

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION WORKSHEET

(Draft 12/04/2006)

Learning(s) that this recommendation is addressing:

A key element in improving the quality of life for those in poverty is access to good paying jobs with benefits. New job creation is best achieved through a coordinated regional approach. The region has not consistently approached new job creation in this manner.

Committee Recommendation:

Athens-Clarke County should partner with other area counties to create a regional economic development entity responsible for proactively marketing the region to prospects interested in establishing new operations in the region.

Research/information used to validate this recommendation:

Discussions with local and statewide economic development professionals.
Review of selected new industry prospects who chose not to locate in Athens-Clarke County.
Observations of other areas where this strategy seems to be working well (i.e., "Research Triangle.")
Discussions with Board of the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center.

Additional information/research needed:

1. Does our region have a market niche?
2. What are possible niches that would be practical for this new entity to pursue? Can a niche be developed for bio-tech and "culture industries" or retirement industry?
3. Is there public and/or private sector support for a "focused business park" for the high tech or bio-tech industry?
4. Is the "retirement industry" an obvious opportunity? If so, do strategies need to be developed and implemented to address additional medical service needs and housing needs?
5. Detailed strategy/implementation documents from other areas who have implemented a regional economic program. Should especially address financial issues.
6. Are there other regions with similar characteristics to the Athens area where this is working?
7. How can the region address transportation needs as a part of a regional economic development strategy?

Input from groups/people to help clarify this recommendation:

- Drew Page, Athens-Clarke County Economic Development Foundation
- Georgia Power Company Economic Development staff.
- Georgia Department of Economic Development staff
- 316 Joint Bio-Tech Authority
- Oconee Co economic development representative
- Local medical service providers and persons familiar with communities who have successfully developed a strategy for attracting retirees.

Actions and Resources Necessary to Implement:

Political buy-in and funding from participating counties.

Financial support from private sector.

Anticipated Reactions -

- **In Support:** General public; some elected officials; ACCEDF; statewide economic developers; GA Department of Economic Development; University of Georgia; Athens Technical College.
- **In Opposition:** Some elected officials; some existing industry.