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**For More Information Contact:**

**Laura Keyes, AICP**

**GA APA Chapter President**

**404-463-3243**

**[lkeyes@atlantaregional.com](mailto:lkeyes@atlantaregional.com)**

## **Georgia Communities Earn State Honors**

(ATLANTA – October 19, 2012) The Georgia Planning Association (GPA) has provided resources and services to planners and communities for more than three decades, offering education, legislative support, the Community Planning Institute and other resources. Each year, GPA rewards local communities and regional commissions for their work to make Georgia a better place to live.

The 2012 Chapter Awards were given last month at the GPA Fall Conference held in Columbus, GA to plans and projects that showed innovation, transferability, quality, effectiveness of implementation, comprehensiveness, public participation, technology, equity, sustainability and collaboration.

**The winners of the 2012 GPA Chapter Awards were:**

- DeKalb County, GA for DeKalb County Long-Range Comprehensive Energy and Sustainability Plan, Outstanding Planning Process for a Large Community - The Plan addresses energy use, water consumption, land use, transportation, procurement, and local sustainable food developed by a diverse group of DeKalb County employees, community leaders, and citizens, who together comprised the Sustainability Steering Committee. It puts in place a practical, fact-based blueprint for development of the County in a manner that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- City of Chattahoochee Hills, GA for City of Chattahoochee Hills Comprehensive Plan, Outstanding Planning Process for a Small Community - Chattahoochee Hills is 52 square miles in size and has only 2378 residents. Nearly 500 people, over 20% of the population, participated in the planning process. The Plan represents a bold choice to stand apart from the development pattern of the rest of metro Atlanta and keep Chattahoochee Hills "Deliberately Rural."
- Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission, Savannah, GA for Reclaiming Old West Broad Street the I-16 Ramp Removal, Outstanding Planning Document for a Large Community - The project reclaims 8 acres of developable land, fronting Martin Luther King Dr. and Montgomery Street. It also reclaims Martin Luther King Dr. as a major economic mixed-use corridor, reinvented as gateway to City instead of as edge of downtown. The effort improves traffic flow with new street grid and lays the groundwork for expansion of streetcar system.

- The City of Grovetown, GA for Picture Grovetown Urban Redevelopment Plan, Outstanding Planning Document for a Small Community – The redevelopment plan facilitates pro-active abatement of slum and blight, and provide the method to create its first true “downtown” activity center. Grovetown’s elected officials initiated the Plan prepared by the CSRA Regional Commission in 2011 and 2012. A 5-year implementation program serves as a strategic plan that prioritizes and coordinates resulting action steps.
- The City of Milton, GA for Crabapple Form based Code and Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance, Outstanding Plan Implementation for a Large Community – The Code capitalizes on historic structures and development patterns. The ordinance represents a combination “form based code” and “transfer of development right.” Development to final approval of the ordinance took 8 months from start to finish. The ordinance is the first of its kind in the State, and one of only a few in the nation. The City is already demonstrating success with nine different projects in various stages of development.
- The City of Washington, GA for the Southwest Washington Urban Redevelopment Plan, Outstanding Plan Implementation for a Small Community – The Plan promotes housing development and reinvestment in the City. It addresses associated public infrastructure deficiencies and, unsightly and hazardous private property conditions, and promotes business growth within the study area. Success to date includes: re-written nuisance and zoning codes; hired new housing and code enforcement staff; and receipt of over \$1,778,386 in combined CDBG, CHIP, and Brownfield's grants.
- Cobb County, GA for the Lifelong Mableton Initiative, Outstanding Initiative for a Large Community – The Initiative is a comprehensive strategy between non-traditional agency and community partners and is based upon the Atlanta Regional Commission’s (ARC) Lifelong Communities principles to create a place that allows people to “grow up and grow old” in the same community. Accomplishments include: A form-based code, new prototype Elementary School; a community garden; a farmer’s market; a Walking Club for older adults; and 2 new pedestrian oriented transportation investments (in design).
- River Valley Regional Commission, Columbus, GA for Prison to Peanuts Bicycle Adventure, Outstanding Initiative for a Small Community – The event was held on Saturday, April 28th, 2012, during National Park Week which included a 32 mile bike ride connecting the cities of Andersonville, Americus, and Plains, and showcasing the Andersonville National Historic Site and the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site. The effort included a partnership of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), the National Park Service and Sumter Cycling (a non-profit, cycling advocacy organization based in Sumter County.)
- The University of West Georgia for the Chalk Level Neighborhood Plan, Outstanding Student Project – The University of West Georgia’s planning students developed for revitalization of the earliest African-American settlement in Newnan. Recommendations include preservation of the historic integrity; and development of a community center. The Newnan Urban Redevelopment Authority will implement the Plan.

- The Clean Air Campaign (CAC), Atlanta, GA for the Get there Green Program, Outstanding Educational Tool for a Large Community - What does it mean to “get there green”? CAC asked high school students to become school transportation planners from 12 high schools including 6 school districts in metro Atlanta. The effort provided an opportunity for students to design programs for their schools, learn more about the broader context of sustainable transportation solutions and community planning. It also provided leadership opportunities and community building experience for students.
- The South Fork Conservancy, Atlanta, GA for the South Fork Conservancy Watershed Vision, Grassroots Initiative – The goals of the project are to restore, conserve and protect the riparian systems of Peachtree Creek’s South Fork watershed. The Initiative was also designed to restore, conserve, protect and daylight the creek through the incremental implementation of a network of low-impact walking and biking trails. The Conservancy partnered with Perkins and Will on this project. The project area covers 29 miles in total including 7 large trail segments. Implementation of the larger vision is underway with the help of the Georgia Department of Transportation and the local community.

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