

Quality Community Objectives Local Assessment For McIntyre

In 1999 the Board of the Department of Community Affairs adopted the Quality Community Objectives (QCOs) as a statement of the development patterns and options that will help Georgia preserve her unique cultural, natural and historic resources while looking to the future and developing to her fullest potential. The Office of Planning and Quality Growth has created the Quality Community Objectives Assessment to assist local governments in evaluating their progress towards sustainable and livable communities.

This assessment is meant to give a community an idea of how it is progressing toward reaching these objectives set by the Department, but no community will be judged on progress. The assessment is a tool for use at the beginning of the comprehensive planning process, much like a demographic analysis or a land use map, showing a community “you are here.” Each of the fifteen QCOs has a set of yes/no questions, with additional space available for assessors’ comments. The questions focus on local ordinances, policies, and organizational strategies intended to create and expand quality growth principles.

A majority of “yes” answers for an objective may indicate that the community has in place many of the governmental options for managing development patterns. “No’s” may provide guidance as to how to focus planning and implementation efforts for those governments seeking to achieve these Quality Community Objectives.

Some assessors may be able to answer these questions without much research, particularly in communities with few or no land use controls. Others may need to review land use ordinances and zoning regulations to find the answers, but this initial assessment is meant to provide an overall view of the community’s policies, not an in-depth analysis. There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment. Its merit lies in completion of the document and the ensuing discussions regarding future development patterns as governments undergo the comprehensive planning process.

Should a community decide to pursue a particular objective, it may consider a “yes” to each statement a benchmark toward achievement. Please be aware, however, that this assessment is an initial step. Local governments striving for excellence in quality growth may consider additional measures to meet local goals. For technical assistance on implementing the policies, ordinances and organizational structures referenced in the assessment please see:

Congratulations on your community and economic development efforts, and thank you for your dedication to Georgia’s citizens and resources.

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<i>Development Patterns</i>			
Traditional Neighborhoods			
Traditional neighborhood development patterns should be encouraged, including use of more human scale development, compact development, mixing of uses within easy walking distance of one another, and facilitating pedestrian activity.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. If we have a zoning code, it does not separate commercial, residential and retail uses in every district.			
2. Our community has ordinances in place that allow neo-traditional development “By right” so that developers do not have to go through a long variance process.		X	
3. We have a street tree ordinance that requires new development to plant shade-bearing trees appropriate to our climate.		X	
4. Our community has an organized tree-planting campaign in public areas that will make walking more comfortable in summer.		X	
5. We have a program to keep our public areas (commercial, retail districts, parks) clean and safe.	X		
6. Our community maintains its sidewalks and vegetation well so that walking is an option some would choose.	X		
7. In some areas, several errands can be made on foot, if so desired.	X		
8. Some of our children can and do walk to school safely.		X	
9. Some of our children can and do bike to school safely.		X	
10. Schools are located in or near neighborhoods in our community.		X	

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Infill Development Communities should maximize the use of existing infrastructure and minimize the conversion of undeveloped land at the urban periphery by encouraging development or redevelopment of sites closer to the downtown or traditional urban core of the community.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community has an inventory of vacant sites and buildings that are available for redevelopment and/or infill development.		X	
2. Our community is actively working to promote Brownfield redevelopment.		X	
3. Our community is actively working to promote greyfield redevelopment.		X	
4. We have areas of our community that are planned for nodal development (compacted near intersections rather than spread along a major road.)		X	
5. Our community allows small lot development (5000 SF or less) for some uses.		X	
Sense of Place Traditional downtown areas should be maintained as the focal point of the community or, for newer areas where this is not possible, the development of activity centers that serve as community focal points should be encouraged. These community focal points should be attractive, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly places where people choose to gather for shopping, dining, socializing, and entertainment			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. If someone dropped from the sky into our community, he or she would know immediately where she was, based on our distinct characteristics.	X		
2. We have delineated the areas of our community that are important to our history and heritage and have taken steps to protect those areas.		X	
3. We have ordinances to regulate the aesthetics of development in our highly visible areas.		X	
4. We have ordinances to regulate the size and type of signage in our community.	X		
5. If applicable, our community has a plan to protect designated farmland.		X	

