



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

## STRATEGIC PLAN

# “Regional Impact – Local Relevance”

*As Adopted by the ARC Board of Commissioners on June 22, 2011*

40 Courtland Street, NE, Atlanta, GA 30303

404.463.3100 FAX: 404.463.3105 [www.atlantaregional.com](http://www.atlantaregional.com)

# CONTENTS

---

Foreword .....	1
Introduction .....	2
Planning Process .....	2
Elements of a Strategic Plan .....	3
Stakeholders .....	3
Purpose .....	4
Vision .....	4
Mission.....	4
Values .....	5
Core Policies.....	6
Objectives .....	7
Objective 1: Leadership .....	8
Objective 2: Market Impact .....	9
Objective 3: Ensure Sustainability .....	10
Objective 4: Impact and Implementation.....	11
Objective 5: Maximize Organization.....	12
Strategic Planning Process.....	i
Types of Boards .....	ii
Board Roles and Responsibilities .....	iii
Member Roles and Responsibilities.....	iv
Board Principles of Engagement.....	vi

# FOREWORD

---

ARC Colleagues:

Since 1947, ARC and its predecessor agencies have developed a framework of plans and programs to ensure the Atlanta region's positive development and quality of life. From creating the first parallel runway plan in the U.S., which led to the busiest airport in the world...to protecting the region's major water source, the Chattahoochee River, regional initiatives have shaped our present and will continue to mold our future.

It is therefore critical that ARC embrace its own internal strategic plan to ensure focus and concerted effort towards achieving critical, regional objectives. We are accountable to a broad set of stakeholders for regionally enhancing plans and programs, and their ultimate results. It is our commitment to achieve "Regional Impact and Local Relevance." It is our responsibility and stated mission to be the leader on key regional issues. We will pursue a policy requiring strategic board engagement, as well as a focus on our customer expectation levels.

This ARC Strategic Plan will serve as a consistent framework, to guide both current and future board members and staff in focusing resources and efforts most efficiently on the region's most critical needs. This plan is measurable and one that must grow and change as we work together towards implementation and the new challenges and opportunities ahead.

I commend the work of the ARC Strategic Planning Committee and look forward to working with each of you to achieve the vision this represents, for ARC and for our region.



Tad Leithead  
Chairman  
Atlanta Regional Commission

## PLANNING PROCESS

Several Task Forces worked throughout the summer and fall of 2010 to develop a new mission and vision for the organization, establish roles and responsibilities for Board members, restructure committees and set a framework for implementation. Mission, vision and committee structure were adopted in October 2010 by the full Commission.

The Commission Chairman appointed a Task Force to work with the ARC Executive Director and the External Affairs Manager to prepare this strategic plan. This plan includes policies, values, objectives and strategies that support the new mission and vision. The process will include a review of the organizational structure and will determine a leadership profile for the organization's senior staff.

ARC staff will be charged to develop action items and timelines to achieve the strategies and objectives.

The scope of this plan is approximately five years, but the Atlanta Regional Commission, both staff and board, will regularly review and update this strategic plan.

# INTRODUCTION

---

This plan begins by addressing high-level strategic elements affecting the Atlanta Regional Commission. (Purpose, Values, Vision and Mission). The plan then addresses more specific elements within the organization (Objectives and Strategies). The following table presents the hierarchy and definitions of the strategic elements utilized in this plan. Action items will be addressed in a separate document.

<i>ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGIC PLAN</i>	
Purpose	<b>Why</b> an organization exists
Vision	<b>Where</b> the organization wants to be in the future
Mission	<b>Who</b> we are, what we do best
Values	The <b>culture</b> , beliefs, characteristics and focus of an organization
Policies	The core principles and criteria by which the organization sets its <b>direction</b> and makes <b>decisions</b>
Objectives	<b>What</b> an organization needs to achieve its vision
Strategies	<b>How</b> the objectives will be achieved
* Action items will be listed in a separate planning document.	

