



Agenda Item

Meeting Date: October 7, 2025

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR COUNCIL APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ASSISTANCE WITH THE ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Item: Action Item

Department: Planning and Zoning

Presented By: Tamaya Huff, Planning Manager

Summary:

The Georgia Planning Act aims to establish a unified framework for coordinated and comprehensive planning across all levels of government in the State of Georgia. This means fostering, developing, and sustaining effective planning initiatives that engage local, regional, and state government entities. This Act is designed to establish a structured framework for coordinating planning efforts under the direction of the Governor, ensuring that departments, agencies, commissions, and other state institutions collaborate effectively. The emphasis on collaboration and shared responsibility is crucial in addressing critical areas, including land use, transportation, environmental stewardship, and public health.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is the state agency responsible for overseeing the enforcement of this Act, thereby ensuring that local governments also meet its minimum standards and produce their service delivery strategy (SDS), comprehensive plan, and capital improvement element (CIE). Where such standards are not met, DCA deems the Local Government Compliance Status for Planning as ineligible for state assistance programs and permits.

City of Stone Mountain's Current Local Government Compliance Status – Planning & 2026 Comprehensive Plan Update

A key responsibility of local government is to engage in proactive planning and preparation of strategic initiatives. Often referred to as "city planning," "urban planning," or "land use planning," this process provides an essential framework for guiding community growth and development. The results of effective planning are captured in "comprehensive plans" or "growth management plans." By implementing well-considered planning practices, local governments can ensure that future development harmonizes with the community's vision and objectives, fostering a thriving environment for all residents.

Georgia offers an incentive program, called Qualified Local Government (QLG) status, which provides financial resources to cities and counties with DCA-approved comprehensive plans to local governments that participate in comprehensive planning. This support includes eligibility to

apply for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), water and sewer loans from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA), and economic development funding from the OneGeorgia Authority, among other programs.

It's also important to be aware of the Georgia Planning Act, which requires the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to review comprehensive plans within 30 days to ensure standards are met. The City of Stone Mountain's QLG status is currently compliant and on track to submit its comprehensive plan and capital improvement element (CIE) updates to the DCA by August 31, 2026. Plan adoption is required by DCA no later than October 31, 2026 to continue in QLG compliance.

Staff propose the following general schedule to meet the October 31, 2026 QLG Compliance review due date, which is included in your agenda package.

- **Prior Plan Review & Data Gathering – Underway. October 2025 to January 2026**
An internal review of the 2021 Adopted Comprehensive Plan is conducted by staff to collect the required data for updates and to coordinate with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), which will assist with meetings and help develop the final draft document.
- **Stakeholder Development, November 2025 to May 2026.**
One of these critical activities is forming a Steering Committee. The members of this committee will actively participate in developing the plan from start to finish, providing technical insight from various community planning perspectives. These areas include real estate, business owners, community development organizations, school boards, developers, property owners, biking/walking groups, residents, and a host of other interested parties. The formation of this committee will follow the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Rule 110-12-1.02(2)(a) and the Department's Supplemental Planning Guidance. This process will commence in mid-October 2025, during which we will finalize the selection of stakeholders and provide training for the chosen Steering Committee members. Members will be responsible for reviewing the 2021 Plan, offering critical feedback, and lessons learned, while committing to all Steering Committee meetings and commitments scheduled from October 2025 until the committee is dissolved in May 2026.
- **First Public Hearing January 2026.**
A public hearing is to be conducted at the outset of the local planning process per Rule 110-12-1.04(1)(a) of the DCA Rules and Regulations, which is planned for January 2026. The purpose of this hearing is to effectively inform the community about the development process of the plan, outline avenues for public participation, and gather input on the proposed planning methodology. Following the consideration of public comments, the community will be well-positioned to initiate the development of the plan in a manner that reflects collective input and priorities. The public hearing will be conducted in accordance with the Georgia Zoning Procedure Law, allowing for a general presentation of plan process, and public comment limiting each speaker to no more than 5 minutes.

- **Online Survey. January 2026 to March 2026.**

This survey provides an opportunity for the community to share valuable feedback, beginning with the first public hearing and continuing through March 2026. This input will play a crucial role in shaping the comprehensive plan. By actively participating, community members can help guide the development of the draft document, which is set to begin in April 2026.

