

# **Vision Statements, Issues and Opportunities & Policies**

# Commitment to Comprehensive Planning Process

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will include the community in an open process of public decision making.

- 1) Opportunity: Public participation is vital to the success of the Athens-Clarke County Unified Government.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will take pro-active steps to coordinate various public sector and private sector entities in order to implement the Comprehensive strategies and policies of Athens-Clarke County.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Continue to promote community awareness, involvement, and development in land use issues.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will make a strong commitment to implementing the Community Agenda as stated in the Comprehensive Plan.
  - c) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will strive to identify the necessary financial resources to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

# Education

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County as a community will support and encourage life-long learning. Higher education, vocational education, and public schools will be life-long learning opportunities for our residents and visitors.

- 1) Opportunity: Education (early learning, pre-k through 12, higher education, vocational, and adult education – public, private and home) is the foundation of our community's long-term prosperity.
  - a) Policy: Promote the concept of schools serving their neighborhoods as focal points for life-long learning.
  - b) Policy: Work with the Clarke County School District, as well as all institutions of higher learning in Athens-Clarke County, to encourage a commitment to providing access, services and instruction to all learners.
  - c) Policy: Athens-Clarke County recognizes the importance of and should continue to support life-long learning.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Investigate the feasibility of establishing life long learning programs that are supported by partnerships with public and private entities.
- 2) Issue: Public perception of the Clarke County School District is important to Athens-Clarke County's ability to be a regional economic leader.
  - a) Policy: The stakeholders should continue to work together and improve the perception of Clarke County School District.
  - b) Policy: Support the development of a public relations program that includes all of the stakeholders to promote the programs of Clarke County School District.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Continue the bi-annual meetings of the Clarke County School Board and the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission.

# Economic Development

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will be the educational, cultural, medical, and economic hub of Northeast Georgia. Athens-Clarke County's strengths and qualities will make it a world-class center for research and innovation. Athens-Clarke County's workforce will be capable of supporting existing and new enterprises. Athens-Clarke County will have a resilient, diverse economic base that provides a broad range of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities making Athens-Clarke County one of the best places in the world to live, work and retire.

- 1) Issue: Local small businesses need substantial increases in technical, financial, and logistical support.
  - a) Policy: Promote opportunities for Athens-Clarke County to assist local small businesses and entrepreneurs through programs such as the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Opportunity Zone program and other redevelopment strategies such as Tax Allocation Districts.
- 2) Issue: The community lacks workforce development coordination between employment and training and needs a substantial increase in moderate income jobs.
  - a) Policy: Partner with local schools and academic institutions to enhance business, technical, and entrepreneurial skills of the workforce in support of Partners for Prosperous Athens workforce development goals.
- 3) Issue: There is a perception that Athens-Clarke County has seen a decline in industrial zoned properties that could be successfully redeveloped as regional industrial parks.
  - a) Policy: Encourage the appropriate development of Research Parks, Business Parks and/or Incubation Parks.
- 4) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County is the regional center for health services.
  - a) Policy: Promote and support the vitality and growth of the Athens-Clarke County health care industry.

- Short Term Work Plan: Identify methods by which Athens-Clarke County can economically capitalize on the opportunities for medical research, training, and health care services.
- 5) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County has a significant and growing life sciences (biotech) research and technology industry.
- a) Policy: Facilitate and support life sciences (biotech) research and technology by promoting their establishment in the region.
- 6) Issue: Athens-Clarke County is the regional economic center, but the shortage of regional economic cooperation and coordination hampers our region's ability to attract the type and quality of development desired for Athens-Clarke County and the region.
- a) Policy: Partner with the University of Georgia to advance local and regional economic development.
- Short Term Work Plan: Develop and evaluate a regional economic plan in partnership with other area governments.
- 7) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County and the region has a significant and growing small-scale agricultural industry.
- a) Policy: Encourage small, self-sustaining farming within the community.
- b) Policy: Encourage agricultural areas on the periphery of the urban area to remain as productive agricultural lands by using techniques such as Transfer of Development Rights (TDR), conservation easements and open space subdivisions.
- ❖ Long Term Goal: Investigate options and encourage the creation of farmer's markets and community gardens.
- 8) Issue: Athens-Clarke County needs measurable data for a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of its business recruitment incentives.
- Short Term Work Plan: Establish a formal data measurement process to evaluate the effectiveness of economic-development incentives.

