

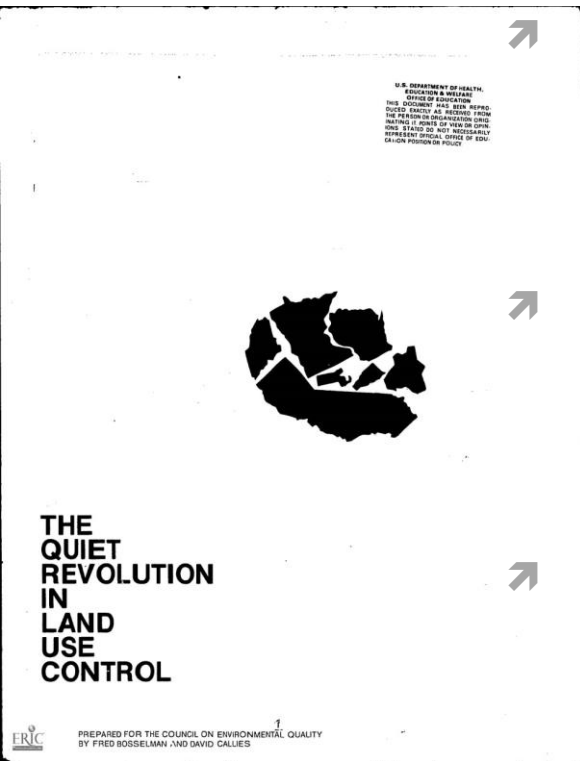
Reflections on Regional Planning in the USA: The Georgia Example

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Quiet Revolution: 45 Birthday



This country is in the midst of a revolution in the way we regulate the use of our land. It is a peaceful revolution, conducted entirely within the law. It is a quiet revolution and its supporters include both conservatives and liberals. It is a disorganized revolution, with no central cadre of leaders, but it's a revolution nonetheless.

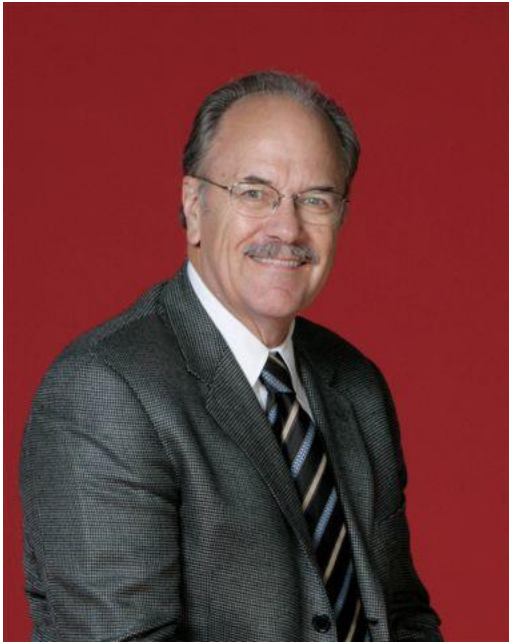


The ancient regime being overthrown is the feudal system under which the entire pattern of land development has been controlled by thousands of individual local governments, each seeking to maximize its tax base and minimize its social problems, caring less about what happens to all the others.



The tools of the revolution are new laws taking a wide variety of forms but each sharing a common theme--the need to provide some degree of state or regional participation in the major decisions that affect the use of our increasingly limited supply of land. The function of this report is to discuss and analyze these new laws and to try to predict and perhaps influence the course of this "quiet revolution."

Why the Quiet Revolution Failed: Are Metropolitan Governments and Regional Planning the Substitute?



- ➔ Nolon: “If local power is so resilient, then perhaps embracing local governments and urging them to collaborate with a national, state, and regional strategy that is designed to honor their concerns and is based on their participation would be a quicker route to a more comprehensive, less cacophonous approach to land use control.”

