



REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

2018 ANNUAL UPDATE

DRAFT

June, 2018

INTRODUCTION

The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) is the regional planning and community development agency for a 13 county area in northeastern Georgia. To guide and coordinate special activities, and as directed by the Georgia Planning Act of 1989, the GMRC maintains a Regional Plan in accordance with the requirements established by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

This document represents the required annual update of the Regional Implementation Program, which consists of four components: 1) Report on the status of each local government that has not achieved the minimum performance standards and list the specific action steps taken to assist the local government.; 2) A Report of Accomplishments that have occurred in the past year; and 3) A new Work Program for the upcoming five-year time frame (optional).

MONITORING ACTIVITIES AND STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

Progress with the Regional Implementation Program as a whole is reviewed as part of the annual update process with the GMRC Council. However, monitoring and evaluation of progress with the Regional Work Program is performed regularly throughout the year. This involves several layers of status reports and meetings, and involved input from various committees, local government officials and other stakeholder groups.

- *Staff Project Reports* – Every month the full GMRC Council is provided monthly Staff Project Reports (SPRs), which identifies the status of each project. The SPRs also provide primary staff contact for each work item and a brief description of progress as needed. Copies of these are found with the minutes of each Council meeting packet.
- *End of Year Review* – The update process for the Regional Implementation Program features an additional overview and evaluation of the status of each project and feasibility of remaining work items. The results provide the first indication of how priorities may need adjusting going forward. This becomes the basis of the draft update and is circulated to local governments for review and comment, providing the first opportunity for nominating new projects for the coming year.
- *Correlating RC Programs* - Additional review of progress with the Regional Plan includes cross-over work with other regional reporting efforts and projects, including the Federally mandated GMRC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and all GMRC products for the Department of Transportation (GDOT).
- *Local Government Interaction* – Copies of the Regional Implementation Program were also distributed to local communities for review and input on the identified objectives and work items. No new regional projects were added as a result of this effort.
- *Public Hearing Opportunity* – A public hearing opportunity to discuss the draft Regional Implementation Program update was held at the GMRC office at 1 PM on June 29, 2018. There were no attendees.

EVALUATION - COORDINATED PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

As part of the State's regional planning standards the GMRC must establish two achievement thresholds for local governments. These standards, rated as Minimum and Excellence Standards, identify specific ordinances, programs, or requirements that may be implemented by local governments in order to realize the Regional Vision and/or address the Regional Issues and Opportunities. Going forward these performance measures will be used to help a) evaluate the effectiveness of the GMRC's Regional Plan implementation efforts, and b) to help identify the various levels of planning and community development desired by the local communities.

In establishing these standards for the GMRC, the approach was to create a framework that works with the current level of planning requirements expected of local governments, then encouraging each community to pursue their own higher standards for community development. In this regard the Minimum is something every local government can readily achieve by simply maintaining their existing level of obligations, and for which the GMRC is available to assist. To achieve the Excellence Standard communities must then employ/adopt a certain volume of policies and practices from the list included here. Communities achieving the Excellence Standard will be eligible for extra assistance from the GMRC and DCA.

Minimum Standard

Items included here are considered essential activities for local governments to undertake for achieving their own planning ambitions and for consistency with the regional plan. The intent is to ensure a consistent and predictable basic level of local requirements across the region. All local governments in the region will be expected to attain the Minimum Standard within three years of adoption of the regional plan, or risk losing Qualified Local Government status.

- Maintain a local Comprehensive Plan, approved by DCA and adopted by the local government
- Maintain and be compliant with all necessary Service Delivery Strategies
- Maintain and participate in a local Hazard Mitigation Strategy
- Maintain and participate in a Local Emergency Operations/Response Plan
- Maintain compliance with State requirements for solid waste management and reporting
- Adopt the necessary minimum rules established by the DNR Part V Environmental Planning Criteria

Excellence Standard

The Excellence Standard consists of 66 policies/activities considered desirable for local governments to undertake for achieving their own planning aspirations and for consistency with the regional plan. The intent is to lay out a menu of recommended best practices for local governments to select for implementation. Each recommended best practice a local government implements will count toward achieving the Excellence Standard threshold established by the Department. The Excellence Standard will be awarded to any community employing any 20 of the standards listed, with at least 1 standard in each of the 7 elements. *(See the GMRC Regional Plan for a full list of all eligible items)*

