

2018 LEGISLATIVE TOOLKIT





TABLE of CONTENTS

A Message from the ACCG President	3
ACCG Policy Staff and Policy Council	4
2018 Top Three Legislative Priorities	5
Legislative Priority Briefs	
• Broadband Connected Georgia	6
• Modernization and Balanced Funding of the 9-1-1 System	8
• Sales Tax Reform	9
2018 Policy Agenda	11
ACCG Guiding Principles	13

Dear ACCG Members and Partners in County Government,



For the fifth consecutive year, Georgia has been recognized as the number one state for business. In addition, the state continues to be recognized as a national leader in many policy areas. Such success and notoriety must be attributed to the good working relationship between state and local government officials. Our collaborative efforts are reflective of the foundational partnership that is critical to positioning our state as a national model regarding public policy. Our efforts also foster an environment that welcomes success and make Georgia an ideal place to live, work, and play.

To assist county government officials in maintaining their role in that critical partnership, ACCG is providing them and their partners in county government with the 2018 Legislative Toolkit. The 2018 Legislative Toolkit will inform individuals about key issues of significance to counties with policy briefs on the association's top three legislative priorities and the Policy Agenda as defined by the entire ACCG membership. This tool will also aid Georgia's county officials in becoming more engaged in the state's policymaking process while asserting the collective voice of county commissioners in legislative affairs.

As you will see in the enclosed document, ACCG's top priorities for the 2018 session include Broadband deployment in Georgia - Right-of-Way Preemptions/Mandates; Sales Tax Reform; and Modernization and Balanced Funding of the E 9-1-1 System. The enclosed policy briefs include more detail on each issue such as background information as it pertains to county governments, the status of the issue, and talking points. As there are a number of issues that will arise during the session that will impact counties, ACCG has also included some anticipated items in which it will pursue in the Policy Agenda.

It is our hope that this information will contribute to constructive and productive dialogue that will result in a benefit to Georgians everywhere. ACCG looks forward to continuing its work of advancing Georgia's counties while best serving in its role as a key player in the state's government arena. County officials and partners in county government are encouraged to use this toolkit throughout the legislative process. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the association's policy team if they can be of any assistance as we all work to progress Georgia's position as a national model for effective and efficient government.

Sincerely,
Allen Poole
ACCG President and Haralson County Chairman

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2018 TOP 3 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

1. Broadband Connected Georgia

While counties continue to partner with the state and telecommunications providers in fostering a broadband-connected Georgia, ACCG has great concerns with any statewide preemption dictating unfettered accessibility to, and local management of, the public's ROW. Elected county officials must properly and consistently maintain their ability to carefully balance ROW access with their charge to protect public safety.

2. Sales Tax Reform

As the cost and demand for county services to residents and businesses increase, it is critical that counties have adequate revenue sources to meet those needs. Local sales tax is the second largest revenue source for counties, which use this revenue primarily for capital infrastructure and reducing their reliance on property taxes. However, most counties have not experienced growth in sales tax revenues since the recession ended. There appear to be two primary reasons for this lack of revenue growth:

1. The ever-increasing percentage of sales made over the Internet, for which most out-of-state vendors do not collect sales tax; and
2. The large (and increasing) number of goods and services that are exempt from sales tax. In addition to expanding the sales tax base, each county has a strong interest in ensuring that the Georgia Department of Revenue is correctly paying over sales taxes attributable to that county.

ACCG calls for reform of the sales tax system to reflect modern economic realities, by requiring the collection of sales taxes on online transactions and limiting exemptions from sales taxes. Counties should also have the ability to obtain certain sales tax data from the Georgia Department of Revenue in order to assist the state in ensuring that sales taxes are being paid to the correct jurisdictions.

3. Modernization and Balanced Funding of the E-9-1-1 System

ACCG urges the Governor and Legislature to pass legislation that will codify the creation of the Local Government 9-1-1 Authority, which he created by Executive Order. ACCG supports legislation to provide statewide fee collection, coordination, planning, auditing of service providers and enforcement of requirements. ACCG also calls for an increase in available 9-1-1 funding by bringing parity to all 9-1-1 fees collected, \$1.50 per month or retail transaction, and the elimination of the cost recovery charges.



