



Strategic Plan FY23–25 Summary

Athens-Clarke County Unified Government

Prepared by Budget & Strategic Analysis

Executive Summary



Over the course of the FY23–FY25 Strategic Plan, Athens-Clarke County Unified Government (ACCGov) departments advanced from foundational relationship-building to structured, data-informed program delivery across all six strategic goals. Departments matured pilots into scalable programs, strengthened collaboration across agencies, and increased transparency through measurable outcomes.



Key milestones included oversight of the Intergovernmental Agreement for the \$1.25 million Center for Racial Justice and Black Futures, Athens in Motion policy updates and capital project completions, and substantial progress on housing stability through enhancements to the Coordinated Entry system and targeted ARPA investments.

Challenges such as staffing transitions, federal funding changes, and supply chain variability were met with adaptive planning and governance. These lessons will inform the upcoming FY26–FY28 Plan, which will formalize the most effective practices and align resources to priority outcomes.

Goal 1

Good Neighbors

20,000+

FY23-25
Residents Reached



Strategy A: Work to create and implement systems to identify, acknowledge, and address racism, trauma, harm, and violence in our community.

2025 Team Lead: Annesia Crew, People & Belonging Department

Over the course of the FY23-FY25 Strategic Plan, the People & Belonging Department (PBD) advanced several initiatives aimed at addressing systemic racism, trauma, and community harm. Early efforts focused on foundational relationship-building and training, which expanded into more formalized programming, including over seven DEI training sessions and wide-reaching engagement through events such as Pride Fest, Hot Corner, and Juneteenth, reaching over **20,000** residents. PBD also supported the Human Relations Commission through onboarding new members, coordinating public tabling events, and launching the HRC's first community education session on affordable housing.

Strategy B. Proactively reform systems of accountability to reduce jail recidivism rates and plan for transition and returning residents.

2025 Team Lead: Jay Bonilla, Corrections Department

Offender education has been vital in the success of our department, and our partnership with Athens Technical College has served as a major catalyst to this success. In FY23, FY24, and FY25, we've had **10**, **16**, and **12** returning citizens earn GED certificates, respectively. We've also surpassed goals for material skills gains and the number of passed sections of the GED test. Although progress has been remarkable, we're facing a major obstacle as GED classes have recently been paused- and potentially canceled altogether- due to federal budget cuts. We continue to look for viable alternatives to circumnavigate these challenges to maintain our recidivism rate significantly below the state average.

Strategy C. Decrease crime and enhance public trust through collaborative strategies between the police and the community.

2025 Team Lead: Jessica Moller, Police Department

Over the course of the FY23-FY25 Strategic Plan, the Police Department focused on strengthening trust with the community, expanding outreach, and piloting innovative responses to public safety challenges. Early efforts included building partnerships with schools, churches, youth groups, and neighborhood organizations to host educational programs on drug and alcohol awareness, gang violence prevention, and other safety topics. These initiatives provided positive non-enforcement interactions with youth and families across Athens-Clarke County. The department also launched the

Internship/Fellowship Program, bringing in approximately **43** students from institutions such as UGA, Morehouse, Emmanuel, UNG, University of South Carolina, high school students from the local area, and Kennesaw State to gain hands-on experience in areas ranging from patrol and 911 communications to behavioral health and homeless outreach. Annual events like the Citizens Police Academy, National Night Out, and Shop with a Cop continued to serve as important touchpoints for community engagement. Outreach remained a major emphasis, with ACCPD staff and partners involved in dozens of public events and community engagements each quarter, although participation varied depending on seasonal activities such as the Athens Parade of Lights.

In FY24, the department completed the launch of the Alternative Response Team, which had been actively dispatched to calls for service from September 2023 to October of 2024. This program created a new pathway for handling certain situations, particularly mental health-related calls, in partnership with other service providers. The department also expanded its collaborations with local agencies, nonprofits, and county work groups to address safety and community well-being from multiple angles. ACCPD has implemented a pilot follow-up case management unit that utilizes ACCPD interns and fellows to provide information for resource service connections for daily life needs that come to the attention of ACCPD officers, dispatchers, BHU teams, and community partners. This pilot program has 3 part-time interns/fellows who assess each individual's needs to assist with connections to agencies that can help support mental health, substance use, food, ACCA services, medical, housing, and other basic needs. A digital resource guide for all resources in Athens-Clarke County and surrounding counties is being developed, along with over 80 homeless bags with supplies that have been provided to the community. Grant funding has also allowed for sensory bags that have items such as non-verbal cue cards, pen and paper, texture stones, etc. to assist teams and officers that respond to a person in crisis. This program created a new pathway for handling certain situations, particularly mental health-related calls, in partnership with other service providers. The Follow-Up Pilot Program, which was implemented in January 2025, has provided **94** contacts, received **42** referrals, and provided connections to approximately **80** resources to individuals and families in need from law enforcement contacts.