Metropolitan Governments

- Italy has recently amended its constitution to consolidate and absorb most of the 8,000+ cities and towns (each of which had a separate civic, economic and political center and agenda) into fourteen newly created “metropolitan cities” or “areas” that are centered on Italy’s current largest city centers that 1 in 3 Italians will now live in. The goal of the historic change was to encourage better coordination on urban problems that do not stop at city borders and elevate the authority of cities by cutting out the provincial layer of local government and giving that power to the new “metro areas”



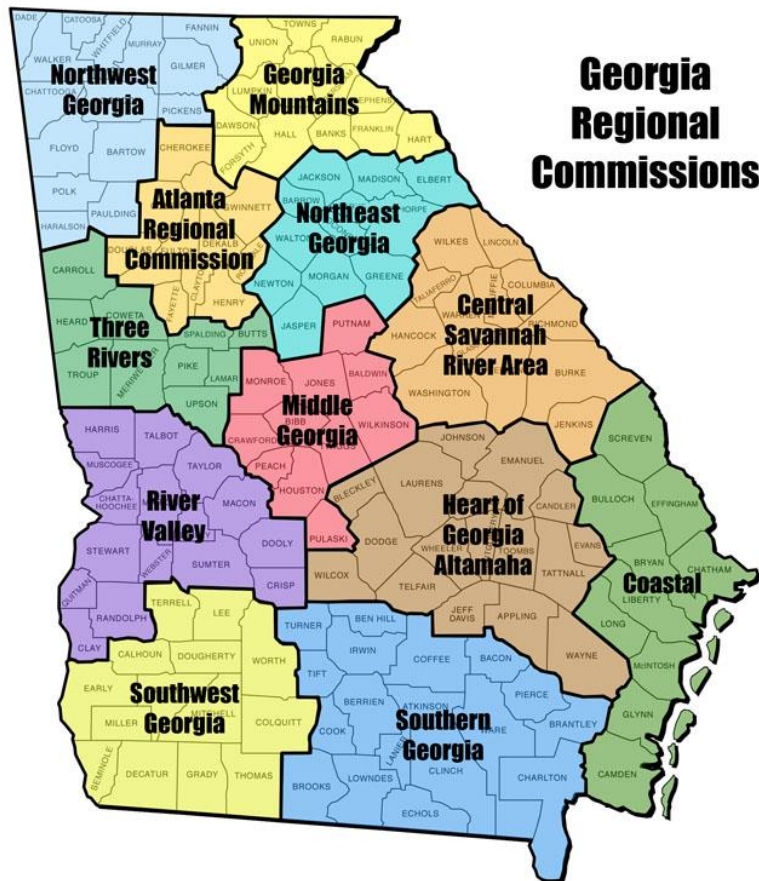
Milan,
Italy

Regional Planning in Georgia



- The state's regional commissions (RCs) serve Georgia's city and county governments by functioning as multicounty planning and development agencies.
- Their role as regional planning organizations (RPOs) is not, however, unique to Georgia. More than 500 RPOs exist in 47 states nationwide and serve 90 percent of the nation's counties and municipalities.
- Each of Georgia's twelve Regional Commissions develops a regionally-specific plan, which must be adopted by its Regional Council.
- ARC was founded in 1947 and is the oldest regional planning organization in country

Role of Regional Commissions



**Georgia
Regional
Commissions**

➔ Georgia's RCs are involved in a broad range of activities related to coordinated and comprehensive planning, land-use development, historic preservation, aging services, revolving loan funds, business retention and development, affordable housing, tourism, workforce development, coordinated transportation, geographic information systems, and disaster-mitigation planning