## STAKEHOLDERS

The audience for this strategic plan is ARC's stakeholders. They include, but are not limited to:

- Atlanta Regional Commission board and staff
- Local county and municipal governments
- Regional partners
- State legislators and the Governor
- Residents of the region

# PURPOSE, VISION AND MISSION

---

## PURPOSE

*To serve the citizens of the region, local governments and the broader regional community by providing services, support and leadership on issues that cross jurisdictional lines and require comprehensive regional solutions.*

## VISION

*The Atlanta Regional Commission is the Regional Leader in identifying Values, developing Policies and executing Plans that matter to residents and communities, ensure Competitive Advantage and preserve long-term Sustainability and Livability.*

## MISSION

*The Atlanta Regional Commission will demonstrate professional and forward-looking leadership to ensure sustainable growth, livability and competitive advantage by focusing and balancing Environmental Responsibility, Economic Growth and Social Needs.*

# VALUES

---

*The culture, beliefs and characteristics of the Atlanta Regional Commission:*

## **Regional Leadership**

We exhibit, build and foster regional leadership to address and act on critical challenges and opportunities.

## **Creative Regional Solutions**

We anticipate challenges and develop creative solutions based on professional knowledge, public involvement and collaboration with our partners.

## **Public Service**

We are accountable to our stakeholders, try to exceed their expectations and exhibit the highest standard of ethical conduct.

## **Collaborative Teamwork**

We work with each other, with partners and with residents of the region in a concerted effort to build the highest quality of life for the metropolitan region.

## **Continuous Learning**

We constantly seek new information, knowledge and skills to better serve the Atlanta region.

# CORE POLICIES

---

*The core principles and criteria by which the Atlanta Regional Commission sets its direction and makes its decisions:*

**Is Board Led—Team Driven:** The Board sets policies and priorities and the staff manages the organization to achieve the overall objectives.

**Is Proactive:** ARC Identifies and researches issues relevant to the region’s communities, now and in the future; brings innovative approaches and state of the art technology to all regional strategies; achieves results; and implements plans.

**Asserts Leadership:** ARC adopts thoughtful positions on issues of importance to the region’s competitiveness, health and vitality.

**Takes Risks:** ARC remains flexible and pursues with speed and deliberation, multiple solutions to the region’s challenges.

**Creates a Common Agenda:** ARC builds consensus among the region’s leaders, across jurisdictions and among local partners.

**Validates Local Relevance:** ARC maximizes opportunities, harnesses resources and develops adaptable models to provide optimal value to and meet the needs of the region’s communities.

**Looks to the Future:** ARC anticipates the future critical needs and issues of the region’s residents.

# OBJECTIVES

---

*What ARC needs to do to achieve its vision:*

1. Build regional leadership among the Board and the staff to achieve Regional Impact – Local Relevance.
2. Advocate ARC’s positive impact to local customers, regional, state and federal partners.
3. Ensure sustainability\* and livability by addressing regional priorities in aging, transportation, development patterns and water, and by advancing the recommendations of “*Fifty Forward*”.
4. Measure and report the impact and results of ARC’s planning activities and programs.
5. Maximize the organization’s effectiveness, growth opportunities and flexibility.

\*sustainability=a community that can accommodate the needs of all its constituents in a manner that is fiscally sound, environmentally responsible and leaves the community in a better condition for future generations.

# OBJECTIVE 1: LEADERSHIP

---

*Build regional leadership among the board and the staff.*

## **STRATEGIES**

---

- 1-1** Implement and institutionalize the roles, responsibilities and activities of a strategic board and its members.
- 1-2** Recruit and develop staff with the expertise and the skills to serve as thought leaders, consensus builders and valuable resources within the regional community.
- 1-3** Create consensus on and advocate for key regional policy issues.
- 1-4** Foster and sustain effective relationships with key stakeholders including: the federal government, the State legislature, Governor’s office, ACCG, GMA GDOT, GRTA, business and advocacy organizations.
- 1-5** Communicate the “value proposition” of all ARC policies and programs.