Throughout FY25, the department tracked detailed data on calls for service, mental health crises, and involuntary transports. While mental health-related calls fluctuated during the year, the availability of referrals, in-person contacts, and resource connections showed consistent attention to individuals in crisis. Over the past year, the BHU Teams have performed **1,025** contacts with individuals in crisis, and of these contacts, the teams have performed approximately **62** involuntary transports to treatment facilities. These combined efforts reflect a sustained commitment to building trust, expanding partnerships, and aligning public safety strategies with the broader needs of the community.

Strategy D. Propel community transformation by prioritizing the development of inclusive and inviting spaces that promote both physical and psychological well-being.

2025 Team Lead: Stephanie Raines, Leisure Services Department

Between FY23 and FY25, Leisure Services advanced several initiatives focused on

between FY23 and FY25, Leisure Services advanced several initiatives focused on community engagement and place-making, with an emphasis on creating welcoming public spaces where residents can connect and participate in cultural activities. In FY24, the department researched which Athens-Clarke County departments should be involved in place-making projects, identified opportunities to strengthen community belonging, and began outlining evaluation metrics for experimental projects. These early steps laid the foundation for training staff and coordinating efforts to ensure place-making was intentionally integrated into planning and design strategies. In FY25, these efforts translated into visible projects. Leisure Services identified three key initiatives: the redesign of College Square, the relocation of the West Broad Street Farmers Market to Rocksprings Park, and the Flight of the Fireflies Lantern Parade. The department facilitated multiple input sessions with stakeholders, business owners, and residents to shape the redesign of College Square, balancing merchant needs with a vision for a more pedestrian-friendly, connected, and vibrant downtown space. The Lantern Parade drew over 1,000 attendees and showcased local artistry through handmade lanterns, illuminated sculptures, and performances by musicians and students. While the relocated farmers' market faced challenges with low attendance, Leisure Services worked with partners to determine next steps. By the final quarter of FY25, the department was refining its approach to support community-led events in a sustainable way, helping smaller festivals grow within their capacity while aligning with government resources. Collaboration with the Office of People & Belonging emphasized the importance of ensuring taxpayer-supported spaces foster trust and connection. Looking ahead, Leisure Services is focused on formalizing sustainable frameworks for placemaking, expanding opportunities for creative community participation, and continuing to adapt strategies that balance cultural vibrancy with fiscal and operational responsibility.

Goal 2

Identify & close gaps in partnership with the community

Strategy A. Partner to develop tools and relationships to increase awareness of and access to Athens workforce and workplace development opportunities.

2025 Team Lead: Myung Cogan, Economic Development Department

Key Accomplishments achieved under the Workforce Development Strategy include the launch of the Athens Community Career Academy's new Biomanufacturing Pathway. Economic Development assisted the Catalyst Committee with planning, structuring, fundraising and recruitment. ED continue to partner with the Career Academy with opportunities to align education with local industry.

The ARPA Workforce Development grant program continues to be an Economic Development Dept. all-hands-on deck project. ED launched the program upon Mayor and Commission approval and work monthly with recipient organizations with funding, reimbursement requests and payments. This project will continue monthly through the end of the grant cycle (Dec. 2026).

Strategy B. Build and maintain two-way information pipelines through relationship building and resident engagement.

2025 Team Lead: Jeff Montgomery, Communications Department

Communications worked with the Attorney's Office, the Manager's Office, Organizational Development, the Clerk of Commission, IT, and board/authority/commission (BAC) liaisons to develop a system by which BAC appointees can use the TakeAIM ACCGov learning management system to take online courses through registered @accgov.com email address to allow them to increase their effectiveness and learn more about the responsibilities and opportunities related to their volunteer roles with BACs. Additional efforts related to BACs are currently being discussed in the Government Operations Committee for eventual consideration by the Mayor and Commission.