- 9) Opportunity: The Athens Ben Epps Airport is an important community resource that is currently underutilized as a regional transportation hub and an economic generator.
- a) Policy: Evaluate the economic opportunities provided by the Ben Epps Airport and investigate methods of leveraging them, including but not limited to daily commercial air service and job-training opportunities.
- 10) Opportunity: Athens is recognized internationally as a center for music, visual, film and performing arts and has a growing cultural industry.
- a) Policy: Continue to encourage the development of Downtown and other neighborhood arts districts.
  - b) Policy: Support the development of an economic-impact study of the arts (visual, film and performing arts).
  - c) Policy: Support the development of an economic impact study of the music industry.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Additional support is needed for local artists and musicians. Investigate programs to support opportunities that promote self-sustainability for members of the local arts and music community.
- 11) Opportunity: Downtown Athens will benefit from continued preservation and development as a vibrant center for all ages.
- a) Policy: Continue the preservation and development of Downtown Athens as a vibrant center for all ages.
- 12) Issue: There is a need to develop long-term planning for and management of the community's water supply.
- a) Policy: When recruiting or encouraging new industries or expansion, consider their impact on the water demand and seek an overall balance between supply and the demands of homes, institutions and industries.
  - b) Policy: Collaborate with state and regional water authorities to improve our allocation of water resources.
  - c) Policy: Continue to encourage conservation of potable drinking water regionally.

- d) Policy: Quantify and adjust estimates and forecasts of total water availability and water demand to realistically gauge the amount of water available for industrial expansion.

# Environmental

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will be an environmentally healthy, sustainable and aesthetically pleasing community in which air, water, soil, plant and wildlife habitat and scenic resources are protected and enhanced, and not degraded or depleted.

Athens-Clarke County will adopt and enforce ordinances and regulations that minimize the harmful impacts of human activities on the natural world and educate and empower citizens to practice and promote responsible environmental stewardship.

## Issues and Opportunities

- 1) Issue: Vehicle emissions and industrial discharges are polluting the air, moving Athens-Clarke County closer to non-attainment status under the Clean Air Act, and contributing to global climate change.
- 2) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County's strong sense of environmental stewardship can place us in the forefront for creating a healthy, sustainable community using climate change action strategies.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage existing local industries to install effective pollution abatement technology.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County should encourage efficient use of resources, such as energy and water, and use of sustainable building materials in new construction and renovation.
  - c) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage energy conservation and the use of alternative energy sources.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Develop, adopt, and implement a county energy plan.
  - d) Policy: Continue to expand the use of alternative fuels, alternative fuel vehicles, non-motorized transportation alternatives and fuel conservation.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Explore incentives for fuel-efficient private vehicles.
- 3) Issue: Loss of tree canopy degrades air and water quality.



- a) Policy: Strengthen tree canopy protection by periodic review of the tree management and environmental areas ordinances to evaluate effectiveness in order to promote an increase in tree canopy and tree protection.
- 4) Issue: Point and non-point sources of water pollution compromise the quality of surface and underground water resources, as well as damage properties adjacent to and/or downstream from tracts of land being developed.
- 5) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County can benefit from implementation of stricter monitoring and enforcement of erosion and sedimentation laws, the monitoring and regulation of wastewater systems, the encouragement of the use of vegetation to limit erosion and run-off, and encouragement of the use of permeable surfaces.
  - a) Policy: Improve the control of erosion and sedimentation.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Review the erosion and sedimentation ordinance to determine the need for additional regulations to assure water quality.
  - b) Policy: Restrict mass grading.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Review the current mass grading ordinance in order to determine its effectiveness.
  - c) Policy: Encourage stormwater management practices that most closely resemble natural run-off and infiltration
  - d) Policy: Ensure waterway buffers are able to function effectively in keeping sediment, pesticides, fertilizers and other pollutants out of wetlands, ponds, streams, and rivers.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Consider amendments to strengthen the environmental areas ordinance that address vegetation and allowable structures so as to maximize floodplain function in a natural fashion.
- 6) Issue: Athens-Clarke County's continued growth highlights the need to manage its water resources wisely.
- 7) Opportunity: Ongoing drought conditions have created heightened awareness and an opportunity to implement effective water conservation measures.

- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County must implement water conservation measures to preserve its water resources to ensure adequate availability of clean water for multiple users.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Research and adopt a conservation rate pricing structure for water.
  - b) Policy: Investigate ways to promote the use of xeriscaping as well as drought resistant plant materials on Athens-Clarke County property, in community projects and on private development.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Study the possibility of amending existing code to allow for the development of a gray-water system county-wide.
  - c) Policy: Implement measures to improve wastewater treatment systems.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Collaborate with state agencies to explore the feasibility of a maintenance and monitoring ordinance for onsite wastewater management systems and to educate the public on the proper use and maintenance of septic systems.
- 8) Issue: Natural areas such as forests, open spaces, riparian buffers and wildlife habitats are reduced or eliminated by residential and commercial development, transportation corridors and other human impacts.
- a) Policy: Continue to support acquisition and/or preservation of environmentally sensitive or important natural areas to attain Athens-Clarke County's goal of 20% protected space using a variety of mechanisms.
  - b) Policy: Limit development in designated natural areas, regulate outdoor lighting, invasive species, encourage the reuse or re-adaptation of vacant residential and commercial properties and brownfields.
- 9) Issue: Athens-Clarke County landfill has a life- expectancy of five years.
- 10) Opportunity: Reduce waste generation and improve rates of recycling and reuse with a goal of achieving 25% recycling.
- a) Policy: Reduce, reuse and recycle will be promoted and coordinated across all Athens-Clarke County departments.
  - b) Policy: Support a community-wide a recycling ordinance.

c) Policy: Support a permanent (year-round) household hazardous waste recycling center.

d) Policy: Support the recycling of cardboard, fluorescent bulbs, and electronics.

- Short Term Work Plan: Investigate methods to restrict the use of plastic bags at points of sale and the sale of plastic bottles.

11) Issue: There is a lack of public understanding and appreciation of our natural resources and systems, the ordinances and regulations enacted for their protections, and those measures, such as recycling, that are not regulated but should be promoted.

12) Opportunity: Community education programs, accessible to all residents and designed to cover basic natural science and environmental issues, increase public understanding and awareness.

a) Policy: Continue to support the existing environmental educational programs and volunteer opportunities.

# Historic Preservation and Cultural Resources

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will be a county rich in cultural resources that enhance and maintain its unique character and also increase its economic vitality.

In pursuit of this goal, Athens-Clarke County will protect, support, improve and generate cultural resources in Athens-Clarke County that contribute to the character and quality of life that define and make Athens-Clarke County unique.

- 1) Issue: Many Athens-Clarke County citizens may be unaware of cultural resources and their importance.
  - a) Policy: Continue collaboration between governmental and non-governmental entities to create opportunities for visitors and residents to learn more about Athens-Clarke County's history and other cultural resources through development of educational materials and programs.
- 2) Issue: Athens-Clarke County is home to many historic buildings, some of which are underutilized and threatened by neglect.
  - a) Policy: Prior to sale by Athens-Clarke County, explore opportunities to protect significant historic properties using designation or easements.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will support historic designation for eligible sites and neighborhoods.
    - ❖ Long Term Goal: Athens-Clarke County will work to leverage resources to compile a comprehensive inventory of county-wide historic properties and prioritize that list for preservation efforts.
- 3) Opportunity: Preservation and adaptive reuse of existing structures offer benefits both financial and in conservation of materials. Historic structures offer Heritage Tourism benefits, as well.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage the reuse and rehabilitation of historic structures.