- **Public Open House. February 2026**

Each component of the plan must incorporate meaningful engagement and input from stakeholders, local leaders, and the public, as outlined in section 110-12-1-.02(2) of the DCA Department Rules and Regulations. This inclusive approach ensures the plan reflects the community's diverse needs and values. Involving citizens and leaders in the development process fosters ownership and enhances the likelihood of successful implementation, ultimately driving positive change within the community. The meeting format will be an open-house style, allowing interested participants to learn more about the plan through self-guided interaction by consulting staff, maps, and supporting plan documents provided for public inspection.

- **Document Development**

Document development will begin in April 2026 and continue through June 2026, collecting input through scheduled public hearings, online surveys, an open house, and feedback from the steering committee. By July, the final draft of the comprehensive plan will be finalized and posted for public comment.

- **Second Public Hearing, July 2026**

The final draft of the comprehensive plan will be posted online for public comment in June 2026, and an overview of the plan will be presented at the second and final public hearing in July 2026.

- **Transmittal of Draft to DCA, July 2026**

Following the final public hearing, the final draft of the plan will be transmitted to DCA for review. DCA recommends transmitting the final draft at least 30 to 90 days before the required due date, to permit the approved plan, following DCA review, to be adopted before the October 31, 2026, due date.

- **Plan Adoption**

Once approved by DCA, the final plan will be presented to the Planning Commission for comment and final adoption by the Mayor and City Council by September 2026.

Resource Impact:

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) offers a free service to assist local governments in developing their comprehensive plans through its Local Comprehensive Plan Update Assistance Program. The division of responsibilities, are outlined in the agenda item, and upon approval from the Mayor and City Council, the City will enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to receive these services.

Attachments/Exhibits:

- City of Stone Mountain's Planning Status as of October 2, 2025.
- Draft Resolution: Enter into A Memorandum of Agreement with ARC to implement the comprehensive plan update.
- Draft Local Comprehensive Plan Update Assistance Memorandum of Agreement
- Stakeholder Development Schedule for Comprehensive Plan Update 2025- 2026
- Overall Schedule for Comprehensive Plan Update 2025-2026

Requested Action: The Mayor and City Council authorize the City's acceptance of the MOA as follows:

1. Approve the City to enter into an MOA with the Atlanta Regional Commission for the purpose of developing the City's Local Comprehensive Plan.
2. Authorizes Maggie Dimov, Interim City Manager, or her designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute an MOA on behalf of the City

RESOLUTION 2025-26

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA, TO ENTER INTO A MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT FOR THE CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

WHEREAS, the City of Stone Mountain, Georgia (the “City”) recognizes the need to formalize a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) to develop the City’s Local Comprehensive Plan and;

WHEREAS, the terms and conditions of the MOA have been reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Department and deemed beneficial to the interests of the City; and,

WHEREAS, all stated goals of this resolution are incorporated fully herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mayor and City Council do hereby support the City’s acceptance of the MOA as follows:

1. The City is hereby authorized to enter into an MOA with the Atlanta Regional Commission for the purpose of developing the City’s Local Comprehensive Plan.
2. Authorizes Maggie Dimov, Interim City Manager, or her designee to negotiate, finalize, and execute an MOA on behalf of the City.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption, this 7th day of October 2025.

CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN, GEORGIA

Approved:

Dr. Beverly Jones, Mayor

Attest:

Shavala Ames, City Clerk

Approved as to Form:

Angela Couch, City Attorney

**LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE ASSISTANCE
MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into as of this _____ day of _____ 2025 (the “Effective Date”) by and between the ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION (hereinafter referred to as “ARC”) and CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN (hereinafter referred as the “City”), a political subdivision of the State of Georgia.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Regional Commissions were created by the State of Georgia in order to assist local governments on a regional basis and to develop, promote, and assist in establishing coordinated and comprehensive planning in the state; and

WHEREAS, as the Regional Commission for the 11-county Atlanta Region, ARC has been mandated to undertake certain regional responsibilities under the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (as amended) (O.C.G.A. 45-12-200, et seq., and 50-8-1, et seq.) and does agree to perform prescribed services to local governments; and

WHEREAS, the City is required to update its Local Comprehensive Plan by October 31, 2026, according to the schedule set by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA); and

