

2021 DRAFT Annual Report on the Implementation Program, Northwest Georgia Regional Plan 2019-2023



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2021 DRAFT Annual Report on the Implementation Program, Northwest Georgia Regional Plan 2019-2023

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2021 DRAFT Annual Report on the Implementation Program

Northwest Georgia Regional Plan 2019-2023

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE REGIONAL PLAN

In 2019 the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Council (Steering Committee) updated the Regional Plan with input from a Technical Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and the public via survey (1,860 responses). The Regional Plan includes Regional Goals and Policies; Regional Development Maps including the Regional Land Use Map, Conservation and Development Map, and Areas Requiring Special Attention Map; Regional Needs and Opportunities; and the Implementation Program including Performance Standards (Minimum and Excellence), Regional Work Program (2019-2023), and the Report of Accomplishments on the previous five-year work program. The Regional Plan meets Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Regional Planning Requirements. The Plan aligns with the Regionally Important Resource Plan, local Comprehensive Plans, state plans, and regional plans of the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission, Atlanta Regional Commission, and Three Rivers Regional Commission.

1.2 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

NWGRC prepared this 2021 annual report on the implementation program of the Regional Plan according to Georgia Department of Community Affairs Regional Planning Requirements. It includes an annual Report of Accomplishments for FY 2020, a report on Local Government Minimum and Excellence Standards, and additions or deletions to the current work program.



NWGRC Council Meeting, Regional Plan Update February 2019

1.3 REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS FY 2020

The Report of Accomplishments for FY 2020 presents an annual status update on each project listed in the 2019-2023 Regional Work Program. Each project must be listed as either Ongoing, Completed, Dropped or Postponed. If the project is shown as Dropped or Postponed, a reason must be given to show the circumstances and changes that occurred. If the project is shown as Completed, the date completed is also shown. If a project is shown as Ongoing, it means it is currently in progress by the Regional Commission or another agency.

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
Economic Development							
Ensure infrastructure is in place across region to meet needs of existing and new business and industry.	Implement regional and local plans and strategies for infrastructure improvements needed to support job creation/retention and private investment	1. Assist 10-15 communities as identified annually to improve or expand infrastructure to support economic development through grant writing, planning, and document/plan updates	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$10,000/ YR			Ongoing
		2. Update the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)	NWGRC	2022 \$10,000			Ongoing, not yet begun
		3. Apply for Cares Act Supplemental Assistance for EDD Partnership Planning Grant Funds	NWGRC	2020 \$400,000			Completed in 2020
Focus on improvement of skills for jobs in Northwest Georgia (specific training and skill development for the jobs and industries in our region).	Improve local and regional partnerships between industry/ business, workforce development providers, and educational institutions both K-12 and post-secondary, and community leadership.	4. Develop and implement education, training and employment opportunities for unemployed/ underemployed individuals in Northwest Georgia; provide leadership training and work ready skills for ages 14-21 by funding and monitoring approved training providers and technical colleges, and providing layoff support services, under direction of Workforce Development Board.	WIOA, Local Governments			\$7M/ yr annual program budget	Ongoing
		5. Review and update 2014 Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategic Plan; identify 5-6 top priorities for region and prepare a plan of action to address those priorities	NWGRC	2020 \$5,000			Dropped due to private industry, WIOA work in this area: IWorks and Alliance for Innovation & Sustainability

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
Improve competitiveness of Northwest Georgia communities to attract and retain business and industry	Provide planning and funding assistance to increase economic competitiveness in coordination with state and federal agencies	6. Provide loan packaging to assist 5-10 businesses each year to expand operations or add jobs, including assessment of need, preparation of loan packages and financial planning in partnership with SBDC, SBA, EDA and lending institutions, and with COVID-19-related loan assistance	NWGRC, North Georgia CDC, Lenders, Businesses	2020-2023 \$95,000			Ongoing, revised in 2021 to include EDA RLF only administered through NWGRC
Healthy Communities							
There is a lack of access to healthy food options; high poverty rates contribute to unhealthy lifestyles- cheap food, lack of health insurance	Expand agritourism and agribusiness opportunities; invest in local food systems	7. Implement 2013 North Georgia Local Food Assessment: Assist 1-3 communities/ year with planning, project development and grant writing to support local food systems	NWGRC, local govts and growers	2020-2023 \$5,000			Dropped due to change in priority, will provide assistance on request
		8. Work with Center for Rural Prosperity & Innovation to develop project parameters, identify local agritourism, growers and producers, and farmers markets interested in participating in a Highway 27 agritourism trail, and provide grant writing assistance for the project (similar to Hwy 41 Georgia Grown Trail or North Georgia Farm Trail)	NWGRC, ARC, Center for Rural Prosperity & Innovation	2020-2021 \$5,000 (est)			Completed, including monthly newsletter/ updates
There is a need for additional resources and services for low-income, disabled, homeless individuals and those with mental health and	Work with local governments and community organizations to improve services to low-income, disabled, homeless individuals and those with mental health and substance	9. Provide planning and grant writing assistance for 1-3 local governments/ year to address needs regarding services for homeless, low income and disabled persons as identified in comprehensive plan or	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$5,000/ YR			Dropped due to change in priority, will provide assistance on request