The following governments have not achieved, or have temporarily lost, the regional commission’s established regional plan minimum performance standards as of June 2018:

GOVERNMENT	MINIMUM PERFORMANCE STANDARD(S) NOT MET	SPECIFIC ACTION STEPS TAKEN, OR NEEARC, TO ASSIST GOVERNMENT
City of Carnesville	QLG Status	Needs to adopt Comp Plan
Town of Avalon	QLG Status	Needs to adopt Comp Plan
City of Martin	QLG Status	Needs to adopt Comp Plan
City of Gillsville	QLG Status	Needs Comp Plan update
Rabun County	QLG Status	Needs SDS update
City of Clayton	QLG Status	Needs SDS update
City of Dillard	QLG Status	Needs SDS update
City of Mountain City	QLG Status	Needs SDS update
City of Sky Valley	QLG Status	Needs SDS update
Town of Tiger	QLG Status	Needs SDS update

Results of Performance Evaluation

- The City of Carnesville participated in the Franklin County Joint Comprehensive Plan update in 2014 which was reviewed and approved by DCA. However, the City did not submit an adoption resolution and there has been some confusion over if the plan was adopted at all. The City is searching through archived Council meeting minutes to confirm the status of any adoption and will produce any materials that will aid in the resolution of the matter. If no record of adoption is found the City can pursue a renewed State submittal and review process ahead of their next full update in 2019.
- The Cities of Avalon and Martin completed their comprehensive plan update as part of the Stephens County Joint Comprehensive Plan that was approved by DCA over 2017/2018. The Cities merely need to follow through with adoption and submit resolutions of such to the GMRC. Both cities have been advised of the process and supplied with template resolutions, with adoptions expected by the end of July.
- The City of Gillsville last updated their plan in 2007 and did not revisit the document in 2012 due to a variety of factors. Gillsville is a small community that historically did not pursue a lot of State funding at the time and focused on other priorities. They have been advised of the benefits of comprehensive planning and the new mayor and Council have been instructed on the updated local planning standards. They are expected to complete a comprehensive plan in 2018, and the GMRC will assist to the best extent possible.
- Rabun County has attempted to update to their Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) since 2016, however multiple governments involved are in dispute over several elements. As

of June, 2018, this matter is scheduled for upcoming mediation with the County and the Cities of Clayton and Sky Valley coordinating the process. All parties involved are aware of the impact of this delay on their QLG status. Once the County and municipalities resolve their dispute and the SDS is approved the QLG status for all communities will be restored.

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GMRC 2018 REGIONAL WORK PROGRAM / REPORT OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
	<i>Priority: To promote and coordinate land use planning and management that supports the other goals and ambitions for the region.</i>						
	LU1: Promote development that maximizes existing utilities and infrastructure.	Encourage local plans to feature nodal development that prioritizes utility capacity	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	-	Program policy	Exploring new tool for calculating development impact costs
	LU2: Support preservation and expansion of historic town centers.	Continue providing urban redevelopment plans	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	1-5 yrs. \$50,000	6-10 yrs. \$50,000	-	Updating plans for Dawsonville and Clarkesville
	LU3: Promote coordinated land use management along critical arterials, supporting both local needs and the demands of through traffic critical for tourism and industry.	Develop corridor specific studies along key highways (identified in Regional Plan)	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	6-8 yrs. \$50,000	-	Incorporating info from studies of 365/441 and GA 17 into local plans
	LU4: Promote neighborhood scale planning.	Encourage, and demonstrate, the practice of small-area studies	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	-	Program policy	-
	LU5: Support efforts that preserve rural and agricultural uses where desired.	Encourage adoption of conservation design standards and conservation easements	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	1-3 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	Developed template conservation design ordinance; Surveying local practices
	LU6: Support advanced development practices within the metropolitan areas.	Inventory metropolitan communities for development trends and needs	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	2-4 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
	LU7: Promote agribusiness in a responsible manner that is sensitive to the scale and capacity of infrastructure and integrates surrounding residential and commercial areas.	Encourage adoption of conservation design standards and conservation easements	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	1-3 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	Developed template conservation design ordinance; Surveying local practices
		Survey local agribusinesses for needs and priorities	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	4-6 yrs. \$10,000	-	-
Priority: To conserve, protect and promote the environmental, natural and cultural resources of the region.							
	NR1: Promote conservation design ideas and other best management practices for new development.	Encourage adoption of conservation design standards and conservation easements	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	1-3 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	Developed template conservation design ordinance; Surveying local practices
	NR2: Improve and promote the knowledge of existing historic resources and preservation programs.	Update NHARGIS and regional inventory; Share with communities	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	2-4 yrs. \$50,000	-	-	Continuing to update GIS and recorded data of local resources
	NR3: Support efforts to implement the State's River Basin Management Plans.	Continue to work with/for the 3 Water Planning Councils	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	-	Program policy	GMRC participated in 10 council meetings and assisted with 2 watershed projects
	NR4: Promote tighter coordination between land use planning and water supply management.	Develop tool for tracking impact of new development on local water supplies	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	-	4-6 yrs. \$10,000	-	-