WHEREAS, the City has requested assistance from ARC to update its Local Comprehensive Plan under the requirements set by the Minimum Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning (“Minimum Standards”) found in Chapter 110-12-1 of the DCA Rules, in accordance with the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 (as amended); and

WHEREAS, ARC and the City believe it is mutually beneficial for both parties that the City, as part of the ARC, maintains its Local Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, ARC agrees to provide assistance for development of the City’s update of its Local Comprehensive Plan;

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the premises and of the mutual covenants herein contained, and for other good and valuable consideration, the parties hereto agree as follows:

1. Duties of ARC. ARC agrees to perform the following services:
 - a. Provide a project manager to coordinate with local government staff and ensure that the project is moving forward in a timely manner.
 - b. Facilitate and/or participate in Project Management Team meetings with local government staff.
 - c. Facilitate, in consultation with local government staff, a public engagement process reflecting the community’s demographics, composition and dynamics, to solicit community input, that includes or is equivalent to the following:

- i. A maximum of two (2) Steering Committee meetings, one (1) to be held in-person and one (1) to be held virtually.
 - ii. A maximum of one (1) public engagement event, to be held either in-person or virtually and, if at all possible, attached to an existing/scheduled community event.
 - iii. An online public engagement portal and survey, hosted by ARC.
 - iv. An opportunity for Steering Committee members to review and comment on the draft plan, including a review and comment period lasting at least two (2) weeks.
- d. Update, in consultation with local government staff, the following Comprehensive Plan elements of which Regional Commissions are required to assist, as defined at Chapter 110-12-1-.02(7)(b) of the Minimum Standards:
 - i. Community Vision/Goals
 - ii. Needs and Opportunities
 - iii. Broadband
 - iv. Report of Accomplishments
 - v. Community Work Program
- e. Update, in consultation with local government staff, the following Comprehensive Plan elements, if requested by the local government:
 - i. Land Use
 - ii. Economic Development
 - iii. Transportation
 - iv. Housing
 - v. Historic and Arts/Cultural Resources
 - vi. Natural Resources and Sustainability
 - vii. Any other elements identified by the local government
- f. Review any adopted HUD Consolidated Plan, Local Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), Regional Transportation Plan/Transportation Improvement Program (RTP/TIP), Economic Development Plan, relevant to ARC or other regional policy or plan document, and any other plans as needed, and integrate same with applicable elements of the Comprehensive Plan, as appropriate.
- g. Present at, attend, or support the two (2) DCA-required public hearings (one at kick-off and one prior to transmittal for regional and state review), if requested by the local government.
- h. Provide language for public hearing notices, if requested by the local government.
- i. Provide advertisement and other public involvement materials, if requested by the local government.
- j. Prepare the final plan document and other supporting materials in ARC's standard format and provide all project files to the local government.
- k. Complete any plan revisions required by DCA following its state review process.
- l. Complete a maximum of two (2) rounds of plan revisions or edits requested by the local government project manager, outside of any revisions required by DCA following its state review process.

2. Duties of the City. The City agrees to perform the following duties:

- a. Provide a staff point of contact throughout the process, to coordinate with ARC staff and ensure that the project is moving forward in a timely manner.
- b. Ensure the staff point of contact participates as a member of the Project Management Team and attends Project Management Team meetings with ARC staff.
- c. Develop a draft Report of Accomplishments showing the status of each item in the Community Work Program from the existing Comprehensive Plan.
- d. Develop a draft five (5) year Community Work Program.
- e. Assemble a Steering Committee reflecting the composition of the local community. The Committee must include members of the governing authority (elected officials), representatives of the local economic development community, and local government staff. It should include or leverage local entities such as artists or arts organizations, nonprofits, community-based organizations (CBOs), neighborhood associations or organizations, and local businesses and/or local business association(s).
- f. Schedule Steering Committee meetings, in consultation with ARC.
- g. Promote public awareness of the plan development process, including timely notice of, and invitations to, Steering Committee and public meetings.
- h. Provide locations for Steering Committee and public meetings that have heat/air conditioning, water, and electricity.
- i. Provide any food or beverages desired by the local government for Steering Committee and public meetings.
- j. Post timely notice of, and conduct, public hearings as required by the City's existing procedures.
- k. Provide timely notice to ARC of local government meetings that ARC staff should attend.
- l. Provide ARC with submittal deadlines for relevant City boards and committees at the beginning of the process.
- m. Meet the following milestones in order for ARC to ensure that the City meets its DCA-designated Plan Update deadline and maintains Qualified Local Government (QLG) status:
 - i. Schedule a date for the First Required Public Hearing, as defined at Chapter 110-12-1-.04(1)(a) of the Minimum Standards, no more than thirty (30) days after the signing of this Agreement (note that the meeting itself does not have to occur within those 30 days).
 - ii. Identify and confirm Steering Committee members no more than thirty (30) days after the signing of this Agreement.
 - iii. Schedule both Steering Committee meetings no more than forty-five (45) days after the signing of this Agreement (note that the meetings themselves do not have to occur within those 45 days).
 - iv. Complete and provide to ARC staff a draft Report of Accomplishments, showing the status of each item in the Community Work Program from the existing Comprehensive Plan, no more than sixty (60) days after the signing of this Agreement.
 - v. Accompany or host ARC staff on a site visit or tour (walking, biking, or driving, as appropriate) of key areas of the community no more than sixty (60) days after the signing of this Agreement.