## OBJECTIVE 2: MARKET IMPACT

---

*Advocate ARC's positive impact to local customers, regional, state and federal partners.*

### STRATEGIES

---

- 2-1 Define and focus activities on local relevance.
- 2-2 Initiate and track customer satisfaction measurements using innovative technologies.
- 2-3 Establish and measure a rigorous plan for continuous outreach to local governments.
- 2-4 Establish and formalize partnerships with broad spectrum of community organizations.

## OBJECTIVE 3: ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

---

*Ensure sustainability\* and livability by addressing regional priorities in aging, transportation, development patterns and water, and by advancing the recommendations of “Fifty Forward”.*

### STRATEGIES

---

- 3-1 Track and measure the outcomes of PLAN 2040.
- 3-2 Pursue all avenues to maintain adequate current and future water quality and supply for the region.
- 3-3 Scale a comprehensive approach to the development of Lifelong Communities in the region’s jurisdictions.
- 3-4 Prioritize and develop action plans for “Fifty Forward” recommendations.
- 3-5 Pursue non-traditional partners, funding and activities to meet the region’s needs.

\*sustainability=a community that can accommodate the needs of all its constituents in a manner that is fiscally sound, environmentally responsible and leaves the community in a better condition for future generations.

# OBJECTIVE 4: IMPACT AND IMPLEMENTATION

---

*Measure and report the impact and results of ARC's planning activities and programs.*

## STRATEGIES

---

- 4-1 Incorporate results/recommendations of the Implementation Task Force.
- 4-2 Track and ensure that all ARC products and services are delivered to a gold standard: on time and complete.
- 4-3 Evaluate and address what ARC is allowed to do, but is not currently doing; wants to do, but is not currently allowed to do; is currently doing, but at which it needs to be more effective.

# OBJECTIVE 5: MAXIMIZE ORGANIZATION

---

*Maximize the organization's effectiveness, growth opportunities and flexibility.*