Strategy C. Identify ways to address unaddressed community needs and develop programs, policies, and processes to facilitate community transformation.

2025 Team Lead: Damario Squire, Housing & Community Development Department

During FY23- FY25, HCD placed greater focus on Community Engagement and highlighting the impact of Federally Funded programs in Athens-Clarke County. Key accomplishments include the completion of the Lay Park basketball court renovation, new housing construction by Habitat for Humanity and ARPA-funded agencies, and enhanced support services. The year saw a shift toward more intensive, personalized service delivery (e.g., disability benefits assistance, restorative justice engagement) and greater collaboration with external partners like the District Attorney's office. Challenges included service delays due to staff transitions and pest management issues, which agencies addressed through coordination, additional staffing, and continued outreach. Overall, the programs demonstrated strong community impact by addressing both immediate needs and long-term empowerment through housing, education, and financial stability.

Strategy D. Ensure existing resources reach marginalized people and those most in need through effective and accessible delivery methods.



2025 Team Lead: Yashaswini Kavalakuntla, Housing & Community Development Department

Between FY23 and FY25, the Housing and Community Development Department (HCD) advanced its role in supporting nonprofit organizations and enhancing the community's access to housing-related resources. In FY25, much of the department's work focused on providing technical assistance to local nonprofits and guiding them through key funding opportunities.

In 2024, the Community Impact Division (CI Division) utilized ARPA funds to launch the *Cultivating Nonprofit Capacity (CNC Athens)* program. This initiative was designed to build the capacity of small, high-impact ACC nonprofit organizations, enabling them to better fulfill their missions. The CNC Athens program culminated in a capstone project, where five nonprofits participated in 12 learning sessions focused on effective nonprofit leadership strategies. Each organization received up to \$40,000 in funding to support their activities.

The CI Division also hosted technical assistance sessions to help both emerging and established nonprofits strengthen their organizational capacity. In addition, the division helped plan networking events that brought nonprofits together to exchange ideas, foster collaboration, and bolster community engagement. Although requests for support slowed mid-year, the department anticipated renewed interest with the launch of capacity-building training sessions in summer 2025. By June, a scaled-down version of CNC Athens was relaunched, laying the groundwork for increased engagement in the new fiscal year.

A major focus throughout the year was raising awareness of funding opportunities. In September 2024, HCD hosted a public meeting to introduce the FY26 HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Additional opportunities followed in October with the release of applications for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the Community Partnership Program (CPP), and the Housing Counseling Program—collectively offering over **\$1 million** in available funding. This generated significant outreach, with staff providing dozens of technical assistance touchpoints across programs, including 17 for CDBG, 26 for Community Development applications, and 9 for CPP applications.

By mid-year, application windows had closed, and no new funding opportunities were posted during the latter quarters of FY25. Nevertheless, the department sustained momentum by preparing for upcoming training sessions and positioning nonprofits to serve as stronger partners in the delivery of affordable housing and community services.

Strategy E. Support diverse, innovative, and creative economy.

2025 Team Lead: Myung Cogan, Economic Development Department

In an effort to support diverse, innovative and the creative economy the Economic Development Department in partnership with CREATE Athens re-launched the Athens Creatives Directory, an online platform where local creatives can post and market their services and trade. ED partnered with a local agency to build the new site and currently acts as admin to the site. Also during 1st quarter of 2024 ED partnered with the Lyndon House Arts Center to develop a 5-part professional practices workshop series (Art Work). Topics included: Taxes, Trademark and Copyright Law, How to Start a Creative Business, Estate Planning for Artists and Collectors.

ED also focused on the local budding food businesses and partnered with Georgia Tech Enterprise Innovation Institute to host an all day food entrepreneur and food safety class in 3Q2024. ED also assisted the Culinary Kitchen of Athens with an all-day Food Truck training class during 1Q2025.

To support the local innovative manufacturing businesses ED partners with the GA Dept of Economic Development's regional representative to identify and schedule one-on-one meetings with the manufacturing businesses and start-ups to review state-level incentives. The goal is to ensure all local manufacturing businesses are aware of the incentives available to them such as energy, investment and job tax credits and how to apply them to their business.

Goal 3

Organizational Improvement

Strategy A. Develop strategies to recruit, reward, and retain high performing employees, both internally and externally, including individuals coming out of the justice system.