- vi. Schedule the Second Public Hearing, as defined at Chapter 110-12-1-.04(1)(c) of the Minimum Standards, no fewer than seventy-five (75) days before the City's DCA-designated Plan Update deadline of October 31, 2025.
- vii. Ensure that any presentation(s) by ARC staff at the above-mentioned First and Second Public Hearings take place first on the hearing or meeting agenda.
- n. If the City seeks to use any consultant services on its plan update, in addition to the services provided by the ARC as outlined in the foregoing, the ARC will only coordinate with, and will only provide information to, the City's staff point of contact.

3. Time of Performance, Amendments, Modifications.

- a. This Agreement shall become effective upon execution by both parties and remain in effect until the completion of the project or termination by the parties as provided below. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, in no event shall the term of this Agreement exceed two (2) years from the Effective Date.
- b. Either party may terminate this Agreement upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the other party, provided that the party requesting termination has provided notice and sufficient opportunity for remedy.
- c. Either party may request changes to this Agreement at any time by written notice to the other party's signatory of this Agreement. Such changes as are mutually agreed upon by and between the parties shall be incorporated in written amendments to this Agreement and executed in the same manner as this Agreement. This Agreement may only be modified by an instrument in writing executed by the City and ARC. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the City and ARC acknowledge that this Agreement may be revised or refined from time to time during its term. The parties agree to cooperate with each other by executing such documents as may be necessary to evidence such mutually agreeable modifications and refinements.

4. Rights in Documents, Materials, and Data Produced. For the purposes of this Agreement, 'data' includes, but is not limited to, writings, sound recordings, photographs, films, videotapes, or other graphic representations and works of a similar nature. The City and ARC shall have the right to use same without restriction or limitation and without compensation to the other parties of the Agreement.

5. Indemnity. The City shall indemnify and hold harmless ARC, its officers, directors, employees and agents from and against any and all losses, reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, that may be based on any injury to persons or property caused by the negligent performance of services under this Agreement by the City or any person employed by the City.

ARC Number
022401

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereto executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

Assistant Secretary

Anna Roach, Executive Director

Witness:

CITY OF STONE MOUNTAIN

Municipal Clerk, Shavala Ames

Hon. _____,
Mayor Beverly Jones

Approved as to Form:

Recommended:

City Attorney, Angela Couch

Approved:

City of Stone Mountain

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Planning Status

Status	Submittal Type	Next Date
	Comp Plan Update	10/31/2026
	CIE Update	
	Service Delivery Strategy	10/31/2027



Compliant



Due in less than 120 days



Past Due

Planning Documents

Current Comprehensive Plans

Service Delivery Strategy

Data for Planning

Quick Links for Stone Mountain City
Quick Facts for Stone Mountain City
Detailed Census Information Request
American Fact Finder for the City of Stone Mountain
Community Indicators
County Snapshots

Other Community Information

Georgia.gov for the City of Stone Mountain
New Georgia Encyclopedia
Annexation Reports for the City of Stone Mountain
Georgia's Best Examples for the City of Stone Mountain
Georgia Government Officials

Comprehensive Plan- Overall Schedule

[illegible]

Comprehensive Plan – Steering Committee Development

[illegible]