ISSUE

Broadband Connected Georgia

BACKGROUND

Georgia's county commissioners recognize the critical importance of, and fully support, expanding affordable broadband access throughout the state to enhance citizens' quality of life, foster economic development, and make their communities more vibrant and competitive. Toward this end counties statewide continue to partner with the telecommunications industry to facilitate market-based solutions to enhance high quality service, including the accommodation of towers, structures and equipment in the public's right-of-way (ROW), to address their respective community's needs. The state could greatly enhance these local efforts; however, preemption of local government ROW management is not needed. Additionally, a reliable and equitable funding source is needed to support increasing demand for county services to support anticipated economic development associated with broadband expansion.

COUNTY INTEREST

While counties continue to partner with the state and telecommunications providers in fostering a broadband-connected Georgia, ACCG has great concerns with any statewide preemption dictating unfettered accessibility to, and local management of, the public's ROW. Elected county officials must properly and consistently maintain their ability to carefully balance ROW access with their charge to protect public safety by:

- Reducing the hazard of poles in high-crash and high-risk areas;
 - Ensuring traffic signal poles remain clear of obstacles impacting their accessibility and operation;
 - Preserving emergency radio transmissions;
 - Effectively and efficiently meeting federal/state environmental and road requirements;
 - Overseeing the timeliness of utility relocation during county road maintenance or expansion projects;
 - Finding remedies to address improperly installed utilities or competing utility needs;
 - Addressing the public's aesthetic and land use demands to maintain private property values;
- and
- Ensuring that taxpayers are not subsidizing the ROW permitting and management processes or any road, sidewalk or other damage caused by others' utilities in the ROW.

Counties also need resources to support the service demands that accompany broadband expansion and associated economic development. At present, counties receive sales tax on some equipment associated with broadband service but are only allowed to impose a franchise fee on in-ground cable service providers. This current tax/fee structure does not provide equity among service providers because they are taxed differently based upon the type of technology they use to deliver their service. Local government revenues on telecommunication companies have been flat or in decline because they do not adequately capture many of the newly emerging technologies.

STATUS

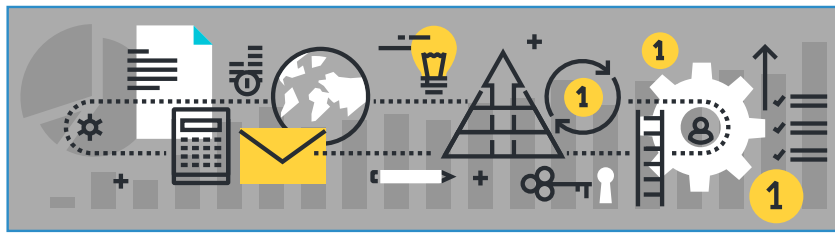
Two bills, SB 232 and HB 533, remain alive from the 2017 legislative session and contain the preemptive ROW language that causes concern. ACCG continues to work with the authors and other stakeholders to formulate sound policy that balances rural broadband needs with appropriate ROW management.

TALKING POINTS

The following considerations are suggested:

The General Assembly and State of Georgia could greatly enhance and guide ongoing county broadband efforts by:

- Formulating a model broadband ROW permitting ordinance for county consideration;
- Recognizing counties that adopt the ordinance as a “Broadband Ready Community”;
- Allowing counties to condition other utilities’ access to their ROW on their allowing broadband providers access to their poles;
- Providing additional tools and incentives to facilitate the collocation of broadband equipment on existing poles in the local ROW;
- Granting local governments the authority to provide sales (via a telecommunications excise tax) and property tax incentives to expand access in their communities;
- Providing state tax incentives to expand broadband access in rural areas;
- Ensuring that all state tax incentives are applied toward providing service only where it is needed and developing a mechanism to measure the success of the incentives;
- Establishing a state broadband office to offer financial assistance and administrative coordination to communities in need of expanded coverage. This office could also assess a county’s obstacles that inhibit broadband expansion, recommending changes;
- Continuing to foster a competitive broadband marketplace among all telecommunications providers, large or small, incumbent or upstart;
- Encouraging local governments to partner with private providers on investing in broadband infrastructure;
- Ensuring that local governments are held harmless and indemnified against any claim of liability or loss from personal injury or property damage resulting from others’ poles or equipment in the ROW;
- Establishing timelines by which broadband and other utility equipment located in local ROW must be moved or relocated, at provider expense, during road widening or other public projects, and by which any abandoned equipment in the ROW must be removed; and
- Eliminating the current franchise fees and taxes on telecommunication service providers and replacing those revenues with a local telecommunications excise tax at a rate up to 3.5 percent of gross receipts. The local revenues should be split between the counties and the cities based upon a population formula or other formula agreed to by ACCG and the Georgia Municipal Association.