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Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
Priority: Enhance all segments of transportation networks in the region to promote economic development and personal safety.						
CFS1: Utilize existing inventories of current roadways, air, and rail needs to support economic development.	Develop freight traffic study	GDOT, Local Govts.	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	-
CFS2: Improve current transit, local public transportation systems, and encourage green methods of transportation.	Ensure all cities have pedestrian accessibility plans	GDOT, Local Govts.	-	8-10 yrs. \$50,000	-	Developing template plan to assess sidewalk and trail needs
Priority: Provide adequate water supply and promote conservation.						
CFS3: Support the development of water supply to ensure stable infrastructural support for businesses and residents.	Develop inventory of all potential new water sources in the region	DNR, Local Govts., Local Authorities	-	6-8 yrs. \$25,000	-	-
CFS4: Improve water quality and wastewater planning to ensure stable infrastructural support for businesses and residents.	Assist water planning councils with routine survey of local best practices	DNR, Local Govts., Local Authorities	-	-	Program policy	-
Priority: Ensure new telecommunication networks for neeARC accessibility and reliability.						
CFS5: Prepare to meet industry and business telecommunication needs by assisting with fiber optic network development.	Develop template material for assessing broadband capacity in local plans	Local Govts., Local Authorities	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Drafting template material for Dawson, Banks, and Habersham plan updates

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
Priority: To foster community-based wellness initiatives and increase the availability of affordable high-quality health care services.							
	CFS6: Encourage and support multi-jurisdictional approaches to provide health services for economic development purposes.	Develop template material for including wellness in local plans	Local Govts., Local Authorities	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Drafting template material for Dawson plan update
	CFS7: Support efforts to improve community-based prevention and wellness.	Develop template material for including wellness in local plans	Local Govts., Local Authorities	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Drafting template material for Dawson plan update
	CFS8: Promote and support the use of health information technology (HIT).	Use CEDS to emphasize HIT benefits and needs	Local Govts., Local medical care providers	-	-	Program policy	-
Priority: Provide adequate waste management for domestic and industrial usage.							
	CFS9: Improve waste management planning to ensure availability for current and future economic growth.	Develop waste mgmt. component for next regional plan update	DNR, DCA, Local Govts.	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Developing template material
Priority: Ensure adequate energy supplies for the region and promote environmental standards in all infrastructures.							
	CFS10: Support the development of low-cost energy and maintain energy reliability.	With utility providers, monitor and promote local green initiatives	Local Govts., Utility providers	-	-	Program policy	-
	CFS11: Promote environmental standards in the development of businesses and industries.	Ensure local governments are aware of, and promote, LEED/green bldg. standards	Local Govts., Utility providers	-	-	Program policy	-

