



## GEORGIA PLANNER

Newsletter of the Georgia Planning Association,  
A Chapter of the American Planning Association

Image of Savannah, Georgia

DECEMBER 2006 – QUARTERLY

Georgia Planning Association  
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## The State of Planning in Georgia 2006

By Dan Reuter, President

As we end 2006 and anticipate the beginning of a new year, it is useful to consider the current state of planning practice in Georgia. Trying to summarize our state's planning is difficult as Georgia is a diverse state with rural and highly populated communities in various conditions and lifecycles of development. It is also difficult as the typical definition of planning is too narrow considering the federal, state and local planning as well as non-governmental activities that have occurred.

Georgians have practiced city, regional and state planning for much longer than most individuals realize. The planning that has occurred in Georgia is more responsible for the current economy and quality of life than many would credit. However, with regard to local government planning, metro Atlanta and others in the state had planning post WWII while many communities began considering the future growth in the early 1990's as a result of the Georgia Planning Act. These later cities or counties are only on their second or possibly third update of the plan. This is a fairly short history of planning by many U.S. state's standards.

It is not inappropriate to consider that Oglethorpe's plan for Savannah was laid out around 1770. While Georgia has built rural highways and interstates since that time, the vast majority of our infrastructure that has been built for over 230 years and most of our existing economy and population is concentrated around the Atlanta region, a dozen or so urban centers that exceed 50,000 population and many smaller communities. The planning that occurred for infrastructure, recreation, land use and other needs has been extremely important during this time.

Correlating with the trends of the U.S. in the last century, significant planning occurred in Georgia. Major roadway planning and construction was undertaken across the state and in urban centers with projects such as Truman Parkway in Savannah or the SR 10 loop highway in Athens. Large public infrastructure that was either envisioned through plans or supported by planning occurred such as Buford Dam, the MARTA rail system, Georgia Ports and Hartsfield-Jackson airport. Finally, state agencies have undertaken enormous amounts of planning for issues such as solid waste management, air quality conformity or wildlife protection and management. While often not coordinated with local governments, even public schools from universities to local school boards have completed campus plans or school construction plans. Georgia is a state with a rich and important planning history.

*continued p. 2*

### NOTICE OF PROPOSED DUES STRUCTURE CHANGE

The Georgia Planning Association is proposing a change to its current dues structure to set the membership rate for both APA and chapter only members at \$35.00 per year. Currently, APA members are charged the discounted rate of \$25.00. The rate for students and planning commissioners would not be affected.

The Board is seeking the increase as a means of funding an administrative assistant position that would increase service provision within the organization. With over 1,000 members, GPA is one of the only Chapters of its size that is strictly run by volunteers. This individual would be significant in helping address the day to day operations of the Chapter.

In accordance with the by-laws, this issue must be duly advertised and brought before the membership at either the annual meeting or at a special called meeting. The Board has elected to hold a special called meeting at its spring conference to be held March 8th – 9th at the Sharraton in Buckhead. All interested parties are encouraged to attend and provide input.

Questions regarding the proposed change can be directed to any member of the Board. A listing of officers and contact information can be found on the GPA website ([www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)) or in the GPA newsletter. ■

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THE STATE OF PLANNING IN GEORGIA 2006 *(continued from p. 1)*

At the 2006 GPA Fall Conference Membership Meeting, I took a few minutes to remember two persons who had an important impact on our state's planning. Dr. Eugene P. Odum was instrumental with creating the Institute of Ecology at the University of Georgia and is widely credited for making the term "ecosystem" a household word. Odum's vision of holistic ecology is still practiced today. The Institute was one of the first ecology research centers. The UGA Institute of Ecology consistently ranks at the top. Most recently, the graduate program ranked eighth in a study by US News and World Report.

The second person, I highlighted at the Fall Conference, who impacted planning in Georgia was Georgia Tech's first City Planning Program Director - Howard K. Menhinick. Menhinick left the Tennessee Valley Authority, where he was Director of Regional Studies, to launch and direct the program as one of the first Regents Professors at Georgia Tech. Menhinick was a highly accomplished professional planner and scholar. He held a Master of Landscape Architecture in City Planning from Harvard, where he also taught from 1929 through 1936. He was a consultant to the National Resources Planning Board in 1935. In 1957 Professor Menhinick drafted the Georgia General Planning and Zoning Enabling Act, which the legislature passed and the Governor signed and which subsequently became the basic legal foundation for planning and zoning in Georgia.