2025 Team Lead: Sara Ivy, Human Resources Department

Hire Stats (Monthly)

On average, ACCGov hired **39** employees (full time/part time) per month in FY25. We saw hiring spikes in September 2024 (**75**) and May 2025 (**182**) which aligned to seasonal hiring surges for both Elections and Leisure Services, respectively. Total hires have slightly increased above average since January 2025 which may be attributable to federal layoffs.

HIRE STATS (MONTHLY)

39
on average, ACCGov hired per month in FY25

75
September 2024

182
May 2025

Total hires have slightly increased above average since January 2025

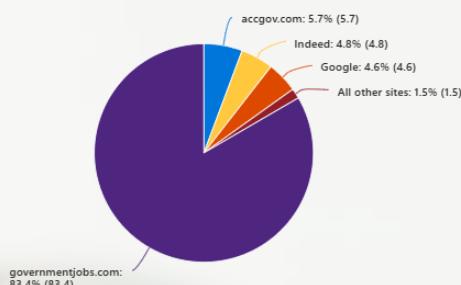
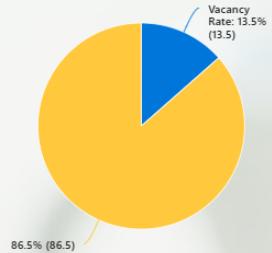
Job Applicant Status (Quarterly)

On average, ACCGov received **1,045** online applications (full time/part time) per month in FY25. We saw our largest applicant pool in August 2024 (seasonal hiring for the November presidential election) and our smallest applicant pool in December 2024 (a historical

holiday season slump). We received more job applications between January and June 2025 (**6367**) than we did between July and December 2024 (**6058**) which could be attributable to federal layoffs.

Employer of Choice in the Community

While ACCGov's vacancy rate continued to drop in FY25, from a high of **13.4%** in July 2024 to a low of **10.4%** in June 2025, our 12-month rolling turnover rate (full time positions only) averaged **13.5%** across the fiscal year, which indicates continuing "churn" in positions that may also suffer from chronic vacancies. The ACCGov Unified Pay Plan classification and compensation study should help us identify any gaps in pay for these positions which could be attributing to this turnover. It is our intent in FY26 to begin releasing Total Reward/Compensation Statements to all full-time employees annually. This will help employees better understand the investment ACCGov makes in each of them beyond just their base salary.



Job seekers primarily Recruitment Sources used by Candidates Hired

In FY25, job seekers who were ultimately hired by ACCGov (both full time and part time positions) learned about the employment opportunity by visiting the Web sites:

Applications are primarily processed online with some exceptions.

HR does not have a budget for recruitment purposes. Any department that wishes to advertise a vacant position outside of governmentjobs.com must provide funding for that advertisement. If a recruitment budget were to be recommended and established for HR's use, our recommendation would be to increase our job posting exposure on governmentjobs.com.

Employee Compensation and Engagement Metrics

In FY25, a **3%** table increase, and **4%** market increase was applied to those employees on the Unified Pay Plans (100 and 200), and a **4%** table increase was applied for those employees on the **Public Safety Step Pay Plans**. A total of three compensation studies began during FY25 to address pay concerns and/or plan design: (1) The ACCGov Unified Pay Plan classification and compensation study which began in November 2024 and is scheduled to be completed during the 3rd Quarter of FY26 (January-March); (2) A Sheriff's Department market study which began in February 2025 and is scheduled to be completed during the 1st Quarter of FY26 (July-September); and a Fire & Emergency Services classification and compensation study began in March 2025 and is scheduled to be completed during the 1st Quarter of FY26 (July-September).

In response to employees' ongoing concerns about rising health care costs, ACCGov continued to hold employee contribution costs to participate in our healthcare plans steady – something ACCGov has done since Calendar Year 2023. This strategy aligns with the Unified Government's goal to get to **75%** employer cost share. In FY25 we looked at adding coverage for emergency medical transport as a separate coverage option (100% funded by employees) beginning in Calendar Year 2026.

Both the Pension and Deferred Compensation Boards proposed changes that would enrich each plan design for the Mayor and Commission review. If adopted and codified, the plan change(s) would be effective in July 2027.

