

**2013/2014 GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS AND POLICY HIGHLIGHTS**

**State Highlights**

The Council actively works with:

* **Department of Natural Resources**
* **Department of Transportation**
* **Department of Community Affairs**
* **Environmental Protection Division**
* **Georgia General Assembly**

The Council has worked on a number of issues at the state level. Among other projects, the Council:

* Actively provides detailed input in opposition to the EPA and Corps of Engineers’ proposed rule to amend the Clean Water Act that would vastly extend the definition of “Waters of the U.S.”
* Actively supported, with testimony, Senate Bill 299, the Watershed Protection Stewardship Act.
* Actively engaged in the 2013 Stakeholders Group for the Permit Re-Issuance of the NPDES General Permit for Construction Activities, along with other key members of the development community, providing in-depth comments to the Georgia EPD regarding the re-issuance of the permits.
* Actively supported and testified on Senate Bill 255, the “P3” bill, which would allow a public entity (from the state level to a local town) to partner (through solicited or unsolicited proposals) with a private entity for the purpose of vertical construction projects.
* Supported and testified on behalf of House Bill 153, which would have allowed fractional SPLOST in .05 increments in individual counties.
* Provided key testimony before the Senate Public-Private Partnership (P3) Study Committee which was tasked with exploring the option of authorizing public-private partnerships in vertical construction as a tool that can be employed by the government to meet public needs at the local, county, and state level.
* Actively supported Senator Brandon Beach’s Senate Public Transportation in the Metropolitan Atlanta Region Study Committee to discuss workable solutions to streamline transit systems in the Metro Atlanta area.
* Successfully lobbied for the passage of Senate Bill 122, which created a funding mechanism for local governments to partner with private entities to finance water supply projects.
* Worked with State Representatives and partners to nullify the need for the “CID” bill, House Bill 649, which was ultimately withdrawn from consideration.
* Successfully lobbied for the passage of Senate Resolution 15, which creates a joint Committee on Water Supply to study and analyze the current status of the state’s reservoir system and conduct a comprehensive analysis of the state’s strategic needs for additional water supply.
* Advocated for the passage of Senate Bill 86, which requires all local governments to adopt a basic local plan and modifies the developments of regional impact (DRI) process.
* Successfully lobbied for the passage of House Bill 195, which allows the citizens of Dunwoody to vote for a tax allocation district in a local referendum.
* Successfully advocated for the passage of Senate Bill 157 which makes local solid waste management and reporting optional for local governments.
* Supported Governor Deal’s allocation of $300 million to reservoir development over the next four years.
* Promotes the preservation of the Transportation Investment Act, as passed by the Georgia General Assembly.
* Advocated for tax reform legislation as well as any kind of tax credits or incentives that are beneficial to economic development.

**Regional Highlights**

The Council actively works with:

* **Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)**
* **Community Improvement Districts (CIDs)**
* **Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)**
* **Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)**
* **Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (MNGWPD)**

On the regional level, the Council:

* Actively serves on the Atlanta Regional Commission’s Land Use Coordinating Committee (LUCC) as an appointed member.
* Participated in the Department of Community Affairs’ Planning Rules Task Force, which developed new local planning rules and is revamping the Development of Regional Impact (DRI) process.
* Hosts the CID Recognition Program each year to educate the public about CIDs and to show public appreciation for CID staff and board members.
* Continually contributes members’ expertise and input into the PLAN 2040 process.
* Worked with MNGWPD on an alternative to the “Retrofit on Reconnect” conservation measure.
* Participates in several events promoting the creation and continued importance of Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) in the Metro Region.

**City of Atlanta Highlights**

In the City of Atlanta, the Council:

* Advocated successfully against two ordinances that – had they been approved – would have sunset all non-conforming businesses along two parts of Cheshire Bridge Road that are zoned to the Neighborhood Commercial Districts NC 4 and NC 5.
* Worked and negotiated with Department of Watershed Management Staff and the Atlanta City Council on the City’s Stormwater Ordinance, dealing with “Green Infrastructure and Runoff Reduction” policies to limit additional costs to the development community.

