



TASK FORCE on SERVICE DELIVERY TASK FORCE

Final Report

A New Model of Service Delivery

October 9, 2007

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I. Overview

The following proposal is designed to assist the Commission for A New Georgia Service Delivery Task Force to construct a model of service delivery for Georgia which ensures that the right agencies are providing the right services, that revenue streams are reaching the delivery point, and that state and local governments are working together as partners to best meet the needs of Georgians. To accomplish the Task Force vision, it is recommended that the Task Force consider an overhaul and redesign of Regional Development Centers as defined in Article 2 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated. Metropolitan Area Planning and Development Commissions as defined in Article 4 of Title 50 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated will not be affected by this proposal.

Georgia has the need for regional entities whose purpose is to coordinate land use, environmental, transportation and historic preservation planning in each designated region of the state; develop, promote, and assist in establishing coordinated comprehensive planning in the state; assist local governments to participate in an orderly process for coordinated and comprehensive planning; assist local governments to prepare and implement comprehensive plans which will develop and promote the essential public interests of the state and its citizens; to prepare and implement comprehensive regional plans which will develop and promote the essential public interests of the state and its citizens; and to advance positive governmental relations at the state, regional and local level.

Currently there are 15 Regional Development Centers (RDCs) in Georgia, excluding the Atlanta Regional Commission. Based on 2006 population estimates, the regions that these centers serve vary in population from 102,624 to 602,429 with seven of the fifteen regions having less than an estimated population of 300,000. Because of the disparity in funding caused by varying population size and the current dues structure, some RDCs charge their member governments for services provided while others may not charge their member governments for the same services. The dues structure for each RDC varies. Twenty-five cents per capita minimum dues are prescribed in law; however, most of the RDCs currently charge approximately \$1.00 per capita or more in dues for their member governments. RDCs serving regions with small populations struggle to provide quality services to their clients because of the inability to hire and retain quality staff. The quality of basic services provided by RDCs varies widely from region to region. RDCs have been forced to look for additional sources of revenue, whether from state, federal or other sources, in order to maintain a minimum amount of services. This has led to the delivery of programs and services that vary greatly in type and quality.

This proposal addresses the issues outlined above and provides recommendations for change that include a new regional governance structure, financial assistance and accountability. It is proposed that the new regional organizations should be called regional commissions. It is recommended that these proposals be incorporated in legislation introduced during the 2008 session of the legislature. It is further recommended that proposed changes in board structure become effective July 1, 2008 in the coastal region, and that all other proposed changes become effective July 1, 2009, to include changes in commission boundaries.

II. Mission

The regional commissions will function as the regional planning entity for land use, environmental, transportation and historic preservation planning in each designated region of the state; act as the official regional planning and development organization for the local governments and its citizens within a designated region; serve as the organization for comprehensive research, study, advice, and review concerning area plans; improve relationships between political subdivisions and public agencies within each region; and provide policy direction for the solution of common problems through short and long-range comprehensive planning within the region. The regional commissions will act as a liaison between the local communities and the region with state government when appropriate and necessary. The regional commissions will be instrumentalities of the local governments within a designated region.

III. Regional Boundaries

Each region is composed of the economic centers of the state and the counties, mostly rural in nature, that are dependent on these centers for employment opportunities and services that address their own unique needs. Each region shall contain a population of no less than 300,000. All state agencies will adopt these regional boundaries for the purposes of planning the delivery of state services. Planning for the delivery of state services to local governments and citizens within each region should be coordinated with the regional commissions.

It is recommended that, where feasible and agreed upon by the board of the regional commission; state agencies locate regional staff in the regional commission offices.

IV. Board Structure

The regional commission board of directors' structure is recommended as follows:

- The chairman/chief elected official of each county governing authority in the region. In the case of a consolidated government where there is not another municipality located within the boundaries of the county and the county is a consolidated government, a second member of the governing authority will be appointed to the board – board position is concurrent with term of office;
- One municipal elected official from every county in the region – board position is concurrent with term of office. This provision does not apply to consolidated governments that do not have another municipality located within its boundaries.
- Three gubernatorial appointees from residents of the region (one school board member or superintendent, and two private sector members) – board position is a two year term;
- Two private sector appointments from residents of the region by the commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs – board position is a two year term;
- Other members appointed to the board as necessary to be compliant with contracting agency requirements and/or by census district as defined in Georgia Code 50-8-84, or as desired to best represent the region's interest. The need for these appointments must be approved by the DCA Commissioner. These appointments must be approved by the regional commission board of directors – board position is a one year term; and
- Each commission board of directors will select a Chair, Vice Chair, and Secretary/Treasurer.
- Subject to appointments outlined above, the by-laws of each regional commission will govern how board members are appointed.