- b) Policy: Develop a tool box complete with resource directory, funding options, etc. for property owners of historic, undesignated properties in an effort to facilitate and encourage adaptive reuse and historic designation of privately-owned properties.
- c) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to encourage and support the efforts of organizations whose mission is to promote and protect our historic and cultural heritage.
- d) Policy: Encourage property owners to take advantage of Federal and State tax credits for rehabilitation of historic property.
- e) Policy: Sensitive areas, both urban and rural, need to be identified and protected from inappropriate infill development through the use of historic districts, conservation districts, or other measures.
  - Short Term Work Plan: The Athens-Clarke County government should create a committee of urban church representatives and officials in charge of public buildings and parking to create innovative ways to share space for uses that operate on different days / hours.
    - ❖ Long Term Goal: Leverage resources to conduct a comprehensive survey of all cultural, natural, and historic resources (urban and rural) to be undertaken and updated on a 5 year cycle.
- f) Policy: Encourage public education and awareness in order to further promote the value of historic preservation.
- g) Policy: Continue to support the importance of historic ethnic neighborhoods, buildings and sites.
- h) Policy: Identify architecturally important non-historic buildings and objects.
  - ❖ Long Term Goal: Leverage resources to inventory architecturally-important non-historic buildings and objects.
- i) Policy: Protect historic architectural materials or urban archaeology (granite curbing, Belgian Block, bricks, etc.) when street work or construction is conducted.
  - Short Term Work Plan: Consider an ordinance or policy to protect historic architectural materials, urban archaeology and historic landscapes.

- j) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage the protection of potentially historic plant materials & trees as well as landscape structures surrounding historic properties by considering these elements when reviewing historic site plans.
- 4) Issue: Historic public documents are threatened and need to be easily accessible to the general public.
- Short Term Work Plan: Pursue grants or other forms of funding to begin safely archiving historic public documents in a manner that allows them to be accessible to the public.
- 5) Issue: There are abandoned or contaminated properties, many of which are historic, in our community that are threatened by demolition by neglect.
- ❖ Long Term Goal: Leverage resources to develop a database of contaminated/abandoned properties that could potentially be rehabilitated without demolition. Develop incentive programs to encourage rehabilitation.
- 6) Opportunity: Public Art benefits the Athens-Clarke County community.
- a) Policy: Encourage the increase of public art throughout the city.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Establish a Public Art Advisory Council which can assist in developing design guidelines for public art, reviewing plans for proposed public art commissions, encouraging developers to incorporate public art in new construction, and researching and recommending funding strategies.
  - b) Policy: Continue to encourage public amenities such as bicycle racks, benches, bus stop shelters, fountains, playground equipment, etc. to be functional public works of art.
- 7) Issue: A large portion of Athens-Clarke County's population is unaware of services offered by the Leisure Services programs.
- Short Term Work Plan: Develop a Leisure Services open-house day where the community can tour the many facilities and learn more about what this program has to offer.

## Facilities and Services / Intergovernmental Coordination

### *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will support and sustain local government services and facilities that respond to the needs of our population and make our community a safe, attractive healthy and productive place to live and work.

- 1) Issue: There is a disconnect between the Athens-Clarke County Land Use Plan and other Land Use Plans for the region.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County should continue to support both increased communication and collaboration between the various governmental entities within the region.
- 2) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County's infrastructure planning should continue to support and reinforce the Future Development Plan, and to protect the rural areas as identified on the Future Development Map.
  - a) Policy: Infrastructure plans to support the policies in the Future Development Map should be continually developed and updated.
  - b) Policy: Strongly encourage the location of utilities and storm drains within the pavement section of the right-of-way whenever feasible.
- 3) Opportunity: The quality of life in Athens-Clarke County could be improved with additional park land.
  - a) Policy: Create and support a system of pocket parks, linear parks and public squares and greens.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Develop a property management program for Athens-Clarke County with the purpose of identifying public land suitable for parks, pocket parks, linear parks, public squares and greens and for other purposes.
- 4) Opportunity: The beauty of Athens-Clarke County should be preserved and enhanced with efforts to improve the visual appeal of our county, to encourage tourism and to support the health and welfare of residents of our community.
  - a) Policy: Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful should continue to be supported and maintained.