**Building Permit Reform**

* Participated in Mayor Kasim Reed’s Permitting Task Force, along with Council members, at his request.

• Worked successfully with Mayor Reed to reform the city’s building permit process with the passage of the Building Permit Reform.

• Led the building permit reform, effort which has allowed registered online applicants the ability to obtain a permit in 10 business days.

• Participated in the Selection Committee for Atlanta’s new Director of the Office Buildings, which led to the hiring of Don Rosenthal.

**Enterprise Fund Reform**

• Contributed to the passage of the Enterprise Fund legislation as a result of the successful building permit reform package. The passage of Ordinance 11‐O‐1293, establishing an Enterprise Fund for the Atlanta Office of Buildings, and Ordinance 11‐O‐1504, authorizing the Chief Financial Officer to transfer funds from FY 2012 general fund anticipations and appropriations to the Enterprise Fund were major successes.

• The Enterprise ordinance established an Enterprise Fund which has allowed the fees charged for services to remain in the Department of Planning and Community Development’s Office of Buildings for critical technology upgrades and staff training.

**Office of Buildings Technical Advisory Committee**

* Worked closely with Mayor Reed and city staff to create and implement the Technical Advisory Committee, which advises the Mayor and city officials on the permitting process, provides recommendations for the cost for various fees and offers feedback on matters related to the Office of Buildings and the Enterprise Fund, the coffer for permit fees.
* Worked to ensure that a Council member would always have an appointment to the Office of Buildings Technical Advisory Committee.

**Cherokee County Highlights**

In Cherokee County, the Council:

* Successfully hosted the first Council for Quality Growth and Cherokee County “Economic Development Update” with Chairman Buzz Ahrens and the Cherokee Office of Economic Development, which became the “State of the County” in 2014.
* Highlighted Cherokee County’s revised Development Services offerings region-wide and hosted the DeKalb County Commissioners to review Cherokee’s process at the County offices.
* Provided input regarding the new online plan submittal system for Cherokee County Development Services.
* Provided Input on Woodstock Development Ordinance Re-write
* Worked on Woodstock Flood/Storm Water Ordinance.
* Expanded the Council’s involvement in educating local officials on issues affecting the growth and development industry.
* Provided input to the Board of Commissioners and county staff on updates to the Cherokee Unified Development Code.
* Provided input to the City of Holly Springs on their master services fee schedule.

**Cobb County Highlights**

In Cobb County, the Council:

* Has a development industry representative on the Continued Care Retirement Community (CCRC) committee and opposed any further amendments to the CCRC ordinance, articulating the CCRC ordinance had been thoroughly vetted and enjoyed broad community and citizen supported when it was passed in 2008.
* Advocated against the Condominium Moratorium and offered a proposed amendment to the county code to allow condominium owners to rent more of their units to likely lessees.
* Advocated for the passage of a $68 million General Obligation Bond designed to bolster economic development in the City of Marietta for the redevelopment of Franklin Road, the Franklin-Gateway Corridor and Whitlock Avenue using public-private investments.
* Represented the development industry during the County’s Code Revision process and provided numerous recommendations for changes.
* Supported the passage of the SPLOST and ESPLOST referendums.
* Provided in-depth input on updates to the development standards as a member of the Cobb County Development Standards Committee.
* Provided input and support, alongside Council members, for changes to Mableton’s design code.
* Provided specific comments to the City of Powder Springs regarding stormwater utility fees.
* Participated in the revision of the City of Kennesaw’s Unified Development Ordinance.