➔ In 2014 12 RCs covered the state

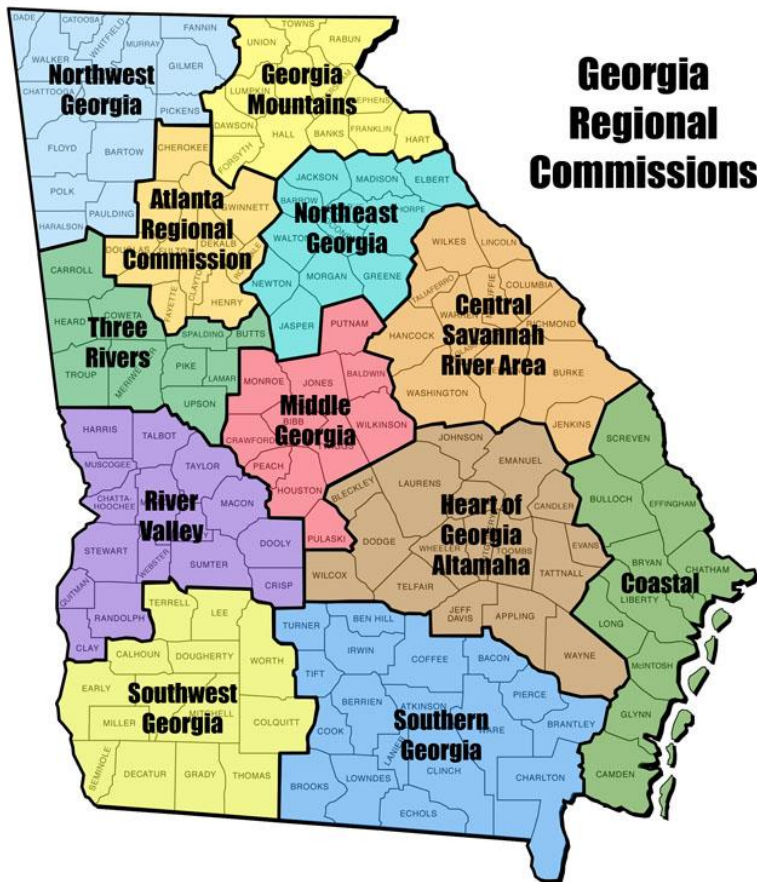
The Twelve Regional Commissions



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION



Role of Regional Commissions Cont...



Georgia Regional Commissions

- ➔ Staff members in each RC serve as resources for their respective local governments, area businesses, and communities.
- ➔ They provide expertise in federal and state programs and grants-in-aid, public policy and fiscal accountability, and technical assistance to local and state agencies.
- ➔ In many ways the RCs exist as extensions of every city hall and courthouse in the state, offering specialized staff assistance and services unavailable on a local level.

History and Organization Cont...



- An executive director oversees each RC, supervising staff and facility operations. The executive director reports to a governing regional council, comprising the following members as required by state law:
 - Chief elected official of each member county (county chairperson)
 - One mayor from each member county
 - Three residents from the region appointed by the governor
 - Two non-public members, one appointed by the lieutenant governor and a second by the Speaker of the House of Representatives
- Each RC council provides commission oversight and approval in work programs, annual budgets, and committee structure. The twelve RCs meet regularly throughout the year, as determined by each region.
- Statewide collaboration and coordination among the twelve RCs is provided through Georgia Association of Regional Commissions (or GARC). This organization serves to promote the RCs and represent their collective, regional interests before state and federal partners.

Funding and Programs

- The RCs depend on a variety of funding sources to support their regional services and operations.
- State and federal administrative contracts and per capita dues, which are paid annually by member local governments, are the primary source of funding.
- The revenue from these local annual dues is used to match state and federal administrative grants, leveraging larger sums with local sources.



These contracts programmatically enable partnerships with state and federal agencies that benefit local governments. Examples of these partnering agencies include:

Funding and Programs Cont...



➔ The RCs also offer other forms of specialized assistance to their local governments, such as geographical information systems mapping, meeting facilitation, and technical research for the preparation of special reports or studies.

➔ It is similarly not uncommon for RCs to respond to special requests or needs of member local governments when they are confronting unique issues. RCs, more broadly, offer a forum for “neutral ground,” where cities and counties convene to discuss regional issues and initiatives while determining policies for solutions.

➔ This collaborative function remains central to the agencies’ mission and has been unchanged since their inception.

Georgia Regional Transportation Authority

- GRTA works on behalf of the Governor to reduce congestion and improve mobility, and operates high-quality, efficient regional commuter services.
- Regional Commuter Transit: GRTA is proud to be a transit provider for all of metro Atlanta with its Xpress and vanpool services.
 - GRTA's role as a regional commuter transit provider began nine years ago with Xpress, a commuter coach service provided through a partnership between the state and metro Atlanta counties.



GRTA Cont...

- Developments of Regional Impact: Per state law (OCGA §50-32-14), GRTA is required to review all Developments of Regional Impact (DRIs) within its 13-county metro Atlanta jurisdiction.
 - GRTA's purpose is to evaluate the proposed development's effect on the surrounding transportation infrastructure and to identify options to mitigate current and future impacts to mobility using best-practice standards for transportation and land use.
- A DRI is a large, master-planned development that exceeds a threshold size and land use type determined by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.



Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District



- Since its creation in 2001, the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (Metro Water District) has implemented one of the most comprehensive regional water management plans in the country.
- It is staffed by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and includes 15 counties and 93 cities.
- It is the only major metropolitan area in the country with more than 100 jurisdictions implementing a long-term comprehensive water management program that is required and enforced

The Metro Water District establishes strategies for water supply and conservation, watershed and wastewater management. Their integrated and holistic approach to water resource management protects water quality, supply, and recreational values in and downstream of the region.

References

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