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
<i>Priority: Promote awareness of the Georgia Mountains Region as a tourism destination by fostering viable and sustainable initiatives.</i>							
	ED1: Update and maintain a master database of tourism assets in the Georgia Mountains Region.	Review/ Update existing datasets with GA DED	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1 yr \$1,000	-	-	-
	ED2: Develop promotional and educational materials for the Georgia Mountains Region.	Include promotional section in new GMRC web site	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1 yr \$5,000	-	-	Collecting information for new web site to launch in fall 2018
	ED3: Foster regional partnerships to create and grow tourism product(s).	Develop a regional tourism forum w/ GA DED	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-
	ED4: Improve infrastructure that supports tourism development and improvement of signage for tourism assets.	Identify and assess conditions of roadways based on tourism impact	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	Collecting data for draft map of primary tourist routes
	ED5: Advocate for more funding related to tourism product development.	Inventory funding for local tourism programs	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	3-6 yrs. \$5,000	-	-

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
Priority: Attract film industry to the region.							
	ED6: Work to ensure that all counties in the Georgia Mountains Region are Camera Ready Certified.	Survey Counties for knowledge of program; Identify gaps	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	Distributing material about certification program
	ED7: Create a business friendly environment which is conducive to the film industry.	Establish local contact list for use by film industry	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-2 yrs. \$2,000	-	-	-
Priority: To focus on creating new small, high-growth companies in the Georgia Mountains Region.							
	ED8: Provide the region's residents with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start a new business.	Develop an entrepreneurship training program for teachers	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	4-7 yrs. \$50,000	-	-
	ED9: Better connect venture capital, investors, and entrepreneurs within the Georgia Mountains Region.	Create a GMRC entrepreneurship network; Promote with lenders and local Chambers	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	-
	ED10: Improve access to capital for startup and small businesses.						
	ED11: Promote successful entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial practices in the region.						

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Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
Priority: To foster sustainable agriculture by creating and/or retaining jobs and private investment within the agricultural sector and by adding value and developing new products and niche markets.						
ED12: Encourage and support the development of community supported agricultural cooperatives to sustain small and mid-sized producers.	Provide models of, and contact info for, existing cooperatives	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	2-4 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-
ED13: Expand opportunities for production based on the byproducts of value-added processing.	TBD	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	-	-	-
ED14: Expand and upgrade infrastructure to support farms.	Identify and assess conditions of roadways based on agribusiness impact	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	Collecting data for draft map of primary industry routes
ED15: Support efforts to expand agri-tourism in the region.	Develop a regional tourism forum w/ GA DED	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-2 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-
ED16: Support the region's wine industry by incentivizing and supporting area growers.	Continue to collect and promote data about local industry to local and State officials	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	-	Program policy	-

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
Priority: Increase expansion and retention of the region's existing businesses and industries.							
	ED17: Promote regional leadership and collaboration.	Develop inventory of leadership programs available to area residents/ businesses	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	2-4 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-
	ED18: Invest in the beautification and revitalization of downtowns.	Continue providing urban redevelopment plans	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-5 yrs. \$50,000	6-10 yrs. \$50,000	-	Updating plans for Dawsonville and Clarkesville
	ED19: Support new efforts for existing business and industry.	Work with local Chambers and dev. authorities to assist efforts to grow local business	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	-	Program policy	-
	ED20: Provide the Region's residents with innovative, educational resources to help them learn technical and financial resources to expand.	Work directly with the businesses to identify lack of skills levels needed for their business;	DOL, ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	Implementing <i>High Demand Career Initiative</i> ; Set up one-stop office of partner programs
Priority: Devote local resources to the recruitment of new industry and businesses in the Georgia Mountains region.							
	ED20: Assess local resources strengths and weaknesses to develop a list of feasible target industries.	Create/Update inventory of regional assets and economic base industries	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	4-6 yrs. \$10,000	-	-
	ED21: Work with supplier networks both up and down stream to develop list of target industries.	Create list of local businesses' imports	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	6-8 yrs. \$10,000	-	-