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
substance abuse needs.	abuse needs.	other local or regional plans.					
		10. Provide planning and grant writing assistance for 1-3 local governments/ year to address needs regarding services for mental health and substance abuse as identified in comprehensive plan or other local or regional plans	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$5,000/ YR			Dropped due to change in priority, will provide assistance on request
Housing							
There is a lack of safe, affordable housing and a lack of mid to high range housing investment in downtowns	Incentivize redevelopment of blighted or vacant areas for residential use; provide assistance for range of local government housing needs	11. Work with housing agencies, state agencies to hold 1-2 Housing Resource Workshops between 2020-2023 to provide resources and training for local governments and agencies on regional housing issues and needs	NWGRC, DCA, UGA, GICH, GA Conservancy, GA Power	2020- 2023 \$3,000			Ongoing
		12. Conduct a regional inventory of housing needs and prepare recommendations to address identified needs	NWGRC	2020-2021 \$5,000/ YR			Completed in 2020
		13. Assist 1-2 communities/ YR to apply for GA Initiatives for Community Housing (GICH), to prepare housing inventories and to implement GICH action plans	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing
		14. Survey local governments to determine interest in “circuit-riding” or shared assistance program for code enforcement, zoning and	NWGRC	2020-2021 \$1,000/			Postponed in 2020 due to COVID

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
		related assistance					
		15. If enough communities express interest, develop local government pilot program for “circuit-riding” or shared assistance with code enforcement, zoning and related assistance	NWGRC, DCA, local governments	2022-2023 \$5,000			Ongoing not yet begun
Natural and Historic Resources							
More people need to connect with Northwest Georgia’s natural resources so they will enjoy and protect its diversity and beauty	Identify, protect, preserve and promote identified Regionally Important Resources	16. Update the Regional Resource Plan per Section 110-12-4-, 02(4) of Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs including recommended actions to address critical resources and improve access to natural resources	NWGRC	2019-2021 \$15,000			Ongoing, expected completion in 2021
		17. Implement RIR plan: Develop publicly accessible GIS database and maps highlighting region’s historic, cultural and natural assets	NWGRC	2022-2023 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing, not yet begun
	Promote trails, greenways and blueways; Improve safety, visibility, and access to trails and blueways and add access points	18. Provide planning and grant writing assistance to 1-3 communities/ year to improve safety and accessibility of trailheads/ put-ins on Pinhoti Trail, Etowah River, Appalachian Trail, and other river and trail corridors in region	NWGRC, local governments, DNR and grant agencies, SORBA, SETPL, other groups	2019-2023 \$7,500/ YR			Ongoing (NWGRC also provides grant writing assistance for parks and recreation areas)
Preserve irreplaceable historic and cultural resources through	Identify and preserve historic and cultural resources	19. Prepare 1-2 National Register preliminary determinations and nominations for regionally	NWGRC, HPD	2019-2023 \$15,000/ YR			Ongoing, assisted Bremen, Dallas and Cohutta in 2020

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
inventory, citizen engagement, planning and funding assistance		significant historical assets each year (Grant Farm, LaFayette, Tunnel Hill, Cohutta/ St Andrews Chapel, Dallas Historic District, Cedartown Historic District, Bremen, others)					
		20. Digitize NWGRC historic resource documents including National Register listings, historic resource surveys	NWGRC, Bandy Heritage Center	2020-2023 \$6,000			Ongoing
		21. Assist 1-2 local governments/ YR to prevent loss of HPD Certified Local Government (CLG) status through technical assistance or grant writing to update ordinances, surveys, etc.	NWGRC, HPD, local govts	2019-2023 \$10,000/ YR			Ongoing
Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region to meet federal and state regulations	Apply for funding to improve water quality, manage stormwater, restore streambanks, and protect water resources in the region	22. Serve as stakeholder with McCaysville and Fannin County on 319h grant project for Toccoa River watershed	NWGRC, McCaysville, Fannin County, Limestone Valley RC&D	2020-2021 \$1,000			Dropped- implementing National Water Quality Initiative watershed projects
		23. Apply for funding to prepare Dozier Creek Watershed Management Plan	NWGRC, Limestone Valley RC&D	2021-2023 \$5,000			Completed- received funding in 2020, writing plan in 2021 with Limestone Valley RC&D
		24. Apply for funds to implement the 2019 Woodward Creek Watershed Management Plan	NWGRC, Floyd County	2020-2023 \$5,000			Ongoing, partnering with Limestone Valley RC&D
		25. Administer finances and grant funds and provide staff support for monthly and annual meetings of the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership, a regional	NWGRC	2019-2023 \$5,000/yr			Ongoing