Almost 50 years ago Georgia adopted a Planning and Zoning Enabling Act which remained until the 1983 Constitution. But only in the past 10 years has Georgia made substantial progress towards real community planning and breaking down the Euclidean zoning standards. Through new regulations, design standards and various public-private partnerships, communities across the state including Atlanta, Athens, Covington, Decatur, Savannah, Smyrna, Suwannee, Woodstock are being renewed with urban densities, street level retail and walkable streets. Many developers are now reinvesting in historic urban centers or seeking to create new mixed use development, centers and master planned developments.

The Chattahoochee Hill Country in south Fulton County has provided possibly the best model in Georgia for planning and regulating a large undeveloped area. The hamlet at a development called Serenbe and the implementation of a legal Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program were significant. In the past several years, hundreds of millions of local, state and non-profit funds have been invested in acquiring greenspace.

Planners are in part responsible for many positive trends in Georgia. Communities across Georgia are undertaking major strides to redevelop existing downtowns, provide transportation alternatives, build new innovative development and protect natural resources. Georgia has reached a level of planning and awareness that is extremely important. Good development examples, good development codes, innovative design standards and reasonable methods of environmental protection are available in Georgia. We are at the point where these practices can gain momentum and become commonplace.

Now is the time to look at the good models and take action in your community. Now is the time to reach out to the private sector and seek standards for development that are beneficial to both the private sector to profit and communities to improve the quality of life. Now is the time to forge partnerships with natural allies in government, non-profits and community groups to look at good models for new development, rural protection and greenspace acquisition. Now is the time to find your voice in your community. Georgia communities and planners are taking big steps. Be a part of it!! ■





## New Publication: Environmental Management

A new book from the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government is written especially to help local officials and administrators conduct effective environmental management in their communities. Environmental Management Handbook for Georgia Local Government Officials offers a hands-on reference for understanding environmental impacts of operations, compliance with regulatory regulations, and techniques that can prevent pollution.

The resource has its beginnings in materials produced for special environmental management training workshops conducted in recent years by the Vinson Institute. "While local governments have always been responsible for providing basic environmental services, in recent years that list has grown considerably, as has the associated expense of compliance with changing state and federal requirements," notes Jim Kundell, director of the Institute's Environmental Policy Program and one of the authors. The new book will be useful to officials from any size community, he emphasizes.

Environmental areas covered are water management, air quality protection, energy conservation, waste management, and land-use management regarding resources, public interest in land use, federal and state government roles, and multijurisdictional land-use policies and programs. Also included are numerous maps, Web and publications resources, glossary, and an index.

The authors of Environmental Management Handbook for Georgia Local Government Officials, 272 pages, softbound, are Margaret A. Myszewski, James E. Kundell, Terry DeMeo, and Don R. Christy. For more information go to [www.vinsoninstitute.org/catalog](http://www.vinsoninstitute.org/catalog). ■

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# georgia planning association 2006 ANNUAL AWARDS

GPA's 2006 Awards were presented at the Fall Conference on St. Simon's Island, GA in October. Local governments and community organizations have become more engaged and sophisticated in recent years in the advancement of planning, growth management and implementation.

The awards were judged on the basis of the following criteria:

- Innovation of concept
- Transferability to other areas or projects
- Quality of thought, analysis and character
- Effectiveness of, or promise for, Implementation
- Comprehensiveness of principles observed

The awards received included:

- 34 nominations in 11 categories
- 21 different organizations
- 14 different communities

## **OUTSTANDING PLANNING DOCUMENT POPULATION UNDER 15,000 CITY OF HAPEVILLE—MAIN STREET TOWN CENTER LCI STUDY**

- Done with Turner-Spangler-Walsh & Associates for the LCI Program
- Vision and action plan for historic downtown and adjacent neighborhoods (~ 900 acres)
- Public input involved Core Team meetings, at least four public workshops, an interactive web site with a visual preference survey, all done between April and December, 2005
- Study combines thorough inventory and analysis, extensive public input, realistic recommendations, and an effective and detailed implementation plan
- Recommendations include
  - RR underpass/ overpass strategies
  - Streetscape solutions
  - Marketing guidelines
  - Design guidelines (already enacted)



*Paul Farmer, Executive Director of APA  
& Chris Montesinos*

## **OUTSTANDING PLAN DOCUMENT POPULATION OVER 15,000 CITY OF ATLANTA—CAMPBELLTON-CASCADE CORRIDORS REDEVELOPMENT PLAN**



*Flor Velarde and Steve Cofer*

- City of Atlanta Bureau of Planning with Glatting Jackson et al, Inc.
- One of six historically underserved communities identified by the City as Economic Development Priority Areas
- Area is a Tax Allocation District and Urban Enterprise Zone
- Public input measures included an Advisory Committee, design charrettes and open work sessions, distribution of flyers, interactive web site and stakeholder interviews
- Process identified 6 "catalyst sites" targeted for redevelopment potential
- Process focused on planning as economic development, trying to lure jobs and stability to an area undergoing demographic and economic change
- Goal is to improve the investment environment while preserving and enhancing the existing neighborhoods