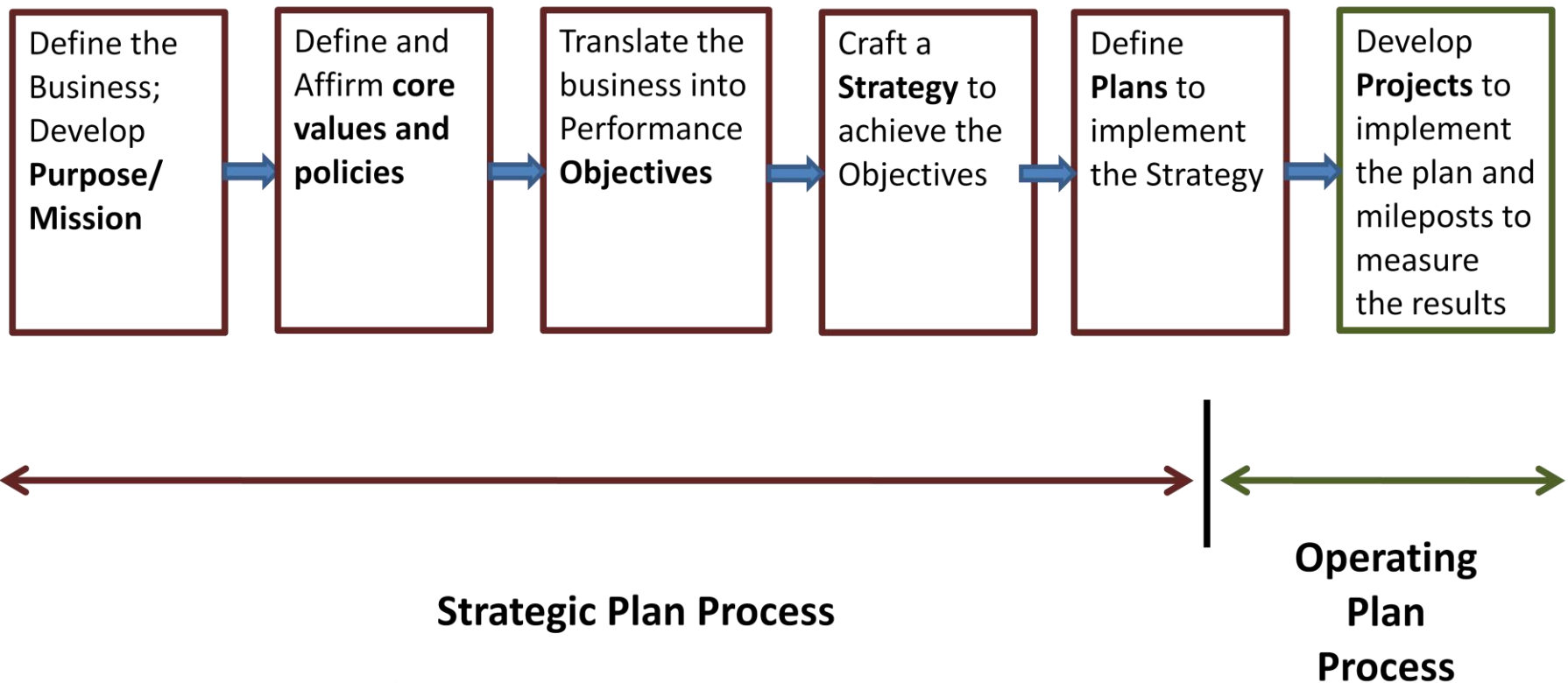
## STRATEGIES

---

- 5-1 Maintain a balanced budget and solid financial base.
- 5-2 Evaluate internal management and leadership and establish succession plans.
- 5-3 Align performance measure and personnel management processes with mission, vision and strategic plan.
- 5-4 Expand and measure cross-division work to maximize impact of ARC's programs, plans and policies.

The diagram below details the process adopted by the 2011 ARC Strategic Planning Committee.

## Strategic Plan to Operating Plan



# APPENDIX

*This chart was reviewed first during the Board’s 2005 Retreat. At that Retreat, the Board decided to become a Strategic Board.*