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
		organization of utility providers which advises the Coosa-North Georgia Water Council and assists the Council to implement the CNG Water Plan					
		26. Assist the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership, Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, or local governments and utilities to apply for state and federal funding to implement Regional Water Plans and related studies including the Grid Transmission Study and Redundancy and Emergency Interconnectivity Study	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$7,500/yr			Ongoing
		27. Work with GA EPD to develop a tool to prioritize delisting impaired streams in the Coosa-North Georgia Region and recommended implementation measures to delist these streams	Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, N GA Water Resources Partnership, NWGRC, GAEPD	2020-2022 \$5,000			Ongoing
Land Use							
Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans and that balances conservation with development needs	Assist local governments to comply with current Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (O.C.G.A. 36-66-1, et seq.; 36-67-1, et seq.; and, 36-67A-1, et seq. as amended) and provide necessary technical assistance.	28. Assist 2-5 local governments each year with review and update of zoning ordinance and/or map	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$20,000/yr			Ongoing, assisted Ellijay, Pickens Co., Lookout Mtn, Chatsworth in 2020
		29. Work with training providers including UGA CVIOG, DCA, GAZA and GPA to provide at least one annual planning and zoning training in the region, and local training as requested	NWGRC, local governments, Training providers (GAZA, GPA, DCA, UGA CVIOG)	2020-2023 \$1,000/ yr			Ongoing, limited/ virtual due to COVID

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
Planning and Local Government Assistance							
Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans	Assist local governments to prepare and implement Comprehensive Plans and service delivery strategies in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act and Service Delivery Strategy Act, to implement projects and initiatives in the comprehensive plan, and to apply for PlanFirst designation.	30. Assist 2-3 local governments/ year to prepare scheduled updates to local comprehensive plans	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$60,000/yr			Ongoing, asst. Catoosa and municipalities, Chattooga and municipalities in 2020
		31. Assist 1-2 communities each year with PlanFirst applications	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing, asst. Bartow Co. in 2020
		32. Meet with approx.15 governments each year to discuss implementation of the local comprehensive plan and regional plan, reporting requirements and other topics related to planning and implementation; assist with amendments as needed to reflect emerging priorities	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$7,500/yr			Ongoing
		33. Provide assistance as requested to 1-3 communities/ year to review and update Service Delivery Strategy agreements either on the 10-year Comprehensive Plan update schedule or as service changes demand	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$3,500/ yr			Ongoing, asst. Catoosa and Chattooga Counties with updates in 2020
	Update the Regional Plan according to Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning	34. Update the <i>Northwest Georgia Regional Plan, 2019-2023</i> annually.	NWGRC	2023 \$7,500			Ongoing
Provide resources to assist local governments to meet	Provide outreach, training and technical assistance on planning and development	35. Digitize legacy Developments of Regional Impact	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$1,000/ yr			Completed in 2020

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
demands of growth, reinvestment, needs of rural areas	needs of local governments	36. Prepare 20-30 local plan reviews, transportation plan review, environmental reviews, and Section 106 reviews, other coordinated reviews each year	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing
		37. Develop marketing, branding, media, training and outreach materials for Regional Commission services and assistance; provide same assistance to 1-5 smaller local governments each year	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing, newsletters and FaceBook page
Transportation							
Provide safe, efficient movement of people and goods through Northwest Georgia to enhance economic growth;	Improve coordination between local governments, GDOT, MPOs and federal agencies to implement regionally significant transportation projects	38. Participate in meetings of federal and state transportation agencies, Atlanta MPO, Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO, Rome-Floyd County MPO, Greater Dalton MPO, Cartersville-Bartow County MPO; provide quarterly planning and coordination between these agencies and the NWGRC Council and non-MPO governments on regionally significant projects	NWGRC, GDOT, MPOs			Ongoing \$20,000/ yr	Ongoing
		39. Participate in GDOT Transit Plan update and GDOT 2050 Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan/ Statewide Transportation Plan and updates by attending public and stakeholder meetings, reviewing draft plan documents and preparing comments, both as NWGRC	GDOT, NWGRC	2019-2020 \$5,000/ yr			Completed in 2020

