

Intergovernmental Coordination Element

The Intergovernmental Coordination Element provides communities an opportunity to inventory existing intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes involving other local governments and governmental entities. These can have profound impacts on the success of implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this element is to assess the adequacy and suitability of existing coordination mechanisms and their ability to serve the current and future needs of the community. The element also articulates goals and seeks to formulate a strategy for effective implementation of community policies and objectives that, in many cases, involve multiple governmental entities.

INVENTORY

Adjacent Counties

The City of Albany and Dougherty County share a lengthy common border with Lee County to the north. Much potential exists for coordination with Lee County, particularly in the area of land use planning. Because of available land, the development pattern occurring in the northern area of Dougherty County is continuing into Lee County. This development trend is recognized in the planning boundary determined by the Metropolitan Planning Organization, the entity responsible for ensuring that federally supported transportation projects are planned in a coordinated manner. The MPO area includes all of Dougherty County and the southern portion of Lee County. Both counties are represented on the Transportation Committees.

Certain natural resource issues common to all surrounding counties, such as water quality, stormwater management, and flooding, are regional issues and need to be addressed as such with adjoining counties, perhaps through the SWGRDC.

Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center (SWGRDC) is the regional government for the City of Albany and Dougherty County. The SWGRDC has 14 counties under its jurisdiction. The only metropolitan area in the SWGRDC region centers on the City of Albany and encompasses portions of Dougherty and Lee Counties. The role of the SWGRDC is to provide technical assistance to local governments within its jurisdiction. The Georgia Department of Community Affairs provides annual contractual opportunities to the SWGRDC to conduct various activities related to implementing the Georgia Planning Act. However, the City of Albany and Dougherty County maintain the primary responsibility for planning policies and decisions within their borders.

SWGRDC has provided technical assistance for historic preservation and helped to develop a historic preservation ordinance in the 1990's. Assistance is also given to the Albany Dougherty Historic Preservation Commission on an ongoing basis. SWGRDC also developed a Greenspace Connectivity Plan, suggesting options for a trail connecting existing protected greenspace in Dougherty and Lee Counties along the Flint River and Muckalee Creek corridors. SWGRDC's role in the greenspace program is one of advocacy.

Additionally, the SWGRDC is providing technical assistance to the region in the area of economic development. Currently the SWGRDC is partnering with Dougherty County and other organizations on the economic diversification of the region. Particular attention has focused on the Marine Corps Logistics Base and its future expansion or reuse. The SWGRDC is also working to encourage economic development in surrounding counties within the region.

State of Georgia

Flint River and Kinchafoonee Creek Corridor Protection Plan

In 1991, the General Assembly passed the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act, which called for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop criteria for the protection of important river corridors within the State of Georgia. The State Department of Community Affairs further required all local governments to address these River Corridor Protection Act criteria within their comprehensive plans as they apply to rivers and streams in their municipal boundaries. Within Dougherty County, the Flint River and Kinchafoonee Creek are subject to the River Corridor Protection Act criteria. The Flint River and Kinchafoonee Creek Corridor Protection Plan was developed to comply with the state's requirements subsequent to the Mountain and River Corridor Protection Act and contains several goals that provide for the protection of water quality, scenic and unique areas, and the protection of property rights for landowners. The Flint River and Kinchafoonee Creek Corridor Protection Plan was adopted by the City and County as part of the current Comprehensive Plan and the Zoning Ordinance.

Governor's Greenspace Program

The Georgia General Assembly created the Georgia Greenspace Program during the 2000 legislative session by enacting Senate Bill 399 (codified as Official Code of Georgia Annotated Sec. 36-22-1 et seq.). The statute assigned responsibility for program administration to the Department of Natural Resources and created a five-member Georgia Greenspace Commission which reviews and approves community greenspace programs submitted by eligible counties. The statute defines "greenspace" as permanently protected land and water, including agricultural and forestry land, that is in its undeveloped, natural state or that has been developed only to the extent consistent with, or is restored to be consistent with, one or more listed goals for natural

resource protection or informal recreation. Dougherty County's program, includes the City of Albany, had one trust fund administered by the Dougherty County Finance Director.