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	Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
	ED22: Promote regional events to attract new business, industry leaders and state partners.	Continue to inventory and promote regional events	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	-	Program policy	Regularly collect info on local events and share via web, email, and GMRC events
	ED23: Promote a regional marketing effort of regional assets.	Develop Regional Fact Sheet/ web site targeted for econ. development	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	6-7 yrs. TBD	-	-
	ED24: Develop an inventory of available sites in the region	Collect/ develop GIS dataset of available industrial sites; Place on web	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	-	3-6 yrs. \$15,000	-	-
Priority: Ensure that every community has a strategy and resources in place that specifically directs how to respond in economic recessions and/or when major employment centers are lost.							
	ED25: Ensure all communities have access to, and are aware of, resources providing economic forecasts	Update catalog of resource programs; Distribute to local econ. developers	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. TBD	-	-	Researching industry specific forecasts; Surveying local economic developers
	ED26: Establish a chain of communication regarding economic concerns and identify resources, providers and services for implementing economic crisis response actions.	Ensure CEDS has complete and updated issues and priorities for the regional businesses	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Working with CEDS committee to streamline promotion of priorities & issues
	ED27: Conduct a forum or concentrated assessment of the economic health and needs of the region's most prominent	Develop regional industrial profile	ARC, Local Govts., Local Chambers & ED authorities	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	-

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Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
PRIORITY: To attract and retain business and industry by promoting education and workforce development.						
WD1: Lower the high school dropout rate.	Start a school mentor / Junior Achievement program in every junior high and high school in the region	DOL, ARC, TCSG	-	-	Policy program	
WD2: Retain graduates and the educated workforce within the region.	Implement program promoting Career Days in primary and secondary schools	DOL, ARC, TCSG	3-5 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	
WD3: Partner with local schools, businesses/ industries, and civic organizations to promote the importance of an educated workforce.	Work directly with the businesses to identify lack of skills levels needed for their business;	DOL, ARC, TCSG	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	Implementing <i>High Demand Career Initiative</i> ; Set up one-stop office of partner programs
WD4: Increase basic and technical skills.	Work with high schools and technical colleges to prepare individuals in the needed skill sets	DOL, ARC, TCSG	-	-	Policy program	Implementing <i>High Demand Career Initiative</i> ; Set up one-stop office of partner programs
WD5: Help alleviate unemployment and underemployment in the Region.	Develop program linking local schools with area Technical Colleges	DOL, ARC, TCSG	3-5 yrs. \$10,000	-	-	Maintaining Career Coach tours and emergency response program
WD6: Address lack of family support.	TBD	DOL, ARC, TCSG	-	-	-	-
Strategy WD7: Address challenges facing the unemployable citizens.	Further develop Apprenticeship programs	DOL, ARC, TCSG	-	2-6 yrs. \$40,000	-	43 apprenticeships in '17

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Priority/ Strategy	Action	Partners	Short-Term (1-5 yrs)	Long-Term (6-10 yrs)	Ongoing	Accomplishments
<i>PRIORITY: Facilitate the availability and accessibility of affordable housing and facilitate coordination of housing development with planning for infrastructure and overall community development for long-term sustainability, in every community in the region.</i>						
H1: Encourage local governments to examine inclusionary zoning measures to effectively plan for the present and future housing needs of the regional workforce.	Provide template resources for assessing development policies	DCA, Local Govts., Financial institutions	3-5 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	-
H2: To inform local leaders and citizens on available housing programs and services.	Ensure local govts. Have knowledge of programs and communication strategy	DCA, Local Govts.	-	6-8 yrs.	-	-
H3: Develop a regional strategic housing plan.	Development of GMRC Regional Plan	DCA, Local Govts.	1-3 yrs. \$5,000	-	-	Housing portion of Regional Plan under development
<i>PRIORITY: Encourage disaster resiliency, extending beyond emergency responsiveness to planning and organizing in advance to address these vulnerabilities, and to enable rebuilding and recovery afterwards in ways that offer healthier, sustainable communities, and more robust regional economies.</i>						
DM1: Creation of a Regional Pre-Disaster Mitigation Plan.	Development of GMRC Hazard Mitigation Plan	GEMA, FEMA	1-3 yrs. \$20,000	-	-	Regional HMP In Progress
DM2: Create public awareness of plan/community outreach.	Ensure every community has an HMP promulgation strategy	GEMA, Local Govts.	-	6-7 yrs.	-	-
DM3: Establish a regional post-disaster response framework.	Ensure every community has co-op agreements in place	GEMA, FEMA, Local Govts.	-	10 yrs.	-	-

Appendix – Summary of input from public hearing opportunity



Screen capture of draft document posted on the GMRC web site for public review.