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
		and as members of GAMPO and GA Transit Association					
		40. Prepare Regional Transit Study/ Assessment	GDOT, NWGRC	2020-2021 \$40,000			Ongoing
		41. Participate in FHWA Nat'l Economic Partnership Grant freight and truck parking study and THRIVE transportation initiatives, representing NWGRC Counties of Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray	NWGRC	2019-2022 \$5,000/yr			Completed study in 2020, implementation ongoing
Improve connectivity of bike and pedestrian pathways throughout the region	Implement bike & pedestrian safety plans, GA Bicycle/ Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, Safe Routes to School, implement Complete Streets design	42. Incorporate all local bike/ ped plans into a regional database; identify favorable connection corridors between bike/ ped infrastructure	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2020-2021 \$10,000			Ongoing
		43. Assist local governments to prepare for regional TSPLOST/ TIA referendum: Reconvene TIA roundtable; hold regular meetings; assist with development of priorities, project list and data; Citizen Review Panels	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, legislative delegation	2020-2023 \$5,000			Postponed in 2020 due to other priorities, still interest
		44. Staff and administer and update website for Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia to implement the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Safety Plan and local plans.	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing
		45. Participate in 1-2 Safe Routes to School Resource Center walk safety audits per year and assist 1-2 schools and local governments/ year to implement audit recommendations and GDOT	NWGRC, GDOT, Safe Routes Resource Center	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing but limited, virtual due to COVID

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
		Complete Streets policies through planning, training, and grant writing assistance					
	Develop more trails and trails systems that connect to parks, neighborhoods, retail centers, libraries, workplaces and downtowns	46. Assist Floyd County, Cave Spring, Cedartown and Polk County with planning and grant writing to implement the Cave Spring to Cedartown Trail Study	NWGRC, Floyd County, Cave Spring, Cedartown and Polk County, funding agencies	2020-2023 \$5,000			Ongoing
		47. Assist Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and Cities with planning and grant writing to implement the 2015 NW GA Feasibility Study for Bikeway & Pedestrian Multi-Use Trails	NWGRC, Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and Cities, funding agencies, Chick-Chatt Greenway Association, THRIVE2055	2019-2023 \$7,500			Ongoing
Broadband							
Improve broadband and telecommunication services	Partner with the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, local governments, providers, and other agencies and initiatives, and participate in the Georgia Broadband Ready Program.	48. Assist 1-5 communities/ year to apply for Broadband Ready designation	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2019-2023 Staff Time			Ongoing
		49. Assist 1-3 local governments/ year to amend their comprehensive plans to include a Broadband Element	NWGRC, local governments	2019-2020 Staff Time			Ongoing
		50. Implement key priorities of the 2014 Northwest Georgia Digital Economy Plan through the Regional Broadband Committee and GA Broadband Deployment Initiative, through grant writing and planning assistance	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2019-2023 Staff Time			Ongoing
		51. Regional Broadband Committee of NWGRC Council and NWGRC staff: With GA Broadband	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2020-2021 \$7,500/ yr			Ongoing

**Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
Report of Accomplishments FY2020 DRAFT**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Status
		Deployment Initiative and providers, assist 5-10 local governments/ year to identify and prioritize service and speed demand, identify gaps in infrastructure and costs to address those gaps, and to develop local and/or regional plans of action or feasibility study to address priority gaps in service					
		52. Provide planning and grant-writing assistance to 1-10 local governments/year to implement local broadband action plans or feasibility assessments	NWGRC, local governments, providers	2020-2021 \$7,500/ yr			Ongoing
	Assess needs regarding 5G, provide assistance and resources	53. Attend 2-3 workshops and trainings/ year, and provide training, planning and zoning, ordinance update and historic preservation assistance to 1-5 local governments per year concerning regulation and review of 5-G technologies; provide information to NWGRC Regional Council on quarterly basis	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers, GMA, ACCG	2020-2021 \$5,000/ yr			Ongoing but virtual due to COVID

1.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINIMUM STANDARDS UPDATE

To encourage implementation of the Regional Plan, realize the Regional Vision and address the Regional Issues and Opportunities, the NWGRC set Minimum and Excellence thresholds for local governments as required by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Regional Planning Requirements. The Minimum Standard includes essential activities for consistency with the Regional Plan.

In 2020 NWGRC met with 26 local governments for Plan Implementation Meetings, to review the comprehensive plan, regional plan and regionally important resource plan, including assessment of minimum and excellence standards. These included Bartow County, Adairsville, Cartersville, Kingston, Emerson, Euahlee, White, Dalton, Tunnel Hill, Varnell, Gilmer County, Ellijay, East Ellijay, Pickens County, Nelson, Jasper, Talking Rock, Murray County, Chatsworth, Eton, Gordon County, Calhoun, Fairmount, Plainville, Ranger, and Resaca. Due to COVID-19 a 90-day extension on Plan Implementation Meeting deadlines was given.