## OUTSTANDING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION POPULATION UNDER 15,000 **CITY OF PERRY—BIG INDIAN CREEK WATERWAY PROJECT**



*Lee Gilmore & Bill O'Neil, City of Perry*

- Push to beautify and revitalize downtown Perry required addressing Big Indian Creek, which lies along the City's western edge
- Corridor featured dilapidated lots and concerns with litter since flood of 1994
- City also sees increasing demand for greenspace and pedestrian accessibility
- Greenway features 55.8 acres, with most of the land donated or purchased
- Total cost \$171,034; more than 74% of funding generated from local sources
- Project considered a success locally in garnering support from minorities and volunteer organizations

## OUTSTANDING PLAN IMPLEMENTATION POPULATION OVER 15,000 **MIDTOWN ALLIANCE—BLUEPRINT MIDTOWN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

- Continued implementation of community development plan updated in 2003
- Features partnerships with City of Atlanta, EDAW, Urban Collage and Silverman Construction Program Mgmt.
- Tremendous public involvement and support
- Improved pedestrian accessibility in final plan for the reconstruction of the 14th Street Bridge
- Six (6) Peachtree Street intersection enhancements designed and funded
- Began streetscape improvement projects on Peachtree Street (3rd -10th Streets) and on West Peachtree (North - 13th Streets).
- Midtown's overall crime rate was down 31% from 2004
- Midtown Green Environmental Maintenance cleaned sidewalks and streets daily with All Terrain Litter Vacuums (ATLV's) collecting more than 450 gallons of trash daily.
- Midtown Transportation Solutions sold an average of 3,800 transit passes per month



*Will Herbig, Midtown Alliance*

**OUTSTANDING STUDENT PROJECT**  
**GEORGIA STATE/ATLANTA URBAN DESIGN COMMISSION—**  
**BELTLINE HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY**



*Steve Cover, Atlanta &  
Brandy Morrison, GSU Student*

- Involved students from GSU's Master in Heritage Preservation Program
- Worked entire 22-mile Beltline corridor to assist in preserving the sense of place and character
- Students performed both archival research and windshield surveys
- Surveyed 1,127 properties in all
- 170 sites already listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 45 unlisted sites individually eligible for nomination
- 673 unlisted sites eligible for nomination as contributing to a possible historic district

**INNOVATIVE & EFFECTIVE PLANNING PROCESS**  
**GRTA—NORTHWEST I-75 STATION AREA DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PROCESS**

- Interagency planning process for corridors of I-75 and I-575 in Cobb and Cherokee Counties
- Objective was to garner input for the design of Interstate improvements
- Included minimum 14 meetings with Coordination Team of key stakeholders, plus at least 15 public hearings and charettes
- Design improvements will include HOV/Bus lanes and Truck Only Lanes
- Results of public input included
  - guidance on location of transit stations;
  - relocation of one HOV interchange;
  - conceptual land use plans for areas around transit stations



*Roger Henze, GRTA &  
Edward Womack, Parsons  
Brinckerhoff Quade & Douglas*

**OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO PLANNING POPULATION UNDER 15,000**  
**CITY OF WATKINSVILLE—"YOUR WATKINSVILLE"**



*Brian Brodick, City of Watkinsville &  
Lee Carmon, Northeast Georgia RDC*

- City was not considered active in planning much before 2004
- "Your Watkinsville," a two-phase planning initiative begun in March 2005 with assistance from Northeast Georgia RDC
- Aggressive promotional campaign yielded an average above 60 people for visioning workshops
- Plan addressed progressive issues such as context sensitive design, transit and pedestrian friendly development, and tree ordinances
- City Council has already followed through with several implementation measures

## OUTSTANDING COMMITMENT TO PLANNING POPULATION OVER 15,000 **COWETA COUNTY—COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING**



*Tavores Edwards, Robert Tolleson,  
& Sandra Parker*

- County completed their Strategic Framework Plan and Joint Comprehensive Transportation and Implementation Program
- First local application in metro Atlanta to coordinate long range transportation plan with comprehensive land use plan
- County Commissioners made early commitments to regularly attend planning meetings and seek plausible resolutions to issues
- Bus tour of county used to better understand scope of concerns (ie: rural vs. suburban development)
- Commission sought to establish a higher standard for development, supported in the Comprehensive Plan, special district or area plans and in revised development regulations
- Commissioners committed themselves to being educated in best practices and planning alternatives
- Upon completion, the Strategic Framework was submitted for comment to a five member peer review panel
- County has maintained support and expectations from planning staff in the ability to follow through with these plans, including a regular budget for research and education measures