V. Funding

Local government dues are the primary funding stream for RDCs. While statute sets a minimum of .25 per capita for local government dues, most local governments contribute at least \$1.00 per capita to their RDC. Federal funds are a significant but inconsistent source of support for many RDCs. State support through DCA planning contracts has dwindled over the past several years to a statewide total of \$1.8 million. Other state agencies utilize RDCs on a case-by-case basis for planning and service delivery.

In consideration of the designation of the newly-formed regional commissions as the statutory entity responsible for coordination of land use, environmental, transportation and historic preservation planning at the regional level, the task force recommends annual state funding for regional commissions at \$1.00 per capita on a statewide basis. Funding will be utilized for 3 purposes: 1) base planning amounts for each regional commission, 2) statewide incentive funds for service consolidation and other activities, and 3) biennial performance audits (see Appendix A for details). This audit function will be housed at the Department of Audits and Accounts.

Funding for base planning and statewide incentive pool funds will be provided through performance contracts approved by the Commission on Regional Planning. Regional commissions will be expected to meet performance standards to continue to receive state funds. The commission will have the authority to withhold funding if performance measures are not met.

Funding will be distributed through performance contracts and in amounts consistent with the work plan and deliverables of the regional commission as determined by DCA. Regional commissions will receive a minimum base planning amount of \$300,000 annually and a maximum of \$850,000. Total funding will be capped at \$1,000,000. State planning contracts will specify a minimum level of service to be provided to local governments in the region at no cost. In order to ensure quality service statewide, minimum performance standards will be established in state contracts.

The boards of the regional commissions will develop an annual work program and suggested funding allocation in consultation with the region's local governments, state agencies, and any other organizations that the boards of regional commissions determine to be necessary for the development of this program.

VI. Contracts

The regional commissions may contract with any applicable federal agency to further the development and opportunities for the communities and citizens of their region.

Regional commissions may contract individually or jointly with state agencies for the purpose of carrying out programs or providing direct services on behalf of the state agencies. Such contracts are limited to activities or services the contracting state agencies are authorized by law to undertake or provide and may be for terms no longer than one year, subject to renewal. State agencies will utilize performance contracts to manage state resources provided to regional commissions.

Regional commissions may contract individually or jointly with local governments for the purpose of carrying out programs or providing direct services on behalf of the local governments as approved by the boards of regional commissions. Such contracts are limited to activities or services the contracting local governments are authorized by law to undertake or provide and may be for terms no longer than one year, subject to renewal.

Both the chair of the regional commission's board of directors and its executive director must jointly execute contracts between a regional commission and state and federal agencies or other organizations that the board of directors of the regional commission chooses. Both will be accountable and responsible for the successful completion of the contractual obligations.

VII. Oversight/Accountability

With the exception of the transfer of audit responsibilities to the Department of Audits, the commissioner and the board of directors of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs will continue to have the same powers and oversight for the regional commissions that they now have for Regional Development Centers.

Each regional commission will submit an annual report in a format prescribed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to the Commission on Regional Planning, its legislative delegation, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, and the appropriate Georgia House of Representatives and Senate oversight committees as determined by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Lieutenant Governor respectively.

VIII. Intergovernmental Cooperation

There shall be created a Commission on Regional Planning governed by a board of directors consisting of the following:

- Governor;
- chairs of each regional commission;
- the president or executive director of the Association County Commissioners of Georgia;
- the president or executive director of the Georgia Municipal Association;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources;
- the Director of the Environmental Protection Division;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Economic Development;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Human Resources;
- the Commissioner of the Department of Community Affairs; and
- the Director of the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority.

The Governor will serve as chair and the DCA Commissioner will serve as vice-chair of the Commission. The chairs of the appropriate Georgia House of Representatives and Senate oversight committees, as determined by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Lieutenant Governor respectively, will serve as ex-officio non-voting members of the commission. The regional commission executive directors will act as an advisory council to the commission. The purpose of the commission will be to coordinate state contract terms, leverage state and federal funding for the pursuit of shared goals, coordinate planning of state and federal resource allocation and state service delivery, and identify issues and opportunities requiring state, regional or local action.

The Commission will be created by Executive Order of the Governor and staffed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

The CNG Service Delivery Task Force reviewed the statutes related to the Governor's Development Council as a possible venue for achieving greater state and regional cooperation.

