

Metro Atlanta

Regional Economic Development Strategy



The 10-county Metro Atlanta region – comprised of Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties – is a diverse region anchored by the state capital, multiple universities and colleges, numerous Fortune 500 headquarters and the world’s busiest airport. The region has enjoyed tremendous growth in recent decades and has positioned itself among the most competitive economic regions in the world. But no region, regardless of its competitive position, has been immune to the effects of the recent “Great Recession.” As Metro Atlanta emerges from this recession, it must have a clear roadmap to continually strengthen its position within an increasingly competitive, global environment for jobs and workers.

The development of this roadmap, the Metro Atlanta Regional Economic Development Strategy, will be a collaborative process, designed to unify multiple stakeholders in the public, private and non-profit sectors behind a consensus vision for the region’s economic future. The final product will support the goals and objectives of PLAN 2040, the Atlanta Regional Commission’s comprehensive blueprint to sustain Metro Atlanta’s livability and prosperity through mid-century. It will also meet the Economic Development Administration’s requirements for a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). The process is being facilitated by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and Market Street Services, a national community, economic and workforce development consulting firm based in Atlanta, and supported by the leadership of Work Group and Steering Committee members.

Scope of Work

The nine-month strategic planning process includes stakeholder input, quantitative research, the development of strategic recommendations, the creation of an implementation plan and the establishment of performance metrics to measure implementation success.

Strategic Initiative Inventory

One of the first steps in ensuring that the regional strategy is a coordinated effort, and not duplicative or uninformed of ongoing efforts, is the creation of a Strategic Initiative Inventory. Market Street and ARC will leverage inventory and assess current local and state economic development priorities, goals and strategies, with input and assistance from the Work Group. The Strategic Initiative Inventory will inform the development of new strategic recommendations for the Metro Atlanta region.

Public Input

Public input facilitated by the consultants in recent years in numerous Metro Atlanta communities (including Cobb, DeKalb, Gwinnett and Henry Counties) as well as feedback received by ARC during the Fifty Forward and PLAN 2040 processes will be supplemented by focus groups conducted throughout the 10-county region, as well as input received via an online survey.

Competitive Assessment

A thorough Competitive Assessment will be completed, analyzing the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the Metro Atlanta region. The region’s performance, as measured by a variety of demographic, economic and quality of life indicators, will be benchmarked against three peer metropolitan areas that the region competes with for jobs and workers.

Economic Cluster Review

The Economic Cluster Review will evaluate and assess the competitiveness of various business sectors that are currently being targeted by local, regional and state economic development partners for growth and development. The most competitive clusters and targets in the Metro Atlanta region will be identified, as well as specific niche opportunities for distinct communities and counties within the region.

Regional Economic Development Strategy

The five-year Regional Economic Development Strategy represents the culmination of the three previous phases and the beginning of the in-depth dialogues about the strategic goals and objectives that can best address regional challenges and capitalize on competitive advantages and assets. The Strategy answers the critical question – “What economic development goals should the Metro Atlanta region pursue?” Best practices from around the country will be identified and referenced when relevant and appropriate.

Implementation Plan

While the Strategy identifies “what” the Metro Atlanta region should pursue, the Implementation Plan will help answer “how” the region will pursue these strategic initiatives. Specifically, it will identify lead and supportive entities in implementing individual recommendations, prioritize the various recommendations, examine funding capacity and sources and provide a set of performance metrics to gauge implementation success.

Steering Committee

The strategic planning process will be guided by a diverse Steering Committee of leaders from the public, private and non-profit sectors. These individuals will oversee the entire planning effort, help identify the region's strategic priorities, build consensus throughout the region and serve as public advocates for the betterment of the region and its economic development. The Steering Committee will meet four times throughout the process.

Work Group

In addition to the Steering Committee, the research and strategic planning phases will be guided by significant input from a group of community, economic and workforce development practitioners from individual communities and organizations throughout the 10-county Metro Atlanta region. Members of the Work Group will meet eight times throughout the process to share their in-depth knowledge of the assets, challenges, opportunities and strategic priorities facing their individual communities.



Atlanta Regional Commission

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the 10-county area including Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties, as well as the City of Atlanta. For 60 years, ARC and its predecessor agencies have helped to focus the region's leadership, attention and resources on key issues of regional consequence. ARC is dedicated to unifying the region's collective resources to prepare the metropolitan area for a prosperous future. It does so through professional planning initiatives, the provision of objective information and the involvement of the community in collaborative partnerships.

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Market Street Services

Market Street Services, a national economic, community and workforce development consulting firm headquartered in Atlanta, was engaged to facilitate the development of the Regional Economic Development Strategy, and will lead the region through a process to identify actionable strategies that will help ensure that Metro Atlanta sustains its livability and prosperity, and continually elevates its competitiveness in today's global economy. Market Street has facilitated strategic planning processes for many of the nation's best practice economic development organizations, and has worked extensively with multiple communities throughout Metro Atlanta.

How would you rate the metro Atlanta area's competitiveness?

Weigh in by March 2, 2012 at:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MetroAtlantaRegion>



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