ISSUE

Modernization and Balanced Funding of the 9-1-1 System

BACKGROUND

The original funding structure for 9-1-1 in Georgia was a surcharge of \$1.50 added to the telephone bill for landline services. The advent of wireless phone service resulted in additional 9-1-1 fees, and finally prepaid cell phone service providers were assessed a 75 cent fee because of their increased use. Initially, the prepaid cell phone fee generated additional revenues for the operation of 9-1-1 centers, but this has changed. Landline services have nearly become obsolete as mobile phones are now the primary phone used by a vast majority of consumers and voice over internet providers (VoIP) have increased in popularity. Further impacting the revenue stream for 9-1-1 centers, most cellular providers are transitioning to a prepaid model for which the 9-1-1 fee is only 75 cents, half of the \$1.50 monthly fee assessed on all other phone lines. With the implementation of next generation 9-1-1 service, it is likely the current funding model will undergo additional changes. Thus, developing a funding model based on next generation 9-1-1 may be premature. Adjusting the current model during transition will provide additional resources for the operation of the 9-1-1 centers.

COUNTY INTEREST

Public safety is one of the many essential services counties provide to their constituents. The factors regarding the current 9-1-1 funding model have severely impacted revenue going to the 9-1-1 centers for operational expenses. Wireless providers currently have the ability to bill public safety answering points (PSAP's) up to 45 cents of the \$1.50 fee for cost recovery for the infrastructure. This represents almost one third of the 9-1-1 fees received for the operation of the 9-1-1 center.

STATUS

A stakeholder group consisting of telecom representatives, county commissioners and representatives from other key groups have met numerous times and agreed on legislation that would create a Local Government 9-1-1 Authority. That legislation, SB 222, passed during the 2017 session but was vetoed by Gov. Nathan Deal. To prevent the Local 9-1-1 Authority from having too much autonomy, he then created the proposed Local Government 9-1-1 Authority by executive order which is housed under the Georgia Emergency Management Agency, also known as GEMA. The Governor has made it clear that he will move forward with legislation in 2018 to codify his executive order and provisions to provide statewide coordination, centralized collection of 9-1-1 fees, and auditing.

TALKING POINTS

The following considerations are suggested:

- The inequity in prepaid wireless rates should be eliminated making the 9-1-1 fee \$1.50 per month for all types of services.
- The cost recovery provision for billing PSAP's should be eliminated. Wireless providers should retain the ability to charge their subscribers a cost recovery fee, but not the PSAP's.
- The Local Government 9-1-1 Authority will provide statewide coordination, auditing of telephone service suppliers conducting business in Georgia, and centralized collection of 9-1-1 fees by the Department of Revenue (DOR) that will be remitted back to the jurisdiction for which they were collected. There must be a provision which allows local jurisdictions to obtain information about the fees collected by DOR on their behalf.

ISSUE

Sales Tax Reform



BACKGROUND

Current Georgia law provides more than 100 exemptions from sales and use taxes that otherwise would be paid to the state, counties, and other local governments. In addition, the state lacks an effective mechanism to collect sales tax on online purchases from out-of-state vendors. Even for those sales taxes that are collected, there is no mechanism to determine whether those taxes are being correctly attributed and distributed to the correct counties.

COUNTY INTEREST

As the cost and demand for county services to residents and businesses increase, it is critical that counties have adequate revenue sources to meet those needs. Local sales tax is the second largest revenue source for counties, which use this revenue primarily for capital infrastructure and reducing their reliance on property taxes. However, most counties have not experienced growth in sales tax revenues since the recession ended. There appear to be two primary reasons for this lack of revenue growth: 1) the ever-increasing percentage of sales made over the Internet, for which most out-of-state vendors do not collect sales tax; and 2) the large and increasing number of goods and services that are exempt from sales tax. In addition to expanding the sales tax base, each county has a strong interest in ensuring that the Georgia Department of Revenue is correctly paying over sales taxes attributable to that county.