The Governor's Development Council was created in the office of the Governor and enacted by Georgia Law 1989, OCGA 45-12-202. Through subsequent amendments, members of the board of directors of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority constitute the membership of the council, OCGA 50-32-4. The council, at the direction of the Governor is authorized to (1) advise the Governor on the state's economic development policy, (2) coordinate, supervise, and review planning by state agencies, and (3) establish procedures for, and take action to require, communication and coordination among state agencies in any respect which the council deems necessary or appropriate in order to further the coordination of planning by state agencies.

It is unclear however whether the original intent of the GDC is still relevant. As proposed, the roles of the GDC and the Commission on Regional Planning may overlap, or be duplicative. The Task Force recommends that the Governor's Development Council be abolished.

The CNG Service Delivery Task Force reviewed the status of Regional Advisory Councils (RACs), created by a memorandum of understanding between the Georgia Department of Economic Development and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. RACs are twenty-one member councils whose membership is jointly appointed by the commissioners of the two departments. RACs were created in each of the state's twelve Service Delivery Regions to advise the boards of the two agencies on the delivery of their programs and services. The Task Force recommends that Regional Advisory Councils be abolished.

PROPOSED REGIONAL COMMITTEE FUNDING FORMULA

- a) State appropriation calculated as \$1 per capita for state as a whole
- b) Funding for 3 components: planning, service consolidation incentives, audits
- c) In order to qualify for state matching funds,
 - each RC must raise a minimum of \$1 per capita for the region as a whole
- d) Base planning amounts available thru performance contracts for land use, environmental, transportation and historic preservation planning
- e) Funding floor for base planning amounts is \$300,000; ceiling is \$850,000
- f) Total funding cap is \$1,000,000

Base Planning Funding

<u>Region</u>	<u>RC</u>	<u>population</u>	<u>\$</u>	
1	NWGA	813,072	\$813,072	
2	GaMtns	571,265	\$571,265	
3	ARC	4,071,200	\$850,000	
4	ChatFlint	467,116	\$467,116	
5	NEGa	593,841	\$593,841	
6	MidGa	588,854	\$588,854	
7	CSRA	526,197	\$526,197	
8	Lower Chat	324,693	\$324,693	
9	SouthWest	365,082	\$365,082	
10	SouthEast	388,445	\$388,445	
11	Coastal	654,176	\$654,176	
		9,363,941	\$6,142,741	\$0.66

Incentive Pool **\$2,846,642** \$0.30

_ funds available to all RCs
 annual allocations determined by the Commission on Regional Planning
 total allocation per RC may not exceed \$1,000,000
 activities eligible for incentive funding
 ~local government consolidation
 ~service consolidation (E-911, jails, hospitals, etc.)
 ~other activities deemed appropriate by the Commission on Regional Planning

Audit function **\$374,558** \$0.04

housed at Department of Audits
 biennial performance audits of RCs (total operations)