The Minimum Standard requirements are the same for all local governments in the region, as follows:

Number	Minimum Standard Requirement	Not Meeting	Action to assist
Min1	The local government has a comprehensive plan that complies with the <i>Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-1, Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning</i> and has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.	None	
Min2	The local government has a Service Delivery Strategy (O.C.G.A. 36-70-22) that is verified by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.	None	
Min3	The municipal/county clerk meets the mandated orientation training as specified in State law (O.C.G.A. sections 36-1-24 and 36-45-20).	None	
Min4	Newly elected municipal/county officials participate in training sponsored by the Georgia Municipal Association or the Association of County Commissioners of Georgia.	None	
Min5	The local government uses the Guiding Principles contained in the Northwest Georgia Regional Plan as guidance for making decisions consistent with achieving the Regional Vision or addressing the Regional Priorities and Strategies.	None	
Min6	The local government uses the General Policies and Protection Measures in the <i>Northwest Georgia Regionally Important Resource Plan</i> when making decisions that affect Regionally Important Resources.	None	
Min7	The local government complies with the <i>Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Chapter 110-12-3, for Developments of Regional Impact</i> .	None	
Min8	A hazard mitigation plan approved by the Georgia	None	

	Emergency Management Agency has been officially adopted by the local governing authority.		
Min9	The local government has the ability to send and receive electronic communications.	None	
Min10	The local government meets state financial reporting requirements.	As of October 5, 2020, according to state reports, Aragon, Braswell, Ranger and Taylorsville were delinquent in previous year state financial reports (RLF and GOMI) and did not meet standard 10.	NWGRC forwarded reporting notifications to Aragon, Braswell, Ranger and Taylorsville. At Feb. 2021 Planning Implementation Meeting, Aragon indicated they were following through on required reporting. NWGRC will continue to forward state reminders.
Min11	The local government meets E-Verify requirements through Department of Audits.	None	

1.5 REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM REVISIONS

COVID-19 caused changes in operations for local governments, Regional Commissions and state agencies which affected local and regional priorities, timeframes and the ability to schedule and hold meetings and hearings. COVID-19 variances were given for Catoosa and Chattooga Counties' comprehensive plan and service delivery strategy update deadlines and for Regional Commission contract requirements. CARES Act Supplemental EDA funding is now in place for NWGRC Community and Economic Development including preparation of a regional resiliency plan and identifying local and regional projects. COVID-related SBA and EDA loan funding assistance was also provided by NWGRC. New projects are indicated with an underline, while projects that were completed or dropped in 2020 are shown in ~~strikethrough~~.

DRAFT Regional Work Program FY 2021-2024						
Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
Economic Development						
Ensure infrastructure is in place across region to meet needs of existing and new business and industry.	Implement regional and local plans and strategies for infrastructure improvements needed to support job creation/retention and private investment	1. Assist 10-15 communities as identified annually to improve or expand infrastructure to support economic development through grant writing, planning, and document/plan updates	NWGRC	2021-2024 \$10,000/ YR		
		2. Update the Northwest Georgia Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)	NWGRC	2022 \$10,000		
		3. Apply for Cares Act Supplemental Assistance for EDD Partnership Planning Grant Funds	NWGRC	2020 \$400,000		
		3. Implement Cares Act Supplemental Assistance for EDD Partnership Planning Grant Funds to identify potential resiliency, mitigation, and economic recovery projects in NW Georgia.	NWGRC	2021-2022 \$400,000		
Focus on improvement of skills for jobs in Northwest Georgia (specific training and skill development for the jobs and industries in our region).	Improve local and regional partnerships between industry/ business, workforce development providers, and educational institutions both K-12	4. Develop and implement education, training, and employment opportunities for unemployed/ underemployed individuals in Northwest Georgia; provide leadership training and work ready skills for ages 14-21 through	WIOA, Local Governments			\$7M/ yr annual program budget

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
	and post-secondary, and community leadership.	approved training providers; and provide layoff support services, under direction of Workforce Development Board.				
		5. Review and update 2014 Northwest Georgia Advanced Manufacturing Strategic Plan; identify 5-6 top priorities for region and prepare a plan of action to address those priorities	NWGRC	2020 \$5,000		
Improve competitiveness of Northwest Georgia communities to attract and retain business and industry	Provide planning and funding assistance to increase economic competitiveness in coordination with state and federal agencies	5. Provide loan packaging to assist 5-10 businesses each year to expand operations or add jobs, including assessment of need, preparation of loan packages and financial planning in partnership with EDA and lending institutions, and with COVID-19-related loan assistance	NWGRC, EDA, Lenders, Businesses	2021-2024 \$95,000		