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Transportation Alternatives			
Alternatives to transportation by automobile, including mass transit, bicycle routes, and pedestrian facilities, should be made available in each community. Greater use of alternate transportation should be encouraged.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have public transportation in our community.	X		
2. We require that new development connects with existing development through a street network, not a single entry/exit.		X	
3. We have a good network of sidewalks to allow people to walk to a variety of destinations.	X		
4. We have a sidewalk ordinance in our community that requires all new development to provide user-friendly sidewalks.		X	
5. We require that newly built sidewalks connect to existing sidewalks wherever possible		X	
6. We have a plan for bicycle routes through our community.		X	
7. We allow commercial and retail development to share parking areas wherever possible.	X		

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Regional Identity			
Each region should promote and preserve a regional "identity," or regional sense of place, defined in terms of traditional architecture, common economic linkages that bind the region together, or other shared characteristics.			
1. Our community is characteristic of the region in terms of architectural styles and heritage.		X	
2. Our community is connected to the surrounding region for economic livelihood through businesses that process local agricultural products.		X	
3. Our community encourages businesses that create products that draw on our regional heritage (mountain, agricultural, metropolitan, coastal)		X	
4. Our community participates in the Georgia Department of Economic Development's regional tourism partnership.		X	
5. Our community promotes tourism opportunities based on the unique characteristics of our region.		X	
6. Our community contributes to the region, and draws from the region, as a source of local culture, commerce, entertainment, education.	X		
<i>Resource Conservation</i>			
Heritage Preservation			
The traditional character of the community should be maintained through preserving and revitalizing historic areas of the community, encouraging new development that is compatible with the traditional features of the community, and protecting other scenic or natural features that are important to defining the community's character.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have designated historic districts in our community.		X	
2. We have an active historic preservation commission.		X	
3. We want new development to complement our historic development, and we have ordinances in place to ensure that happening.		X	

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Open Space Preservation			
New development should be designed to minimize the amount of land consumed, and open space should be set aside from development for use as public parks or as greenbelts/wildlife corridors. Compact development ordinances are one way of encouraging this type of open space preservation.			
1. Our community has a greenspace plan.		X	
2. Our community is actively preserving greenspace – either through direct purchase, or by encouraging set-asides in new development.		X	
3. We have a local land conservation program, or, we work with state or national land conservation programs to preserve environmentally important areas in our community.	X		
4. We have a conservation subdivision ordinance for residential development that is widely used and protects open space in perpetuity.		X	
Environmental Protection			
Environmentally sensitive areas should be protected from negative impacts of development, particularly when they are important for maintaining traditional character or quality of life of the community or region. Whenever possible, the natural terrain, drainage, and vegetation of an area should be preserved.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comment
1. Our community has a comprehensive natural resources inventory.	X		
2. We use this resource inventory to steer development away from environmentally sensitive areas.	X		
3. We have identified our defining natural resources and have taken steps to protect them.	X		
4. Our community has passed the necessary Part V Environmental Ordinances, and we enforce them.		X	
5. Our community has and actively enforces a tree preservation ordinance.	X		
6. Our community has a tree-replanting ordinance for new development.		X	
7. We are using stormwater best management practices for all new development.		X	

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8. We have land use measures that will protect the natural resources in our community (steep slope regulations, floodplain or marsh protection, etc.)		X	
<i>Social and Economic Development</i>			
Growth Preparedness Each community should identify and put in place the pre-requisites for the type of growth it seeks to achieve. These might include infrastructure (roads, water, sewer) to support new growth, appropriate training of the workforce, ordinances and regulations to manage growth as desired, or leadership capable of responding to growth opportunities and managing new growth when it occurs.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have population projections for the next 20 years that we refer to when making infrastructure decisions.		X	
2. Our local governments, the local school board, and other decision-making entities use the same population projections.		X	
3. We have a Capital Improvements Program that supports current and future growth.	X		
4. We have designated areas of our community where we would like to see growth. These areas are based on the natural resources inventory of our community.		X	