## MEDIA INVOLVEMENT **COWETA COUNTY—COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO PLANNING**

- County completed their Strategic Framework Plan and Joint Comprehensive Transportation and Implementation Program
- Coordinated public involvement began with “Be Something Different” community visioning workshops, heavily supported by Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce
- Received over 5,000 responses and had over 500 residents at 12 workshops
- Newnan Times-Herald aided in promotion of events, included follow-up reports after meetings complete with maps and graphics
- Published the original survey as a full page ad at no cost to County
- Planning staff and team members participated in interviews for two local television programs, InfoCoweta and Spotlight on Newnan
- Two newsletters were distributed in hard copy and electronic format
- Several web sites coordinated to promote plan events and results
- Regular press releases, flyers and posters featured Be Something Different logo to maintain awareness

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

*Thanks to all of you who responded to the Professional Development Committee's survey. The results of the 114 responses are tabulated below:*

## 1. What topics of professional development do you want? (1 = highest)

1	Land Use Planning	10	Affordable Housing
2	Growth Management	11	Design Review
3	Land Use Law	12	Environmental protection
4	Transportation	13	Public Finance
(tie) 5	Zoning Administration	14	Impact Fees
(tie) 5	Visioning and Strategic Planning	15	TAD/ CID
6	Redevelopment	16	Historic Preservation
7	Form-based codes	17	TDR
8	Economic Development	18	Eminent Domain
9	Public Participation	19	Ethics
		20	Solid Waste Management

## 2. What format of training do you want?

5%	Lunchtime session (1 hour)
45%	half day session
33%	full day session (best day is Wed. or Thur.)
16%	1-1/2 to 2 days
1%	3 or more days

## 3. What method of training do you prefer? (1 = highest)

1	Lecture
2	Expert Panel
3	Case study
4	Written study guide
5	CD/ video
6	APA Audio tape

## 4. Which location in the state is most convenient for you?

55%	Atlanta area
18%	Macon
12%	Athens
9%	Savannah
3%	Rome
3%	Gainesville/Ga Mtn RDC
0%	Columbus





5. What is the most that you are willing to pay for the professional development session of your choice, based on the length of the session? (Check one box per row).

Length of Session	\$10	\$25	\$50	\$75	\$100	\$200	\$300	\$400	\$500
Lunchtime	19%	60%	19%	2%					
Half day	1%	14%	44%	25%	16%				
Full day		1%	13%	24%	35%	24%	3%		
1-1/2-2 days			1%	6%	32%	37%	21%	3%	
3 or more days				3%	11%	29%	27%	12%	18%

6. Are you aware of the Community Planning Institute course?

62% Yes  
38% No

7. Have you ever attended CPI?

31% Yes  
69% No

8. Do you consider it to be (choose one):

21% Very helpful  
23% Somewhat helpful  
2% Not very helpful



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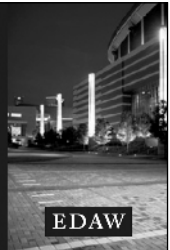
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## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

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: [addresschange@planning.org](mailto:addresschange@planning.org), go to Member Login at [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org), or write to:

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## 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 or visit their website at [www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org).

## 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 **February 28, 2006**.

Send items for the newsletter to:

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS - visit the website for the current events listing

January 5th	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.southface.org">www.southface.org</a>
January 16th – 17th	Community Planning Institute	Savannah, GA	<a href="http://www.dca.state.ga.us">www.dca.state.ga.us</a>
January 22nd – 23rd	Growth Management in Georgia	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.lawseminars.com">www.lawseminars.com</a>
February 2nd	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.southface.org">www.southface.org</a>
March 2nd	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.southface.org">www.southface.org</a>
March 8th – 10th	GPA Spring Conference	Buckhead, GA	<a href="mailto:rlebeau@atlantaregional.com">rlebeau@atlantaregional.com</a>
March 10th – 14th	Congressional City Conference	Washington, DC	<a href="http://www.nlc.org">www.nlc.org</a>
March 21st – 23rd	Paying for Sustainable Water Infrastructure: Innovations for the 21st Century	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.gmanet.org">www.gmanet.org</a>
March 22nd – 23rd	Greenprints Conference	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.southface.org">www.southface.org</a>
April 9th – 10th	Complete Management Course for Planning Directors	Savannah, GA	<a href="http://www.zuckersystems.com">www.zuckersystems.com</a>
April 13th	Southface – Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	Atlanta, GA	<a href="http://www.southface.org">www.southface.org</a>
April 14th – 18th	APA National Planning Conference	Philadelphia, PA	<a href="http://www.planning.org">www.planning.org</a>





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