STATUS

Two bills, HB 61 and HB 181, remain alive from the 2017 legislative session, having passed the House of Representatives and awaiting in the Senate. HB 61 would require out-of-state vendors with a minimum amount of sales in Georgia to collect and remit state and local taxes. HB 181 would allow local governments to receive certain information from the Department of Revenue related to vendors' sales taxes attributable to individual counties. In addition, a Senate Study Committee is working to develop objective criteria to assess the costs and benefits of all tax exemptions and tax credits.

TALKING POINTS

The following considerations are suggested:

- **DIGITAL GOODS AND MANY OTHER ITEMS PAID FOR THROUGH ONLINE PLATFORMS ARE NOT TAXED.**
There are many businesses that do not have a physical presence in Georgia and have decided not to collect our state and local sales tax. As more products are purchased online, this "legal loophole" is contributing to a significant loss in sales tax revenue.
- **THE SERVICE SECTOR IS THE FASTEST GROWING SEGMENT OF THE ECONOMY YET IS LARGELY EXEMPT FROM SALES TAX.** Georgia currently has approximately 110 exemptions in the sales tax code and only taxes approximately 36 services out of a potential 168 services.
- The General Assembly should help counties reduce their reliance on property tax by **EXPANDING THE EXISTING SALES TAX BASE** through:
 - Limiting the items that are exempt from sales taxes;
 - Including in the tax base additional services and digital goods such as digital music, books, and video; and
 - Creating a legal nexus test for the collection of sales taxes by out-of-state businesses selling to customers in Georgia.

- COMMISSIONERS AND CITIZENS SHOULD BE GRANTED GREATER FLEXIBILITY TO DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE LOCAL SALES TAXES FOR THEIR COUNTY.

This should include:

- The ability to take an existing local sales tax and ask the voters for approval to convert it to a different use that is locally determined to be essential to a specific county's environment; and
- The ability to use a portion of their capital sales tax for maintenance on capital facilities.

- COUNTIES NEED THE ABILITY TO WORK WITH THE STATE IN VERIFYING THE ACCURACY OF SALES TAX PAYMENTS.

- Confidentiality laws greatly limit the information that the Department of Revenue can share with local governments about their sales tax collections. Without this sharing of information between the state and local levels of government it is difficult to determine when errors, underreporting, misuse of exemptions and tax avoidance have occurred.
- Local officials and staff are the most knowledgeable about their local businesses and the local economy and should be able to work in partnership with DOR to make sure local sales taxes are collected and remitted accurately.
- To create this partnership, the General Assembly should expand the scope of taxpayer information that can be shared with designated local officials that have entered into a confidentiality agreement with the department. These records would continue to be exempt from public disclosure and could only be discussed with local elected officials in executive session.
- For businesses to accurately determine the proper sales tax allocation to each county, state law should clearly prescribe a uniform method for businesses to identify the county where the transaction occurs.

Steps that the General Assembly could take to accomplish this goal include:

- Requiring the Department of Revenue database to include information at the street address level in addition to the nine digit zip code; and
- Requiring the vendor to use the customer's physical address instead of a P.O. Box.



2018 POLICY AGENDA

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank

ACCG supports the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank (GTIB), a revolving loan and grant fund, and urges its primary purpose remain as a financing tool to meet the transportation needs of local governments. To maximize the opportunity for counties to successfully receive a GTIB loan, ACCG supports the use of Local Maintenance & Improvement Grant (LMIG) funding as a GTIB loan repayment source.

ISSUE: Transit Governance and Funding

Local governments should have the authority and financing tools available to make decisions to address the transit needs of their communities. ACCG supports efforts to create a regional transit governance council for metropolitan Atlanta or any other region of the state as long as the governing structure is comprised of local government representatives proportional to the local government's investment in the transit systems to be governed. ACCG also advocates that any solution for regional transit governance have an opt-in provision. Funding of transit projects requires a significant local government investment and in order to receive necessary federal funds, transit projects typically need to show a dedicated funding mechanism for a minimum of 20 years. ACCG asks the General Assembly to allow for the ability for counties to collect any fractional portion of a Single County T-SPLOST dedicated to transit for a maximum period of 20 years.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: Jail Diversion Programs for the Mentally ill