Dougherty County has committed to protecting 20% (the minimum level required by the Georgia Greenspace Program) of its 209,793 acres by 2023. The 42,000 acres of greenspace will include:

- River corridor, associated flood plains, and other stream buffers
- Wetlands and contiguous upland areas
- Agricultural and farm lands
- Parks and areas suitable for parks
- Historic Resources
- Land that provides connectivity between these areas

Funding for the Greenspace Program ended with the term of Governor Roy Barnes and was closed out in 2004. Governor Sonny Perdue sponsored a conservation initiative, the Georgia Land Conservation Act, in 2005 which also provides a mechanism for permanently protecting farms, timberland, river corridors, historic sites and other valuable landscapes.

Albany and Dougherty County currently have 10,818 acres protected. See the Natural & Cultural Resources Element for more information.

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST)

In 1985, the State Legislature authorized counties to hold referendums for the approval of an additional 1% sales tax for funding Special Purposes. These Special Purposes were originally only for roads, streets and bridges with the tax collection limited to four years. As the popularity of this funding source grew, the state legislature created more flexibility. Special Purposes were expanded to include more diverse projects such as public facilities, industrial parks, equipment and debt retirement.

The proceeds of the tax must be spent for capital, non-operating outlays by the county government and participating municipal governments in the county. To date, five Special Referenda have been approved by the City of Albany and Dougherty County voters that have funded more than \$2 billion in improvements.

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

Regional transportation planning is accomplished in close cooperation with GDOT, through which Federal transportation funds are funneled to the local Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Several divisions of DNR provide support, direction, and training for local government including:

- Historic Preservation Division
- Wildlife Resources Division
- Environmental Protection Division

Dougherty County School System

The Dougherty County School System is the twenty-first largest of Georgia's 180 school systems and is Dougherty County's second largest employer. The school system has used money from the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax approved by county voters in 1997 to finance new schools, improve existing schools, and enhance technology. Planning for schools is the responsibility of the Dougherty County Board of Education. The Board of Education generally requests input on capital facilities plans for short-term facility improvements, including the location of new schools. Additionally, the school system currently has excess property in its inventory that is being evaluated for sale or reuse by the school system. The DCSS is discussed further in the Community Facilities & Services Element.

Federal Government

The relationship between the City of Albany and Dougherty County and various federal agencies was maximized following the flood of July 1994 that devastated a large area of Albany. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were conduits of flood relief efforts in redeveloping infrastructure and impacted neighborhoods. The flood relief was provided primarily for the purposes of reconstruction of housing and other infrastructure. The effort has lasted for 10 years and the City of Albany and other impacted institutions have rebuilt, where allowed, and have replaced damaged and destroyed structures.

Marine Corps Logistics Base

The 3,458 acre base was originally commissioned in 1952, as the Marine Corps Depot of Supplies. The installation was renamed in the late 1970's to the current name, Marine Corps Logistics Base (MCLB) Albany to better represent the logistics support functions required to support the Marine Corps ground weapon systems and equipment that was being performed at the base.

In 1990, MCLB Albany also took on the responsibilities of command of the Marine Corps Logistics Bases, known as LOGCOM. LOGCOM functions as the hub for Marine

Corps Logistics and consists of three major locations – MCLB Albany, Georgia; MCLB Barstow, California; and the Blount Island Command, Jacksonville, Florida.

The MCLB is Albany's second largest employer, with more than 2,200 civilians along with a complement of 600 marines, for an annual payroll totaling more than \$217 million. The base employs workers from the surrounding 21-county area. MCLB Albany represents a major economic impact on the Albany Dougherty County Area.

The primary mission of the base as a logistics, supply chain and repair facility results in MCLB Albany affecting less community impact than other military installations. There is not an airfield or weapons firing ranges that might cause noise or other impacts to the surrounding community. In many regards, MCLB Albany functions much like any typical large scale industrial and warehousing facility.