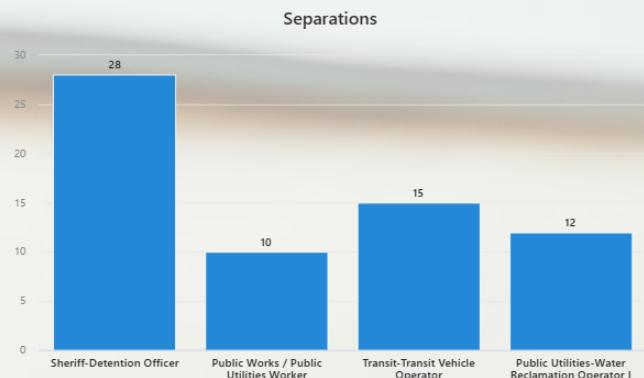
Talent Acquisition and Retention Metrics (Monthly)

In FY25, job seekers who applied for vacant positions ACCGov (both full time and part time positions) learned about the employment opportunity by visiting the following Web sites:

- governmentjobs.com: **76.8%**
- accgov.com: **4.1%**
- Indeed: **9.9%**
- Google: **5.5%**
- accpdcareers.com: **1.1%**
- All other Web sites: **2.7%**

Applications are primarily processed online with some exceptions.

For all employees hired by ACCGov, we continue to **experience the greatest loss** of employees, both **full-time** and **part-time**, during their **second year of employment (19.7%)**. Turnover of full-time personnel hired between FY23-FY25 has been greatest in the following positions:



The ACCGov Unified Pay Plan classification and compensation study and Sheriff's Office market study will allow us to identify any gaps in pay for these positions which could be attributing to this retention issue.

Strategy B. Create a culture for high performance: increase interdepartmental collaboration, events, better cross-departmental workforce strategy.

2025 Team Lead: Jay Bonilla, Corrections Department

We have taken the initiative not only to partner with local employers to gainfully employ participants of our program, but to train our residents with valuable job skills that can be advantageous to all parties involved. We've taken major strides in providing, tracking, and reporting on-the-job-trainings (OJT's). Our department has far exceeded Georgia Department of Corrections expectations in program completions. In fact, our participants have completed approximately 1,000 OJT programs over the last three years. In addition to many returning citizens potentially earning credit toward an earlier release date, participants learn valuable job skills which they will carry with them well beyond their confinement. Corrections has also maintained a fruitful partnerships with many program providers, including Action Incorporated, which has brought to fruition numerous cohorts of a welding program that incorporates forklift and OSHA certifications.

Corrections
1,000 FY23-25
on-the-job training programs

Strategy C. Improve internal programs, processes, policies and communication, while assessing how resources are allocated to meet existing and future needs for better service delivery and what we deliver.

2025 Team Lead: David Fountain, Information Technology Department

Over the last three fiscal years, Information Technology implemented projects that strengthened our cybersecurity posture, modernized network and endpoint management, improved data protection, and formalized technology governance. These projects directly advanced ACCGov's strategies by standardizing practices, clarifying decision making, and investing resources where they most improve service reliability and security. Key projects included:

- Organization wide multi factor authentication (MFA) deployed.
- Managed Detection & Response (MDR) service implemented to provide 24/7 monitoring and rapid incident response.
- Security policies reviewed and updated to align with current industry standards (including CJIS and NIST aligned practices where applicable).
- Patch management capability funded and introduced to increase visibility, risk based prioritization (CVE), and update compliance.
- Network modernization launched via a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) to refresh core and edge equipment and improve resiliency.
- Transition to a hybrid management model (on prem AD + Intune) to standardize configuration, compliance, and software delivery.
- Cloud backup storage established for critical data sets to enhance recovery options and business continuity.
- Legacy fax environment evaluated and upgraded/replaced to reduce operational risk and improve reliability.
- Enterprise Service Management (ESM/ITSM) solutions evaluated to improve service delivery, asset visibility, and request workflows.
- Technology governance structure created to prioritize investments, standardize intake, and ensure cross department alignment.

Goal 4

Quality, Stable, Affordable Housing for All

Strategy A. Support home ownership by increasing opportunities for low- and middle-income people to own a home and help people retain and remain in homes.