**DeKalb County Highlights**

In DeKalb County, the Council:

* Opposed the Dunwoody City Council’s proposed amendment to Code Section 8-1(e)(1) that would require buildings greater than three stories in height to be framed with noncombustible materials.
* Met individually with zoning staff and DeKalb County’s Community Development Director to develop industry specific revisions to the Zoning Code Rewrite, which is expected to pass in fall 2014.
* Actively opposed with testimony moratoriums before the Decatur City Commission that would have put a halt to large tree removal more than 12 inches in diameter, as well as opposing a single-family residential structural demolitions moratorium.
* Partners with the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce to present the “State of the County” address with County Leadership.
* Provided concerns and feedback on the Foreclosure Registry Ordinance.
* Weighed in on the privatization of planning services.
* Worked to develop industry specific revisions to the Zoning Code Rewrite.
* Supported the reinstatement of the DeKalb Local Issuing Authority by the state.
* Continued to work to improve relations between County Staff and the Development Community by providing counties input into the Permitting reform initiative by DeKalb County as members of the Permit Reform Task Force.
* Ensured that ten Council Members were appointed to the DeKalb County Permitting Task Force, which is charged with overhauling the permit process in DeKalb County.

**Forsyth County Highlights**

In Forsyth County, the Council:

* Advocated for residential zoning changes to the Unified Development Code, working with the County Planning Director and Commissioners to increase density in Residential Zoning Areas.
* Actively supports creation of a new Community Improvement District (CID) in Forsyth County.
* Actively supports and works with DCA and local members of the Council for Quality Growth and officials for the creation of a new Enterprise Zone.
* Provided assistance and input to the County in the development of the Forsyth County Comprehensive Plan.

**Gwinnett County Highlights**

In Gwinnett County, the Council:

* Expressed concerns and provided testimony to County staff and Stormwater Authority on proposed changes to the stormwater pipe standards limiting the use of aluminized piping.
* Worked with County officials and Council members to develop new Tax Allocation Districts (TADs), which will help spur redevelopment opportunities.
* Provided recommendations for improving the County’s parking requirements.
* Worked alongside Council members to address issues and concerns regarding impact fees through participation on the County’s Impact Fee Steering Committee.
* Promoted the proposed allocation districts, the Evermore TAD, the Gwinnett Place TAD, and the Gwinnett Village Gateway TAD.
* Worked with the Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners to develop and approve the 2030 Unified Comprehensive Plan.
* Represented a stakeholder’s seat on the “Engage Gwinnett Committee,” a citizen-led initiative to propose funding strategies for current and future government services.
* Hosts Gwinnett County Commission Chair Charlotte Nash’s “State of the County” Address, along with the Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce.
* Participated as an industry stakeholder in the Unified Development Code Committee.
* Advocated against a steel pipe ban and successfully delayed a hearing before Stormwater Authority.

**North Fulton County Highlights**

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In North Fulton County, the Council:

* Actively assisting the City of Roswell to revise their tree ordinance to be more conducive to economic development.
* Worked with city staff and the City Council on the City of Roswell’s Comprehensive Plan and with the City of Roswell on the Unified Development Ordinance to promote polices that continue to bring in commercial development and encourage single-family development.
* Opposed the Fulton County Commission’s “Environmental Justice Ordinance”, working with Metro Atlanta Real Estate Trade Group (MARTG) partners to commission an analytical report to show the negative economic impact of the ordinance on South Fulton County
* Provided detailed input on the City of Roswell’s implementation of stormwater utility fees.
* Worked with the City of Roswell on LEED requirements for city buildings.
* Contribute in the North Fulton Mayor’s Association regarding industry issues and transportation.
* Participated in hearings for amendments to the Alpharetta code affecting site mitigation and inactive construction sites.
* Worked with the City of Sandy Springs on promoting their water conservation ordinance.
* Participated in the City of Roswell’s Comprehensive Land Use process.
* Provided comment and direction to the City of Milton on commercial overlay districts.
* Worked on the form based code initiative in City of Milton.
* Actively working on the City of Roswell’s regional detention concept for redevelopment.