Facilities

The base features over 6.2 million square feet of facilities. The primary use is as a maintenance center providing rebuild and repair for ground-combat and combat-support equipment for the Marine Corps and other customers. Associated with the maintenance center operations are a vehicle test track and a pond for testing amphibious vehicles.

A series of 19 warehouses, measuring 5 acres of inside storage each, are used for equipment for the Marines as well as storage and distribution for all branches of the military. Additionally, there are a total of 2 million square yards of open storage area.

Commerce for the base is provided in the "Downtown" area consisting of a day care center, PX, commissary, recreation centers, gas station and other services. The administrative area at MCLB Albany hosts the offices, meeting and training areas for the base.

The base offers two areas of housing within its boundaries. Eight residential barracks buildings are offered for enlisted Marines. Two additional barracks buildings have been converted for uses as classroom space. A separate on-base residential neighborhood known as Hill Village provides 250 family housing units.

Like any small city, MCLB Albany has a comprehensive infrastructure network to serve the industrial, administrative and residential uses on the base. MCLB provides its own electric, natural gas, potable water and potable water wells, wastewater treatment, telephone, fiber optics services. Also, within the base are 50 miles of paved roads and 26 miles of railroads.

MCLB Albany has several large areas of open space. In the northeastern part of the base, the Indian Lake Wildlife Refuge is the center of a beautiful, undisturbed area. Among the open space, there are some areas of floodplain designated on the base, so not all vacant land is suitable for future development.

Inter-Agency Coordination

The Southwest Georgia Alliance for Progress has established a high level of community involvement and renewed partnership with MCLB Albany. Along with the State of Georgia, an economic development strategy is being developed including state and local support, tax incentives, infrastructure improvements, job training, and other programs.

Further evidence of community partnership occurred on June, 25 2004, when the Albany Area Chamber of Commerce and MCLB Albany came together in partnership after more than 50 years of creating jobs and bringing industry to the area. Mr. Tim Martin, CEO of the Chamber, and Colonel Joseph R. Wingard, Commanding Officer, signed a memorandum of understanding formally linking the two organizations. This relationship will assist in advancing the affordable cost of living and high level of community support in Albany. This support extends to the strategy of increasing the size of the base in terms of missions, organizations, and functions.

The Southwest Georgia Alliance for Progress proposed further detailed study on the issue of economic diversification for the region through a Request for Proposals using Office of Economic Opportunity (OEA) grant funds application, matched with local resources, through the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center.

Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC)

In 1990, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act was enacted. Pursuant to this Act, the US Department of Defense periodically conducts Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) evaluations. The fifth round of these evaluations was completed in 2005. As a result of the 2005 BRAC process, it was announced that the MCLB would remain open and would receive additional missions, organizations, and functions in the future.

The US Department of Defense routinely examines the long-term viability of its military installations through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process. It is important that relationships between the local economic development agencies and the MCLB remain active during the planning period with a focus on retaining the base and expanding its missions, organizations, and functions through future BRAC evaluations. Evaluation criteria which were applied during the 2005 BRAC process focused on efficiencies that could be achieved through share facilities.

ASSESSMENT

Trends and Opportunities

Service Delivery Strategies

Intergovernmental coordination between governments is not new for the City of Albany and Dougherty County. The feasibility of consolidation was discussed as early as the 1960's. In 1972, the City of Albany and Dougherty County entered into a series of cooperative agreements, which consolidated several service departments, such as Planning, Voter Registration and Tax services. These agreements have served as models for other cities and counties throughout the state as well as the U.S. Since that time, many services provided by the City of Albany and Dougherty County have been consolidated.

In 1997, the state passed the Service Delivery Strategy Act (HB 489). This law mandates the cooperation of local governments with regard to service delivery issues. Each county was required to initiate development of a service delivery strategy between July 1, 1997 and January 1, 1998. In 1999, the City of Albany and Dougherty County submitted a report that outlined cooperative agreements between the city and county for delivery of services for all departments with the exception of Personnel, Police Services, Finances, and Public Works.