2025 Team Lead: Solomon Smothers, Housing & Community Development Department

HCD saw a significant increase in the number of rehabilitations conducted throughout FY23-25. As more funding became available, word spread throughout the community, leading to greater program participation. In addition, many individuals in ACC were able to secure Down Payment Assistance (DPA) to purchase homes. A total of 12 DPAs were provided during FY23-25 — 6 through FABT's ARPA contract and 6 from HCD's comprehensive affordable housing programs dataset; 6 received funding through First American Bank and Trust's ARPA contract and 6 Athens Land Trust projects received a combination of HOME and CDBG funding.

Strategy B. Update zoning code and development standards to enable diverse, affordable housing options that meet community needs, and identify funding/resources to support these efforts.

2025 Team Lead: Hannah Savard, Housing & Community Development Department

1. We began this metric by planning to provide Fair Housing Educational Materials to the

1. We began this metric by planning to provide Fair Housing Educational Materials to the community, and began planning for the annual Fair Housing Month events. Over the past 3 years, we were able to provide a substantial amount of Fair Housing resources to ACC community members. HCD was able to provide a Fair Housing presentation to parents at Howard B. Stroud Elementary School and assisted in the creation of the new Analysis of Impediments. HCD also began tracking Fair Housing referrals submitted, making strides towards educating ACC community members about their fair housing rights.

2. Significant strides have taken place for the Planning Department to finalize the Future Land Use Map. Staff have been busy engaging the community on the plan to collect public input.

Strategy C. Preserve and increase the supply of affordable rental housing.

2025 Team Lead: Solomon Smothers, Housing & Community Development Department

Though no LIHTC projects were completed, HCD made significant strides towards implementing LIGHTC projects in the ACC community. This includes the GICH Team voting on GICH Point applications, which included LIHTC units. Additionally, HCD continues in leading conversations regarding Inclusionary Zoning incentives in the ACC community.

Strategy D. Coordinate and implement the plan to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness alongside our partners.

2025 Team Lead: Lillian Sronkski, Housing & Community Development Department

Over the past three years, we strengthened the Coordinated Entry system and improved Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data quality across the Continuum of Care. Key accomplishments include the launch and pre-beta testing of the trauma-informed Universal Housing Assessment Tool, successful submission of the LSA, SPM, and PIT/HIC reports, and the implementation of monthly data checks and agency office hours. These efforts have led to a significant reduction in data errors and improved client exits, contributing to a **63**-person decrease in unsheltered homelessness. Athens-Clarke County also secured increased Continuum of Care funding for FY24, including a new Joint Transitional Housing-Rapid Rehousing project with Family Promise and expanded housing support through ABHS and Project Safe. Additionally, nine agencies were funded through ARPA to address homelessness, supporting new shelter capacity, case management, housing diversion, employment programs, and healthcare for unsheltered individuals. These combined efforts have strengthened systemwide capacity and advanced local goals for housing stability and service quality.

Strategy E. Improve equitable housing opportunities in identified disinvested or underinvested areas.

2025 Team Lead: Melinda Lord, Housing & Community Development Department

1. The ACC Land Bank Authority was approved for reimplementing by M&C on June 3, 2025. Next steps are selection of Board members, budget approval, IGA development and execution, hiring of an Executive Director and operations startup.

2. HCD continues to operate under its current NRSA plan, primarily focusing CDBG and HOME funding efforts to census tracts 6, 9, 301 and 302. From FY23 through FY25, HCD awarded over **\$3,465,652** in CDBG and HOME funding to support affordable housing, economic development, and public services program activities in current NRSA areas.

3. The Magistrate Court Eviction Prevention program, operated by Family Promise of Athens (FPA), successfully closed out on November 20, 2024 after serving **403** families using **\$1,102,349** of ARPA funding. With ARPA Homelessness funding, FPA is currently operating a diversion program and the Athens Homeless Coalition will begin operating its diversion program in late 2025. Both programs provide/will provide funding assistance to prevent homelessness through expanded eviction prevention activities, including childcare payment, car repair, rent, and other payment assistance activities to help keep people in their current housing.

Strategy F. Provide support to tenants to improve quality of life.

2025 Team Lead: Hannah Savard, Housing & Community Development Department

With ARPA Homelessness funding, FPA is currently operating a diversion program and the Athens Homeless Coalition will begin operating its diversion program in late 2025. Both programs provide/will provide funding assistance to prevent homelessness through expanded eviction prevention activities, including childcare payment, car repair, rent, and other payment assistance activities to help keep people in their current housing.

Goal 5

Safely Move Around Athens

Strategy A. Improve, multi-modal travel options to provide safe opportunities for active transportation.