There are thousands of mental health and substance abuse patients residing in county jails because there are no local services or resources to assist with their illnesses. Those individuals are not receiving appropriate medication and treatment due to the lack of resources and qualified providers in the local communities. Counties should not bear the burden of providing mental health or substance abuse services through the local jail as the jails are not qualified to do so. Furthermore, treatment, not incarceration, is what the individuals need. To help meet the need of those citizens and provide relief to local jails, ACCG is asking the Governor and the General Assembly to allocate funding for pilot projects around the state that will provide for mental health assessment upon arrest and diversion to a Community Services Board for treatment as opposed to booking into the jail. ACCG also asks for the implementation of adequate accessible services in ALL areas of the state.

ISSUE: Policy Change by the Department of Community Health to Allow for Suspension of Medicaid Benefits upon Incarceration in Lieu of Cancellation

ACCG strongly encourages the Governor, the General Assembly, Department of Community Health, and the Department of Human Services to allow for the continuation of Medicaid benefits for local jail inmates prior to conviction and for the suspension of benefits upon conviction as opposed to cancellation. It can take months for an inmate released from prison or a local jail to have benefits reinstated, which is detrimental to the success of the inmate maintaining adequate mental and physical health services upon release. Allow Medicaid coverage for eligible inmates and detainees in local jails prior to conviction and for hospital stays of more than 24 hours post-conviction.

ISSUE: Involuntary Commitment for Persons Exhibiting Mental Health Issues without Having Committed a Crime.

There are instances whereby local public safety officials are called to a scene where an individual is exhibiting mental health issues, is a danger to themselves, and unless they have committed a crime, the local public safety officials are helpless. SB 40 from the 2017 session of the General Assembly is pending would allow certified EMTs to contact a doctor at a medical receiving facility to have an involuntary commitment order signed (1013) allowing the transport of that person against their will. ACCG supports providing additional tools to local communities to address the mental health crisis that is ongoing at the local level.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: Stormwater Management

Adequate funding is necessary in order for local governments to meet federal and state mandates in operating, maintaining, and improving stormwater infrastructure and management practices. To provide watershed protection, ACCG opposes any restrictions on a local government's ability to implement stormwater utilities; assess stormwater utility fees; create stormwater authorities; and state- or federally-imposed exemptions on a stormwater utility fee's applicability. This is not a tax, but a fee, for mandatory stormwater management services provided and every entity contributing to stormwater runoff must pay their fair share rather than shift the cost to other businesses and property owners.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE COURTS POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: Local Law Enforcement Compensation and Retention Strategies

ACCG understands and recognizes the vitally important role that law enforcement has in local communities. Local law enforcement officers deserve adequate pay and training. ACCG is committed to working with the state and the General Assembly to develop creative strategies to increase entry-level salaries for local law enforcement - taking into consideration all benefit packages, overtime, and other forms of compensation in determining appropriate beginning salaries, short of the statewide minimum salary mandate. ACCG supports the state and legislature putting into place incentives for state funding that incorporate more robust training and best practices. Given the diversity of the state, ACCG is opposed to any effort to require minimum salaries.

Consideration should be given to methods of increasing revenue at the local level to fund adequate salaries - such as expanding the sales tax base and allowing SPLOST for public safety and the courts - giving counties the flexibility as they continue to explore ways to attract, train, and retain public safety employees.

REVENUE AND FINANCE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ISSUE: Telecommunications Excise Tax

Telecommunication service is a rapidly growing and evolving sector of the economy. Local government revenues on telecommunication companies have been flat or in decline because they have not adequately captured many of the newly emerging technologies. Legislation is needed to reduce distortions in the marketplace and to provide for a tax base that grows with the economy and the corresponding increased demands on local government services. The current tax structure does not provide equity among service providers because they are taxed differently based upon the type of technology they use to deliver their service. ACCG asks the General Assembly to eliminate the current franchise fees and taxes on telecommunication service providers and replace these revenues with a local telecommunications excise tax at a rate up to 3.5 percent of gross receipts. The local revenues should be split between counties and local municipalities based upon a population formula or other formula agreed on by ACCG and the Georgia Municipal Association. The county's share of the excise tax should be used to fund services that primarily benefit the unincorporated area.