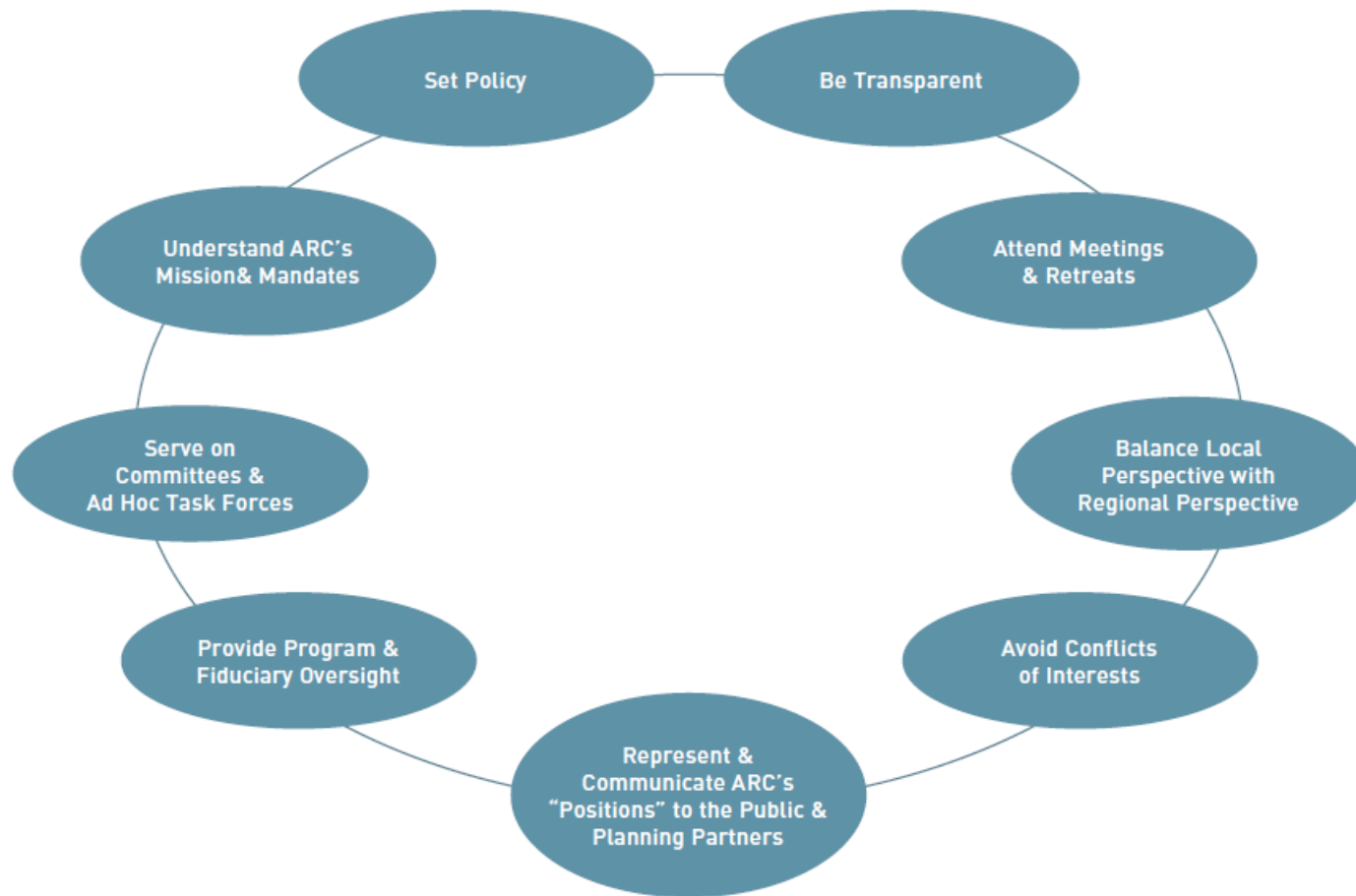
## TYPES OF BOARDS

<b>Type</b>	<b>Advisory</b>	<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Managing</b>	<b>Administrative</b>
<b>Focus</b>	Consultative	Strategic Planning and Oversight	Monitors Operational Performance	Participates in Tactical Execution
<b>Role of Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves As A Sounding Board</li> <li>• Offers Counsel</li> <li>• Makes Recommendations</li> <li>• Provides Suggestions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shapes Mission</li> <li>• Establishes Strategy</li> <li>• Determines Policy</li> <li>• Sets Priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes Objectives and Measures</li> <li>• Monitors Progress</li> <li>• Intervenes When Performance Is In Jeopardy</li> <li>• Exercises Influence In Implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct Involvement In Operations</li> <li>• Routinely Involved In Decision-Making</li> <li>• Hands-On Approach To Organizational Performance</li> <li>• Heavy Role in Accomplishing Objectives</li> </ul>
<b>Role of Senior Staff</b>	Consults Board For Input As Needed	Implements Strategy, Policy, and Priorities	Executes Tactical Initiatives	Responds to Tight Direction of Board

*Reference: Right Management, Billy Browning*

*This diagram of the ARC Board's Responsibilities came out of the Fall 2010 Task Force on Board Roles and Responsibilities.*

## General Responsibilities of ARC's Board



***Regional Impact – Local Relevance***

# APPENDIX

---

## Commission Member Roles and Responsibilities

Members of the Atlanta Regional Commission Board are an important asset to the success of the organization. Their policy direction, civic networks, participation and leadership define the Agency's effectiveness through each member's level of engagement and understanding of his or her roles and responsibilities. The following job description helps clarify what is expected of Commission Members.

### Regional Statesman/Stateswoman

1. "Be the face of ARC" and a spokesperson for the Agency to the public, policy makers of state, federal and local governments, corporate executives and nonprofit community leaders.
2. Be pro-active in affirming to local elected officials in the region that they are members of ARC even though they do not serve on the Board.
3. Be a goodwill ambassador and represent ARC at targeted community meetings, public hearings or state and national meetings.
4. Serve and represent ARC on regional planning or public policy coalitions.