2025 Team Lead: Daniel Sizemore, Transportation & Public Works Department

Over the past three years, we've completed over a dozen smaller active transportation projects and are in progress on capital projects that will enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout Athens-Clarke County. These include multi-use path expansions, key sidewalk infill, and intersection upgrades. We also revised the Midblock Crosswalk Policy to better align with national best practices and support safer pedestrian access. An Athens in Motion Plan update is underway. Ongoing progress reflects our commitment to building safer, more accessible options for people walking, biking, and rolling. Continued coordination with TSPLOST and federal funding sources has been critical in moving this strategy forward.

Strategy B. Provide enhanced public transportation through inter-city travel options to connect Athens residents with the surrounding region.

ACCGov Transit continues to work with intercity transportation providers to establish agreements to utilize the ACCGov Multi-Modal Transit Center (MMTC) as a stop point for passengers transferring from ACCGov Transit to intercity transportation options. As of August 11, 2025, Transit has restored all previously suspended services.

Strategy C. Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents.

As a result of the acceptance of the 2025 Transit Development Plan (TDP) and the 2025 Operational Analysis Periodic Audit, the Transit Department will be introducing a proposal to modify fixed-route service routes to increase frequency, improve service reliability, and provide more direct routing to points of interest. The Transit Department anticipates introducing a proposal to modify fixed-route services in the winter of 2025.

Strategy D. Create more usable and aesthetically pleasing corridor connections between residential and commercial areas.

Roadway Condition: Between FY23-25, primarily due to increased TSPLOST paving funding, ACCGov has performed resurfacing work on **135 lane miles** of roadway, and an additional **242 lane miles** of preventative maintenance, patching, and sealing efforts. In doing so, staff have been able to address the entirety of the currently identified paving deficit list (roadways scoring less than **40%** in the Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rankings. This work has also raised the total average roadway PCI for ACC to **67%**, bringing the county much closer to the industry standard target of **70%**.

E. Enhance safety for all modes of transportation.

We've made significant progress toward a more proactive and data-driven approach to transportation safety, including the completion of a Local Road Safety Plan and the development of our first Safety Action Plan, expected to be completed by December 2025. As part of this work, we established a High Injury Network to identify priority corridors and focus resources where they can have the greatest impact. We also revised the Residential Traffic Management Program to better respond to neighborhood safety concerns. These efforts position us to more effectively address crash trends and reduce serious injuries and fatalities across all modes.

Goal 6

Built & Natural Infrastructure

Strategy A. Adequately plan infrastructure to support our community in the future.

The creation of the Transportation Planning Office has played a key role in advancing planning efforts such as the Athens in Motion Plan update, Local Road Safety Plan, and Safety Action Plan, while also supporting the development and implementation of capital projects through the 2023 and upcoming 2026 TSPLOST programs. By collaborating with Planning, Transit, and Leisure Services on broader efforts like the Transit Development Plan and Greenway Network Plan, our work in multimodal planning, safety, and project development spans departments and helps address current needs while preparing for future growth. Improved internal coordination has strengthened our ability to deliver impactful, data-informed infrastructure.

Strategy B. Use equitable and sustainable infrastructure to enhance safety, identity, and a healthy environment.

PUD: Several infrastructure projects have been completed or nearing completion that enhances public safety and water resiliency. These milestones include the Lead and Copper Inventory study yielding no lead findings in the county, major upgrades to sewer and water lines for future demands and longevity, and increased chemical inventory capacity at water treatment plant with an additional brine tank. Major projects in their infancy with potentially great impact include the Rock Hill Quarry slated to come online in 2035, recycled water transmission design 30% complete for the industry sector, and transitioning to a new billing software in Spring 2026 which will provide operational efficiencies, customers transparency and better communication. With rising prices and temperatures driving up operational costs, the water treatment plant has utilized GA Power's Real-Time-Pricing (RTP) program which has saved over a hundred thousand dollars in energy costs. To continue to provide clean, reliable, and sustainable water to the community requires great focus on executing PUD's Service Delivery Plan centered on infrastructure and growing demand.

Strategy B Continued... Use equitable and sustainable infrastructure to enhance safety, identity, and a healthy environment.