Healthy Communities

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
There is a lack of access to healthy food options; high poverty rates contribute to unhealthy lifestyles- cheap food, lack of health insurance	Expand agritourism and agribusiness opportunities; invest in local food systems	7. Implement 2013 North Georgia Local Food Assessment: Assist 1-3 communities/ year with planning, project development and grant writing to support local food systems	NWGRC, local govts and growers	2020-2023 \$5,000		
		8. Work with Center for Rural Prosperity & Innovation to develop project parameters, identify local agritourism, growers and producers, and farmers markets interested in participating in a Highway 27 agritourism trail, and provide grant writing assistance for the project (similar to Hwy 41 Georgia Grown Trail or North Georgia Farm Trail)	NWGRC, ARC, Center for Rural Prosperity & Innovation	2020-2021 \$5,000 (est)		
There is a need for additional resources and services for low-income, disabled, homeless individuals and those with mental health and substance abuse needs.	Work with local governments and community organizations to improve services to low-income, disabled, homeless individuals and those with mental health and substance abuse needs.	9. Provide planning and grant writing assistance for 1-3 local governments/ year to address needs regarding services for homeless, low income and disabled persons as identified in comprehensive plan or other local or regional plans.	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$5,000/ YR		

DRAFT Regional Work Program FY 2021-2024						
Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
		10. Provide planning and grant writing assistance for 1-3 local governments/ year to address needs regarding services for mental health and substance abuse as identified in comprehensive plan or other local or regional plans	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$5,000/ YR		
Housing						
There is a lack of safe, affordable housing and a lack of mid to high range housing investment in downtowns	Incentivize redevelopment of blighted or vacant areas for residential use; provide assistance for range of local government housing needs	6. Work with housing agencies, state agencies to hold 1-2 Housing Resource Workshops to provide resources and training for local governments and agencies on regional housing issues and needs	NWGRC, DCA, UGA, GICH, GA Conservancy, GA Power	2021-2024 \$3,000		
		12. Conduct a regional inventory of housing needs and prepare recommendations to address identified needs	NWGRC	2020-2021 \$5,000/ YR		
		8. Assist 1-2 communities/ YR to apply for GA Initiatives for Community Housing (GICH), to prepare housing inventories, and to implement GICH action plans	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$7,500/ YR		

DRAFT Regional Work Program FY 2021-2024						
Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
		9. Survey local governments to determine interest in “circuit-riding” or shared assistance program for code enforcement, zoning, and related assistance	NWGRC	2021-2022 \$1,000/ YR		
		10. If enough communities express interest, develop local government pilot program for “circuit-riding” or shared assistance with code enforcement, zoning, and related assistance	NWGRC, DCA, local governments	2022-2024 \$5,000		
Natural and Historic Resources						
More people need to connect with Northwest Georgia’s natural resources so they will enjoy and protect its diversity and beauty	Identify, protect, preserve and promote identified Regionally Important Resources	11. Update the Regional Resource Plan per Section 110-12-4-, 02(4) of Rules of Georgia Department of Community Affairs, including recommended actions to address critical resources and improve access to natural resources	NWGRC	2021 \$5,000		
		12. Implement RIR plan: Develop publicly accessible GIS database and maps highlighting region’s historic, cultural, and natural assets	NWGRC	2022-2023 \$7,500/ YR		
	Promote trails, greenways and blueways; Improve safety, visibility, and	16. Provide planning and grant writing assistance to 1-5 communities/ year to plan for expansion of and safety	NWGRC, local governments, DNR and grant agencies, SORBA,	2021-2024 \$7,500/ YR		

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Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
	access to trails and blueways and add access points	improvements to land and water trails, parks and recreation areas, trailheads, and water access/ put ins	SETPL, other groups			
Preserve irreplaceable historic and cultural resources through inventory, citizen engagement, planning and funding assistance	Identify and preserve historic and cultural resources	17. Prepare 1-2 National Register preliminary determinations and nominations for regionally significant historical assets (Grant Farm, LaFayette, Tunnel Hill, Cohutta/ St Andrews Chapel, Dallas Historic District, Cedartown Historic District, Bremen, others)	NWGRC, HPD	2021-2024 \$15,000/ YR		
		18. Digitize NWGRC historic resource documents including National Register listings, historic resource surveys	NWGRC, Bandy Heritage Center	2021-2024 \$6,000		
		19. Assist 1-2 local governments/ YR to prevent loss of HPD Certified Local Government (CLG) status through technical assistance or grant writing to update ordinances, surveys, etc.	NWGRC, HPD, local govts	2021-2024 \$10,000/ YR		
Maintain surface and groundwater quality throughout the region to meet	Apply for funding to improve water quality, manage stormwater, restore streambanks,	22. Serve as stakeholder with McCaysville and Fannin County on 319h grant project for Toccoa River watershed	NWGRC, McCaysville, Fannin County, Limestone Valley RC&D	2020-2021 \$1,000		