- b) Policy: Encourage the creation of pleasing and distinctive gateways into Athens-Clarke County to promote community pride and to encourage tourism.
- 5) Opportunity: Crime prevention and emergency response are everyone's responsibility. Therefore the community benefits from citizen involvement in both crime prevention and disaster training.
- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County should continue to form partnerships within the community to support and develop programs to prevent crime and promote disaster preparedness.
  - b) Policy: Continue to support and expand efforts by the Citizen's Police Academy, the Neighborhood Notification Initiative, Neighborhood Watch programs, and Citizen Emergency Response Team (CERT) training programs for these purposes.
- 6) Issue: The number of employees, types of equipment and training should respond to the new demands placed upon government services as the population increases.
- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County should continue to analyze and assess the workload and service delivery of government departments as the population increases.
- 7) Opportunity: A mutual benefit exists for a coordinated approach in selecting locations for new schools.
- a) Policy: Continue coordination between Clarke County School Board, the Mayor and Commission of Athens-Clarke County and appropriate staff to ensure that new schools will be located with the potential to become focal points as neighborhood centers.



# Housing

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will foster neighborhoods and housing opportunities that will:

- Support and preserve diversity while providing an adequate supply of quality housing to address housing needs;
- Respect the rich history and character of our community in both new development and revitalization;
- Promote healthy, safe, affordable, and sustainable housing that accommodates a growing population while enhancing the quality of life and preserving the environment.

1) Issue: Athens-Clarke County needs to conduct periodic analyses and assessments of housing.

- Short Term Work Plan: Perform periodic renter/home ownership survey — rents, new home prices, resale values, condos vs. real property, etc.

2) Issue: Athens-Clarke County would benefit from a strategy to address student housing within the community.

- a) Policy: Partner with University of Georgia and other area institutions of higher learning to inform students of local codes.
- b) Policy: Coordinate with institutions of higher education regarding university housing policies and future plans as they relate to demands on the local housing stock.

3) Opportunity: We will preserve our diverse population by encouraging a mixture of housing types and uses.

- a) Policy: Support development in areas currently served by public facilities.
  - Short Term Work Plan: Investigate standards whereby accessory dwelling units may be integrated with owner occupied housing in Single Family (RS) zones.

- 4) Issue: Athens-Clarke County does not have inclusionary zoning ordinance.
  - Short Term Work Plan: Explore inclusionary zoning as a means for increasing the mix of housing types.
- 5) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County provides a high level of urban services.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to provide services that support revitalization of existing neighborhoods.
  - b) Policy: Devote resources to adequate enforcement of existing development, zoning, and quality-of-life codes.
- 6) Issue: Athens-Clarke County needs to increase the percentage of owner-occupied housing.
  - a) Policy: A mix of housing types, including workforce and life-cycle housing, will be encouraged.
- 7) Issue: Athens-Clarke County needs to enable aging-in-place and protect residents from the negative effects of gentrification.
  - Short Term Work Plan: Athens-Clarke County should review taxing mechanisms and other policies to address gentrification.
- 8) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County will benefit from the creation and protection of Traditional Neighborhood Developments.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage the adoption of design, zoning and development standards for all construction, including infill, that respect and contribute to the community's history and unique character.

# Land Use

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County land use policies will encourage and enable a balance and diversity in the projected land uses while respecting the importance of a clean, sustainable and healthy environment.