In an effort to fully consolidate services, a joint resolution was passed in April 2003 that established the Albany-Dougherty County Governmental Study Commission for the purpose of providing an in depth study of the governments of the city and county and to give consideration to possible consolidation of services; delineation of functions; and the elimination or addition of services, departments, agencies or other entities. There are only the four departments mentioned above and three units in which cooperative agreements are not already in effect. The units are legislative (the Boards of Commissioners), managerial (administrators), and legal (attorneys).

In November 2004, a consulting firm, Del Delaper and Associates, was contracted by the Albany-Dougherty County Governmental Study Commission to conduct a study of the four departments and a scan of the three units of government. The study results were presented in December 2004 and the consulting firm concluded that because of substantial duplication of functions and costs that significant economies and efficiencies could be realized if the operations of the two governments were completely combined. It was therefore recommended that the process leading to the complete unification of the City and County governments be initiated.

The Albany-Dougherty County Governmental Charter Commission was charged with fashioning a charter to govern the consolidation of the City of Albany and Dougherty County. The majority of work on the charter is complete and the consolidation process is expected to move forward in 2006. The State Legislature and the voters of the City and County must approve the charter in order for consolidation to take place.

MCLB

Almost everything at MCLB Albany was Marine Corps-owned and operated until about twelve years ago. Over the past several years, however, the base has experienced a major shift toward partnerships with other branches of the military, civil service, and contract teams. This has resulted in a highly efficient logistics support capability available to the Department of Defense. As part of the recent BRAC process, it was announced that the MCLB would receive additional missions, organizations, and functions. This means the addition of operational capacity and personnel. This is a trend that should be supported in preparation for future BRAC evaluations. The initiatives which were formed to lobby for the retention of the MCLB should continue in preparation for the next BRAC so that the MCLB will be prepared to receive even more missions, organizations, and functions. This will improve the long-term viability of the base as a military installation.

Goals and Implementation

Every element of the Comprehensive Plan will benefit from the proposed consolidation of City/County government. Implementation of a consolidation plan is a goal of both City and County government. The recommendation for consolidation is repeated in the Community Facilities & Services Element.

Additionally, improved coordination between economic development agencies within the City/County and within the region is recommended in the Economic Development Element. An umbrella organization or a standing coordination committee would greatly improve the effectiveness of the many economic development initiatives that already exist. Particularly, better coordination is needed between the job training role and curricula of the Dougherty County School System, the colleges and universities, and industry retention and recruitment efforts.

Efforts to retain the MCLB should continue in preparation for future BRAC evaluations. The relationships and communications which have been forged between the local economic development agencies and the MCLB should continue to proactively address issues that would allow the future expansion of the base or the base's missions, organizations, and functions. Communications should also focus on the provision of off-base housing to accommodate base military and civilian personnel.

Summary of Current and Future Needs

The intergovernmental Coordination Element investigates issues that require the cooperation of multiple government agencies. Major intergovernmental coordination issues that exist in Albany-Dougherty County revolve around three major areas: City/County Government Consolidation, Regional Issues, and the MCLB. Major recommendations to address these needs are as follows:

- Pursue consolidation of the City of Albany and Dougherty County governments to streamline the provision of services and to reduce duplication of effort.
- Utilize the SWGRDC as a forum to address regional issues; particularly those common to both Albany-Dougherty County and Lee County.
- Anticipate issues that may arise from the next Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process and proactively address these to position the MCLB to receive additional missions, organizations, and functions and to ensure the long-term viability of the base as a military installation.
- Periodically update the Generalized Future Land Use Map and supporting policies in the Land Use Element to ensure appropriate buffers around the MCLB, potential expansion of the MCLB, and the reduction of land uses around the MCLB that may conflict with future missions, organizations, and functions of the base.