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
federal and state regulations	and protect water resources in the region	23. Apply for funding to prepare Dozier Creek Watershed Management Plan	NWGRC, Limestone Valley RC&D	2021-2023 \$5,000		
		20. Prepare Dozier Creek, Dykes Creek, Woodward Creek, Etowah River (Hwy 411-Coosa R.), Watershed Management Plans for USDA NRCS NWQI	NWGRC, Limestone Valley RC&D	2021 \$20,000		
		21. Apply for funds to implement the 2019 Woodward Creek Watershed Management Plan	NWGRC, Limestone Valley RC&D	2021-2024 \$5,000		
		22. Administer finances and grant funds and provide staff support for monthly and annual meetings of the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership, a regional organization of utility providers which advises the Coosa-North Georgia Water Council and assists the Council to implement the CNG Water Plan	NWGRC	2021-2024 \$5,000/yr		
		23. Assist the North Georgia Water Resources Partnership, Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, or local governments and utilities to apply for state and federal funding to implement Regional Water Plans and related studies	NWGRC	2021-2024 \$7,500/yr		

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Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
		24. Work with GA EPD to develop a tool to prioritize delisting impaired streams in the Coosa-North Georgia Region and recommended implementation measures to delist these streams	Coosa-North Georgia Water Council, N GA Water Resources Partnership, NWGRC, GAEPD	2021-2024 Staff time		
Land Use						
Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans and that balances conservation with development needs	Assist local governments to comply with current Georgia Zoning Procedures Law (O.C.G.A. 36-66-1, et seq.; 36-67-1, et seq.; and, 36-67A-1, et seq. as amended) and provide necessary technical assistance.	25. Assist 2-5 local governments each year with review and update of zoning ordinance and/or map	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$20,000/yr		
		26. Work with training providers including UGA CVIOG, DCA, GAZA, and GPA to provide at least one annual planning and zoning training in the region, and local training as requested	NWGRC, local governments, Training providers (GAZA, GPA, DCA, UGA CVIOG)	2021-2024 \$1,000/ yr		
Planning and Local Government Assistance						
Develop a coordinated long-term land use vision for Northwest Georgia that respects local land use plans	Assist local governments to prepare and implement Comprehensive Plans and service delivery	27. Assist 2-3 local governments/ year to prepare scheduled updates to local comprehensive plans – Catoosa, Chattooga, Haralson, Polk, and Walker in 2021	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$60,000/yr		

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
	strategies in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act and Service Delivery Strategy Act, to implement projects and initiatives in the comprehensive plan, and to apply for PlanFirst designation.	28. Assist 1-2 communities each year with PlanFirst applications	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$5,000/ yr		
		29. Meet with approx. 15 governments each year to discuss implementation of the local comprehensive plan and regional plan, reporting requirements and other topics related to planning and implementation; assist with amendments as needed to reflect emerging priorities	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$7,500/yr		
		30. Provide assistance as requested to 1-3 communities/ year to review and update Service Delivery Strategy agreements as required- Catoosa, Chattooga, and Walker in 2021	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$3,500/ yr		
	Update the Regional Plan according to Georgia Department of Community Affairs' Standards and Procedures for Regional Planning	31. Update the <i>Northwest Georgia Regional Plan, 2019-2023</i> in 2023; prepare annual implementation reports.	NWGRC	2021-2024 \$7,500		

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Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
Provide resources to assist local governments to meet demands of growth, reinvestment, needs of rural areas	Provide outreach, training and technical assistance on planning and development needs of local governments	35. Digitize legacy Developments of Regional Impact	NWGRC	2020-2023 \$1,000/ yr		
		32. Prepare 20-30 local plan reviews, transportation plan review, environmental reviews, Section 106 reviews, and other coordinated reviews each year	NWGRC	2021-2024 \$5,000/ yr		
		37. Develop marketing, branding, media, training and outreach materials, newsletter, and Facebook page for Regional Commission services and assistance	NWGRC, local governments	2020-2023 \$5,000/ yr		
Transportation						