- 1) Issue: Athens-Clarke County zoning and development regulations encourage mixed-use, neo-traditional development patterns; however, new construction and redevelopment projects too often fail to meet these standards fully.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will champion Traditional Neighborhood developments.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Continue to review codes and regulations affecting new development to ascertain if they present challenges to the attainment of mixed use, neo-traditional development.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage intra- and inter-connectivity within and between neighborhoods and discourage cul-de-sac development.
- 2) Opportunity: Public Open Space creation and tree canopy preservation will be a major priority within our neighborhoods, along our streets, parking lots and within commercial and industrial developments.
- 3) Issue: Land uses and development regulations are often inconsistent or incompatible with significant natural features.
  - Short Term Work Plan: Explore opportunities to amend Athens-Clarke County Code to enhance the protection of natural environmental features such as topography, mature forests, rock outcrops, historic sites and streams.
- 4) Issue: Development codes that determine the final product emphasize use over appearance and context.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County development regulations and review will focus on form, appearance, context and use.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Explore the desirability of using Form Based Codes within our development regulations.

- 5) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County citizens would benefit from increased educational opportunities about land use regulations and issues.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to include citizen participation in the planning and development process.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to encourage a friendly, customer service oriented, and transparent development process.
  - c) Policy: Coordinate with non-governmental organizations to provide educational opportunities regarding land use regulations and issues.
- 6) Opportunity: Survey results show walking to be the favorite pastime of Athenians. Therefore, Athens-Clarke County should strive to be a more walkable community.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County is committed to creating walkable, safe, and attractive neighborhoods throughout the community in new and existing developments where people have easy access to schools, parks, shopping and services are available to all residents from their homes.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Continue to develop the sidewalk network emphasizing connectivity and accessibility.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage configuration of large existing or proposed commercial centers into “blocks” that promote walkability.
- 7) Issue: A lack of suitable guidelines for infill development has the potential to have an adverse impact on the character of existing areas.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will support residential and non-residential in-fill development that positively contributes to the character of existing neighborhoods and meets the goal of providing housing and services close to existing infrastructure.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Create design guidelines for compatible infill development.
- 8) Opportunity: Sustainable development should achieve a balance that satisfies the community’s housing, recreational, educational, commercial, and industrial needs.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County’s development regulations will be based on the Community Vision as stated in the Comprehensive Plan.

- b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will ensure that proposed zoning and development decisions are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Review Commercial Zoning Classifications (e.g. Commercial Neighborhood and Commercial General) and Future Development categories (e.g. Corridor Business) as they relate to one another.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Investigate rezoning of properties that are incompatible with the Future Development Map and/or existing uses.
  - c) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will support higher densities in urban areas
    - ❖ Long Term Goal: Identify goals and ideal percentages for development types that will ensure balance and economic viability.
    - ❖ Long Term Goal: Investigate lower minimum parking-space requirements.
- 9) Opportunity: Security can be enhanced through design guidelines.
- Short Term Work Plan: Explore the possibility of using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) in the review of proposed development projects.
- 10) Opportunity: Rural areas of our community need to be protected.
- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will preserve its rural character by supporting opportunities for agricultural and forestry activities as vital parts of our community.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Protect working agricultural lands through various means which might include zoning, tax policies, easements, acquisition, and promotion of small-scale local farming.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to encourage redevelopment and in-fill development in preference to Greenfield development.
- 11) Opportunity: Passive and active recreation are vital to our community and should be supported through greenspace acquisition and park development.
- a) Short Term Work Plan: Review and update the Recreation Master Plan.

12) Opportunity: Corridors could benefit from being comprehensively planned rather than planned piecemeal.

❖ Long Term Goal: Implement design guidelines for significant corridors.

13) Opportunity: Neighborhood planning would benefit from increased participation of citizens, property owners, developers and planners.

a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will promote the involvement of citizens in neighborhood planning.

- Short Term Work Plan: Explore opportunities for increased participation, including but not limited to the creation of neighborhood planning units or the expansion of the Neighborhood Notification Initiative (NNI).

14) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County benefits from coordination between and among existing agencies and institutions whose decisions have major land use impacts.

a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to coordinate with other agencies, services, and institutions in land use planning and development by identifying methods to foster improved communication.

# Transportation

## *Vision Statement:*

Athens-Clarke County will support transportation policies that promote context-sensitive street design principles and provide a balanced transportation system to encourage viable alternatives to the automobile, promote public health and safety, protect the environment, encourage efficient land use, relieve traffic congestion, maintain a sense of community, accommodate the needs of our diverse population and support the movement of good, services and people.

- 1) Issue: An efficient and safe transportation system must accommodate multiple modes of transportation.
  - a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage street design that promotes multiple modes of transportation.
  - b) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will interconnect streets and businesses by retrofitting parking lots and planning new network connections.
  - c) Policy: Continue to provide funding in the capital budget to support and expand the Bicycle Master Plan and the sidewalk network.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Consider the creation of bicycle lanes or routes from the South Milledge / Loop 10 intersection to the Prince Avenue / Loop 10 intersection.
    - ❖ Long Term Goal: Explore a plan to convert all state routes within Loop 10 (South Milledge Avenue, North Milledge Avenue, Prince Avenue) to local jurisdiction incrementally within the next 20 years.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Investigate the use of tiered parking fee system with higher costs and shorter time allowances within the downtown core to encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel.
  - d) Policy: Expand the use of street trees in corridors.

- e) Policy: Work with developers to promote and expand alternative parking lot designs that create circulation routes within commercial centers as distinct streets. The designs should include sidewalks, shade trees, small courtyards, on-street parking and traditional block sizes with multiple access points to shopping areas.
  - f) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to monitor and modify street and crossing designs to promote pedestrian crossing safety and accessibility that specifically address the needs of the elderly, the disabled, and the young.
  - g) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will encourage residential street design standards that slow traffic speeds.
- 2) Issue: The glare from roadway and roadside lighting compromises visibility and safety.
- Short Term Work Plan: Investigate regulations to reduce roadside glare and enhance user visibility.
- 3) Opportunity: Athens-Clarke County will continue to expand our sidewalk network.
- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to refine design standards for transportation corridors.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Athens-Clarke County will study the principles found in “Context Sensitive Street Design” written by the Urban Design Collaborative for the Atlanta Regional Commission for potential local application.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Investigate design standards for residential streets to minimize pavement width and enhance public safety.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Athens-Clarke County in collaboration with the Clarke County School Board, the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (NEGRDC), and the Safe Routes to Schools Task Force will develop a Safe Route to Schools program at selected schools.
- 2) Opportunity: All alternative transportation plans working together can provide non-automotive connectivity throughout Athens-Clarke County.
- Short Term Work Plan: Map existing and proposed rights of way to determine the suitability and funding feasibility of each for inclusion in a connected system of bicycle and pedestrian pathways.



- 3) Opportunity: The Athens Transit System is vital to meeting the transportation needs of our community.
- a) Policy: Athens-Clarke County will continue to pursue strategies to increase ridership on Athens Transit.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Explore an active marketing program for the Athens Transit System aimed at familiarizing the entire community with the system and its use. Special focus will be given to marketing the program to University of Georgia students, Spanish-speaking members of the community, seniors and young people.
  - b) Policy: Continue to explore ways to increase funding for the Athens Transit System.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Consider the feasibility of commercial advertising as a supplemental financing mechanism for the Athens Transit System.
  - c) Policy: Continue to seek additional opportunities for Park-and-Ride lots for UGA, downtown destinations and other work centers.
  - d) Policy: Continuously evaluate existing Athens Transit System routes to determine if there are needs to expand the routes.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Evaluate the service area of “The Lift” and “The Link” for potential expansion beyond the one-mile radius from bus-stops.
    - Short Term Work Plan: Begin exploring the potential for expanding Athens Transit System into adjoining counties in order to promote movement among population, commercial and employment centers.