

GROWTH AND ECONOMY

Potential Vision Statement:

Athens-Clarke County will be the educational, cultural, medical, and economic hub of Northeast Georgia. Athens-Clarke County's strengths and qualities will make it a world-class center for research and innovation. Athens-Clarke County's workforce will be capable of supporting existing and new enterprises. Athens-Clarke County will have a resilient, diverse economic base that provides a stratified range of jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities, making Athens the best place in the world to live, work, and retire.

Potential Issues and Opportunities:

- A. Promote the music industry. The economic impact of the music industry has not been formally researched. Involve UGA in the impact study.
- B. Buy local campaign. How to support local business owners? Business to business sales. Local and state government purchase decisions.
- C. Establish a small business resource center that serves as a single-point of contact for small business needs. The Chamber of Commerce is a potential provider.
- D. Define guiding principles for business recruitment that reflect the economic goals of ACC citizens. Develop measurable data for a comprehensive evaluation of recruitment incentives.
- E. Establish formal procedures for the retention of businesses, including a focal point retention representative.
- F. Actively participate in regional planning in the counties of Northeast Georgia.
- G. Encourage the preservation and development of Downtown Athens as a vibrant center for all ages.
- H. Protect and enhance the historic heritage of the community as an economic development tool.
- I. Promote and support the growth of the "Arts Industry."
- J. Promote and partner with all of the Athens academic institutions to enhance business skills.
- K. Enhance cooperation with UGA to advance local and regional economic development.
- L. Promote and support the growth of local agriculture including buying locally grown food.
- M. Promote and support the growth of the Athens area health industry.
- N. Promote and support life sciences (biotech) research and technology.
- O. Measure the economic impacts of the local airport with the help of UGA. Investigate expansion of commercial flights.
- P. The community job structure needs workforce development coordination and a substantial increase in moderate income jobs.

Potential Policies:

1. Use the Comprehensive Plan's guiding housing strategies and policies as central tools for managing and controlling growth of Athens-Clarke County's population.

2. Limit the amount of urban development within Athens-Clarke County to areas that can be reasonably served by public infrastructure.
 3. Develop an economic development strategy that encourages high paying business and industry that employ and train a skilled labor force.
 4. Establish an atmosphere in which entrepreneurial enterprise is nurtured in Athens-Clarke County.
 5. Develop an economic development strategy that promotes Athens-Clarke County as the commercial, tourist, educational, medical, arts and recreation center of Northeast Georgia.
1. Develop incentives that encourage the arts to expand within Athens-Clarke County.
 2. Promote Athens-Clarke County as a retirement community.

The above information was taken from the 1998 Guiding Principles, Objectives, Strategies and Policies.