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
Provide safe, efficient movement of people and goods through Northwest Georgia to enhance economic growth;	Improve coordination between local governments, GDOT, MPOs and federal agencies to implement regionally significant transportation projects	33. Participate in meetings of federal and state transportation agencies, Atlanta MPO, Chattanooga/Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO, Rome-Floyd County MPO, Greater Dalton MPO, Cartersville-Bartow County MPO; provide quarterly planning and coordination between these agencies and the NWGRC Council and non-MPO governments on regionally significant projects	NWGRC, GDOT, MPOs			Ongoing \$20,000/yr
		39. Participate in GDOT Transit Plan update and GDOT 2050 Statewide Strategic Transportation Plan/ Statewide Transportation Plan and updates by attending public and stakeholder meetings, reviewing draft plan documents, and preparing comments, both as NWGRC and as members of GAMPO and GA Transit Association	GDOT, NWGRC	2019-2020 \$5,000/yr		
		34. Prepare Regional Transit Study/ Assessment	GDOT, NWGRC	2021-2022 \$40,000		
		35. Implement FHWA Nat'l Economic Partnership Grant freight and truck parking study and THRIVE2055 transportation	NWGRC, THRIVE2055	2021-2022 \$5,000/yr		

DRAFT Regional Work Program FY 2021-2024						
Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
		initiatives, representing NWGRC Counties of Dade, Walker, Catoosa, Whitfield, Murray				
		36. Incorporate all local bike/ ped plans into a regional database; identify favorable connection corridors between bike/ ped infrastructure	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2021-2022 \$10,000		
Improve connectivity of bike and pedestrian pathways throughout the region	Implement bike & pedestrian safety plans, GA Bicycle/ Pedestrian Safety Action Plans, Safe Routes to School, implement Complete Streets design	37. Assist local governments to prepare for regional TSPLOST/ TIA referendum: Reconvene TIA roundtable; hold regular meetings; assist with development of priorities, project list and data; Citizen Review Panels	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts, legislative delegation	2021-2024 \$5,000		
		38. Staff and administer and update website for Bike! Walk! Northwest Georgia to implement the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Safety Plan and local plans.	NWGRC, GDOT, local govts and Bike! Walk! NWGA	2021-2024 \$5,000/ yr		
		39. Participate in 1-2 Safe Routes to School Resource Center walk safety audits per year and assist 1-2 schools and local governments/ year to implement audit recommendations and GDOT Complete Streets policies through planning, training, and grant writing assistance	NWGRC, GDOT, Safe Routes Resource Center	2021-2024 \$5,000/ yr		

DRAFT Regional Work Program FY 2021-2024						
Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
	Develop more trails and trails systems that connect to parks, neighborhoods, retail centers, libraries, workplaces, and downtowns	40. Assist Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and Cities with planning and grant writing to implement the 2015 NW GA Feasibility Study for Bikeway & Pedestrian Multi-Use Trails	NWGRC, Catoosa, Dade, and Walker Counties and Cities, funding agencies, Chick-Chatt Greenway Association, THRIVE2055	2021-2024 \$7,500		
		41. Assist Floyd County, Cave Spring, Cedartown, and Polk County with planning and grant writing to implement the Cave Spring to Cedartown Trail Study	NWGRC, Floyd County, Cave Spring, Cedartown and Polk County, funding agencies	2024 Staff time		
Broadband						
Improve broadband and telecommunication services	Partner with the Georgia Broadband Deployment Initiative, local governments, providers, and other agencies and initiatives, and participate in the Georgia Broadband Ready Program.	42. Assist 1-5 communities/ year to apply for Broadband Ready designation	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2021-2024 \$5,000		
		43. Assist 1-3 local governments/ year to amend their comprehensive plans to include a Broadband Element	NWGRC, local governments	2021-2024 \$5,000		
		44. Implement key priorities of the 2014 Northwest Georgia Digital Economy Plan through the Regional Broadband Committee and GA Broadband Deployment Initiative, through grant writing and planning assistance	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2021-2024 \$5,000		

**DRAFT Regional Work Program
FY 2021-2024**

Priority	Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing
		45. Regional Broadband Committee of NWGRC Council and NWGRC staff: With GA Broadband Deployment Initiative and providers, assist 5-10 local governments/ year to identify and prioritize service and speed demand, identify gaps in infrastructure and costs to address those gaps, and to develop local and/or regional plans of action or feasibility study to address priority gaps in service	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers	2021-2022 \$5,000		
		46. Provide planning and grant-writing assistance to 1-10 local governments/year to implement local broadband action plans or feasibility assessments	NWGRC, local governments, providers	2021-2022 \$7,500/ yr		
	Assess needs regarding 5G, provide assistance and resources	47. Attend 2-3 workshops and trainings/ year, and provide training, planning, and zoning, ordinance update, and historic preservation assistance to 1-5 local governments per year concerning regulation and review of 5-G technologies; provide information to NWGRC Regional Council on quarterly basis	NWGRC, DCA, local governments, providers, GMA, ACCG	2021-2022 \$500-1,000/ yr		