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Appropriate Businesses			
The businesses and industries encouraged to develop or expand in a community should be suitable for the community in terms of job skills required, long-term sustainability, linkages to other economic activities in the region, impact on the resources of the area, and future prospects for expansion and creation of higher-skill job opportunities.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development organization has considered our community's strengths, assets, and weaknesses and has created a business development strategy based on them.		X	
2. Our ED organization has considered the types of businesses already in our community, and has a plan to recruit business/industry that will be compatible.		X	
3. We recruit businesses that provide or create sustainable products.		X	
4. We have a diverse jobs base, so that one employer leaving would not cripple us.		X	
Employment Options			
A range of job types should be provided in each community to meet the diverse needs of the local workforce.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our economic development program has an entrepreneur support program.		X	
2. Our community has jobs for skilled labor.	X		
3. Our community has jobs for unskilled labor.	X		
4. Our community has professional and managerial jobs.	X		

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Housing Choices A range of housing size, cost, and density should be provided in each community to make it possible for all who work in the community to also live in the community (thereby reducing commuting distances), to promote a mixture of income and age groups in each community, and to provide a range of housing choice to meet market needs.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community allows accessory units like garage apartments or mother-in-law units.		X	
2. People who work in our community can afford to live here, too.	X	X	
3. Our community has enough housing for each income level (low, moderate, and above-average incomes)			
4. We encourage new residential development to follow the pattern of our original town, continuing the existing street design and recommending smaller setbacks.		X	
5. We have options available for loft living, downtown living, or “neo-traditional” development.		X	
6. We have vacant and developable land available for multifamily housing.		X	
7. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		
8. We allow multifamily housing to be developed in our community.	X		
9. We support community development corporations building housing for lower-income households.	X		
10. We have housing programs that focus on households with special needs.		X	
11. We allow small houses built on small lots (less than 5,000 square feet) in appropriate areas.	X		

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Educational Opportunities			
Educational and training opportunities should be readily available in each community – to permit community residents to improve their job skills, adapt to technological advances, or to pursue entrepreneurial ambitions.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. Our community provides work-force training options for our citizens.	X		
2. Our workforce training programs provide citizens with skills for jobs that are available in our community.		X	
3. Our community has higher education opportunities, or is close to a community that does.	X		
4. Our community has job opportunities for college graduates, so that our children may live and work here if they choose.	X		
Governmental Relations			
Local Self-determination			
Communities should be allowed to develop and work toward achieving their own vision for the future. Where the state seeks to achieve particular objectives, state financial and technical assistance should be used as the incentive to encourage local government conformance to those objectives.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We have a citizen-education campaign to allow all interested parties to learn about development processes in our community.	X		
2. We have processes in place that make it simple for the public to stay informed on land use and zoning decisions, and new development.		X	
3. We have a public-awareness element in our comprehensive planning process.		X	
4. We have clearly understandable guidelines for new development.		X	
5. We offer a development guidebook that illustrates the type of new development we want in our community.		X	
6. We have reviewed our development regulations and/or zoning code recently and are sure that our ordinances will help us achieve our QCO goals.	X		
7. We have a budget for annual training for planning commission members and		X	

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staff, and we use it.			
8. Our elected officials understand the land-development process in our community	X		
Regional Cooperation			
Regional cooperation should be encouraged in setting priorities, identifying shared needs, and finding collaborative solutions, particularly where it is critical to success of a venture, such as protection of shared natural resources or development of a transportation network.			
Statement	Yes	No	Comments
1. We plan jointly with our cities and county for Comprehensive Planning purposes	X		
2. We are satisfied with our Service Delivery Strategies	X		
3. We cooperate with at least one local government to provide or share services (parks and recreation, E911, Emergency Services, Police or Sheriff's Office, schools, water, sewer, other)	X		