

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Local Government Chief Elected Officials

FROM: Christopher Nunn, Commissioner *CN*

DATE: July 2, 2018

SUBJECT: Proposed Revisions to the Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning

Earlier this year the Georgia General Assembly amended the provisions of the Georgia Planning Act affecting local comprehensive planning. This action along with the others contained in the “Achieving Connectivity Everywhere (ACE) Act” is aimed at facilitating the enhancement and extension of high-speed internet infrastructure—particularly in areas of the state that currently lack access to the vast resources that such infrastructure provides.

In collaboration with our partners at the Georgia Technology Authority (GTA), the Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD), the OneGeorgia Authority, and others, we plan to roll out a series of programs and initiatives aimed at capturing and delivering the community improvement and empowerment potential that reliable, high-speed internet access can provide to even the most difficult-to-serve citizens, schools, and businesses. As Georgia continues to move forward into the new century, the importance of reliable access to a speedy internet connection cannot be overestimated. Simply put, unserved and underserved areas of Georgia will not remain economically competitive in the long-term. The need to invest in internet infrastructure, today, is not unlike the need our grandfathers faced when confronted with the need to facilitate rural electrification one hundred years ago. We and our state agency partners have been charged with ensuring that local governments are planning for this critical, potentially catalytic infrastructure.

The first step in that process is providing a mechanism to prompt Georgia cities and counties to incorporate those thought processes into their local plans. The “Ace” Act requires all local governments to incorporate the “promotion of the deployment of broadband internet services” into their local plan. DCA has developed a draft of revised Minimum Standards for Local Comprehensive Planning that it believes accomplishes that objective.

State law (Georgia Administrative Procedures Act O.C.G.A. §50-13-1, et seq.) provides an opportunity for you to provide input on these draft rules or request changes prior to adoption by the Board of Community Affairs. To assist you with this, I have attached a synopsis of the proposed amendments as well as a "Notice of Public Hearing and Intent to Adopt" these proposed changes. A clickable link to the draft standards has been included in each of the attached documents. You can submit your comments in writing to the address below, or you can attend one of the public hearings.

Please note that the Board of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs intends to act on the proposed amended standards at its meeting on August 8, 2018, in the Boardroom of the Department of Community Affairs, 60 Executive Park South, N.E., Atlanta, Georgia 30329. If adopted by the Board of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the revised rules will become effective on October 1, 2018.

If you have any questions, need additional information, or wish to submit comments on the rules, please contact:

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