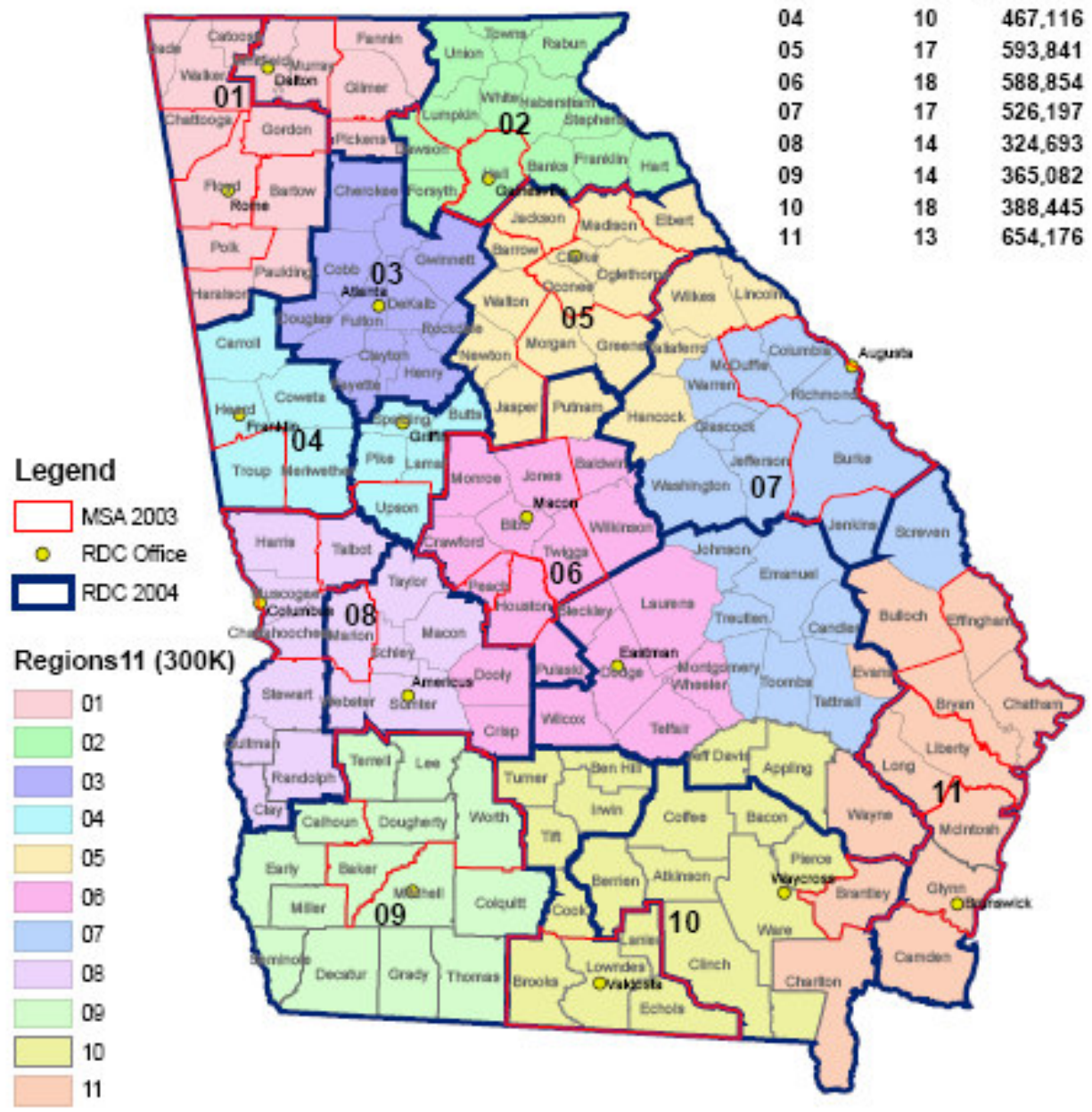
Total state funds **\$9,363,941**

PROPOSED SERVICE DELIVERY REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

10/09/07

Minimum 300,000 Population

Region	Count	Population
01	15	813,072
02	13	571,265
03	10	4,071,200
04	10	467,116
05	17	593,841
06	18	588,854
07	17	526,197
08	14	324,693
09	14	365,082
10	18	388,445
11	13	654,176



TASK FORCE MEMBERS

CHAIR: Paul Wood, President, Georgia Electric Membership Corporation
Jim Dove, President, Georgia Association of Regional Development Centers
Mike Beatty, Commissioner, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Earl T. Leonard, Jr., Vice President (ret) Coca-Cola
Lawrence C. Walker, Attorney, Walker, Hulbert, Gray & Byrd
Eugene Dyal, Chair, Bacon County Commissioners
Gaye M. Smith, Family Connection Partnership
John Wiles, State Senator
Melvin Davis, Chair, Oconee County Commissioners
Pat Graham, Mayor, City of Braselton
Ron Stephens, State Representative
Christopher C. Womack, Georgia Power Co.
Bill Yerta, Mayor, City of Sylvester

STRUCTURE COMMITTEE

CHAIR: Jim Finch, Department of Community Affairs
Jan Coyne, Fanning Institute, The University of Georgia
Jim Dove, Georgia Association of Regional Development Centers
Jim Grubiak, Association County Commissioners of Georgia
Jim Higdon, Georgia Municipal Association
Michelle NeSmith, Association County Commissioners of Georgia
Susan Hart Ridley, Governor's Office of Planning & Budget
Jerry Griffin, Association County Commissioners of Georgia
Jeff Strane, Governor's Office of Implementation
Joe Whorton, Fanning Institute, UGA
Jim Youngquist, Fanning Institute, Southeast Regional Directors Institute, UGA

GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE**CHAIR: Phil Foil**, Department of Community Affairs**Jim Ledbetter**, Carl Vinson Institute**Michelle NeSmith**, Association County Commissioners of Georgia**Jeff Strane**, Governor's Office of Implementation**Jim Youngquist**, Fanning Institute, The University of Georgia**Consulting Support**

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