to:

Membership Department  
APA National Headquarters  
122 South Michigan, Suite 1600  
Chicago, Illinois 60603-6107

Membership Information: If you are interested in joining GPA or the American Planning Association, contact the national headquarters at the address above or call (312) 431-9100.

Contacts: Direct financial inquiries and address payments to the Treasurer. Direct questions about chapter records to the Secretary. Direct matters for the Board of Directors to the President. See mailing and email addresses inside.

Submission: The Georgia Planning Association welcomes articles, letters to the editor, photos of planning events or state happenings, calendar listings, job notices, planners on the move, etc. We are always interested in publishing items you think may be of interest to others throughout the state. Graphics are especially welcome. Articles may be edited for space. Articles printed in any issue of The Georgia Planner are not the expressed opinion of the Chapter.

Deadline: The deadline for the next issue is May 31, 2005.

Send items for the newsletter to:

William F. Ross  
ROSS+associates  
2161 Peachtree Road, NE Suite 806  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309  
Bill@planross.com