The Sustainability Department focused on developing a science and data driven Invasive Species Management Program on ACC owned lands. Increases in staffing capacity and training allowed us to build and test several methods of data capture related to invasive species infestations and treatments. Just within the last year of the Strategic plan, we collected georeferenced and verifiable

Invasive Species

Across 7 Athens-Clarke County parks and Natural Resources

20+

Collected, Georeferenced, and verified

FY23-25

Strategy C. Leverage local resources in stewardship of infrastructure.

2025 Team Lead: Josh Hawkins, Capital Projects Department

Efforts to define and track the use of "local resources" in infrastructure projects are ongoing. The current procurement policy emphasizes selecting vendors based on best value, which prioritizes cost-effectiveness and qualifications, rather than geographic proximity. As a result, there is no formal local preference built into current purchasing practices.

This presents challenges in determining what qualifies as "local." While some vendors may operate within Georgia or Athens-Clarke County, their headquarters or payment processing locations may be outside the region. Similarly, materials such as asphalt, steel, or lumber may be sourced through national supply chains, limiting the ability to verify local origin.

To better align with this strategy, the team is exploring the use of regional definitions of locality and referencing the County's Disparity Study as a guide. Future improvements may include incorporating language into contracts that requires vendors to report on the origin of materials and labor. The use of sustainability certifications and material sourcing standards is also under consideration to help evaluate the local or regional impact of infrastructure investments. Continued collaboration with procurement and departmental partners will be essential in developing a consistent and measurable approach.

Strategy C (Continued...): Leverage local resources in stewardship of infrastructure.

2025 Team Lead: Mike Wharton, Sustainability Department

Land Conservation and Management – Sustainability Department

- Completed the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Grant and the MLK restoration initiative, restoring native habitat on 33 acres of Dudley and along the North Oconee River Greenway
- Enhanced and established standards and processes to guide conservation management of ACCGov natural areas. This included securing transportation, equipment, and hiring 3 part-time habitat specialists.
- Established process that will expand Rock and Shoals Outcrop Natural Area by 81 acres, bringing the total to 210+ acres.

Secured grants and rebates totaling \$1.3M with an awarded \$6.1M grant being "reviewed" by the Federal Highway Administration as per Executive Order.

Strategy D. Follow through on commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution.

2025 Team Lead: Mike Wharton, Sustainability Department

Some notable accomplishments during the strategic planning period include:

Clean and Renewable Energy highlights (in partnership with other ACCGov Departments)

- Installed solar/storage at the Family Protection, solar at the Athens Regional Library and Memorial Park and allocated funding for solar/storage for East Library and the Mental Health Recovery Building.
- Replaced 15% of the fleet's 450 light vehicles with hybrid, PHEV, or full EVs and established process to be able to increase this to 38% by December 2026.
- Installed 32 EV chargers for ACCGov vehicle use
- Contracted for and began implementing Energy Management Software to provide detailed information on ACCGov energy use in ACCGov buildings.

Looking Ahead to FY26–28

As Athens-Clarke County transitions from the FY23–25 Strategic Plan into the FY26–28 cycle, the Unified Government is positioned to build on progress and launch bold, community-centered initiatives. The upcoming plan reflects a renewed focus on equity, sustainability, innovation, and transparent governance.

Key strategies for FY26–28 will advance support for justice-involved individuals, expand affordable housing access, modernize public infrastructure, and accelerate the County's clean energy transition. Simultaneously, internal efforts will strengthen organizational culture, workforce development, and interdepartmental collaboration.

To support transparency and alignment, Athens-Clarke County has launched a central strategic planning portal where both the FY23–25 Summary and the full FY26–28 Strategic Plan are available, alongside a [Community Performance Dashboard](#) that shares quarterly updates beginning in FY25. This dashboard enables both the public and internal leadership to track measurable progress on strategic goals.

[Explore the Strategic Plan and Performance Dashboard](#)

Key priorities for FY26–28 include:

Expanding evidence-based programs that support our six strategic goal areas.

- Advancing economic mobility through small business support and workforce development

- Preserving and creating affordable housing while addressing eviction prevention
- Supporting minority- and women-owned business participation in public projects
- Building safer, multimodal transportation networks across Athens
- Meeting clean energy and sustainability goals through fleet, facilities, and park operations
- Strengthening employee recruitment, retention, and leadership development across departments

As we move forward, this strategic platform ensures that ACCGov's efforts remain visible, measurable, and accountable — for both our residents and leadership.