### Policy Development

1. Keep ARC's vision and mission relevant for local governments and the regional community.
2. Define and explain the value of the vision and mission to ARC's customers.
3. Set agency priorities and monitor the alignment between the Commission's vision –mission – priorities and staff program goals and objectives.
4. Assist with the preparation of plans, development guides, programs, services provided and policy position statements; and adopt the recommended policy instrument.
5. Monitor the implementation or application of plans, development guides, programs, services and policy position statements for effectiveness and relevance.
6. Review local plans and development proposals as authorized by statute.
7. Develop and update board level strategic plans as well as Identify strategic opportunities and offer guidance.

### Governance and Finance

## *Regional Impact – Local Relevance*

1. Elect the Atlanta Regional Commission Chair and approve the appointed officers and committee chairs.
2. Nominate and select citizen commission members (responsibility of elected officials)
3. Appoint advisory commissions. (Discretion of Board)
4. Recruit, hire and evaluate the Agency Director.
5. Set objectives for the ARC Director.
6. Orient new Commission members.
7. Approve Bylaw changes.
8. Adopt an annual work program and budget and review the annual Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.
9. Ensure that the agency is fiscally sound.
10. Monitor work program objective outcomes.
11. Approve Human Resources rules, benefit changes and pay and classification plans.

### **Accountability**

1. Adhere to ARC's "Standards of Ethical Conduct" and avoid conflicts of interest.
2. Attend Commission meetings, retreats, committee meetings and special events.
3. Prepare for board meetings and assigned functions.
4. Support and articulate the Commission's positions, including the big picture, to other elected officials, planning partners and the community.

Reference: "Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit" National Association of Development Organizations and the Development District of Appalachia, May 2010"

# APPENDIX

---

## Board Principles of Engagement

“Principles of Engagement” define optimal standards for commitment, ownership and involvement for ARC board members.

### Practice “Regional Stewardship”

Provide leadership across “political, civic, community and institutional boundaries” to form alliances, solve problems and create opportunities for enhancing the Atlanta region.

### Formulate a Strategic Underpinning for Success

1. Develop user friendly, strategic messages on ARC’s Web Site that explains “where we are going as a regional community and what is our picture of the future” using the board’s Vision and Mission as context.
2. Learn and take advantage of Commissioner’s professional, business and community networks; talents and expertise to advocate for the Agency’s regional policy perspective and implementation strategies.
3. Develop expectations and priorities for management and staff from the results of the Board’s Strategic Plan to allow staff flexibility in achieving the goals and desired outcomes.
4. Create board level public policy implementation strategies in concert with ARC’s plan development processes.
5. Keep “What’s good for the Region” as a focal point in public policy decision making and balance with the local perspective.

### Market Regional Solutions

1. Position and champion ARC as the “Go To” organization for regional problem solving.
2. Inform consistently your local stakeholders and policy-makers about ARC’s policy actions, results and project/program outcomes including examples of how ARC’s actions assist your county or city improve or maintain a quality of life threshold for your citizens.

### **“Serve Responsibly”**

1. Allocate appropriate time to participate on the ARC Board and its committees and attend Agency sponsored events or important community functions.
2. Do the homework necessary to learn and contribute at meetings and keep informed about agency operations, finances and external issues that could impact the agency.
3. Disclose potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Committee in a timely manner.

### **Nurture Staff Partnerships**

1. Provide support for the agency and its staff to succeed at accomplishing the Commission’s vision and mission; and organization goals for an effective, efficient and innovative organization.
2. Avoid micromanaging management and staff in daily operations.
3. Challenge management and staff to take risks and have a sense of urgency.

Reference: “Regional Council Self-Assessment and Resource Toolkit” National Association of Development Organizations and the Development District of Appalachia, May 2010”