ISSUE: Fees on Property Tax Bills

Local elected officials and their citizens should control the substance of what will or will not be placed on a local property tax bill. The potential use of fees allows county governments to pay for some services in a manner that more closely approximates the users' demand and usage of the service. Most of those services could be paid for through property tax but the financial burden could only be distributed based upon the value and taxability of a person's property. Charging a fee for services allows the financial burden to be spread more equitably. The charging of fees for particular services, through the creation of Special Tax Districts or otherwise, has long been an appropriate legal manner to fairly distribute costs for services to specific users of a provided service. To make fees a viable option to the property tax, they must be easy to administer and collect. Having the option to collect fees on the property tax bill ensures that the fees can be collected efficiently. ACCG asks the General Assembly to protect this important local tool for charging a fee for service as an alternative to the property tax. ACCG does not support the placing of liens on any property for failure to pay a fee unless it has been authorized in state law.



ACCG GUIDING PRINCIPLES

LOCAL ISSUES

ACCG provides a common platform that allows counties to maximize their legislative influence by making requests of the General Assembly and Congress through a unified effort. Through ACCG's policy development process, a Policy Agenda is adopted, containing issues of significant importance to all counties or a reasonable portion of them. ACCG will not become directly involved in lobbying local legislation or general legislation that is drafted to affect only one county. ACCG will, however, notify the affected county of the pending legislation and will, at the request of the county, provide technical assistance. ACCG urges members of the General Assembly to refrain from passing this type of legislation without the support of the county governing authority. Where legislation will benefit some counties at the expense of others, ACCG will notify all counties of the potential benefits and consequences of the legislation, but will not take a position.

HOME RULE

Home rule is the right of the people to determine and implement a public policy at the grassroots level. Home rule power is conferred on Georgia counties by Article IX, Section II, Paragraph I of the Georgia Constitution. Local governing authorities have the power to adopt ordinances, resolutions, or regulations relating to its property, affairs, and local government, as long as they are not inconsistent with state law or the Georgia Constitution. Although state laws may define minimum standards, they should not preempt counties from passing ordinances that establish a more stringent standard for their communities. The preservation of administrative and fiscal home rule authority allows counties to develop and implement community-based solutions to local problems. ACCG believes that counties, as the government closest to the people, are the most appropriate authority to serve the needs and requirements of the community.

COST SHIFTING

A state directive that compels local governments to provide a service, program, or benefit without providing the appropriate monies or a funding source is regarded as an unfunded mandate. County officials recognize that some state mandates are justified because they achieve agreed upon statewide policy goals. However, many, if not most, mandates on counties are imposed without the consensus of local governments or the resources necessary for their implementation. Mandates shift costs to local property taxpayers, financially drain county governments, and impede a county's ability to adequately deliver the fundamental services required by law. Mandates also compromise a county's ability to provide discretionary services requested by the local community. ACCG opposes any state or federal actions that limit the ability of local elected officials to make fiscal and public policy decisions for the citizens that they represent. Furthermore, counties support the establishment of an agreed upon course of action whereby state and county elected officials deliberatively evaluate the appropriate funding and delivery of intergovernmental service responsibilities between counties and the state.

LOCAL REVENUES

To provide services requested by the local community or required by the state, counties need an adequate stable revenue source that is diverse and fairly spreads the tax burden across the residents of the county. State-determined restrictions on local revenues hinder a local community's ability to establish a revenue structure that fairly distributes the financial burdens of local government to all citizens of the county based on the unique characteristics of the county. When new state laws or annexation erodes a portion of the local revenue base, county commissioners must shift the tax burden to other residents or reduce the level of county services provided. Politically, neither of these choices is popular. The decision to tax should occur at the same level of government where the decision is made to enact a new service or enhance an existing service. Local governments should have an equal share of flexibility and control over both revenues and expenditures as they are directly linked.

SERVICE DELIVERY

To help create and maintain the quality of life desired by the residents of a community, counties should be given the flexibility to create new services, expand existing services, or discontinue a service. If a service is funded partially or fully using county revenues, then the county governing authority should have a level of control over the service commensurate to its share of the funding. Local government services in the unincorporated areas should be provided solely at the discretion of the county governing authority and such services should not be disrupted by annexation. Service delivery responsibilities within the incorporated areas of the county should be determined jointly with the city. When the state wishes to provide services locally, they should coordinate with the counties to determine the most efficient method of service delivery and funding of the service.

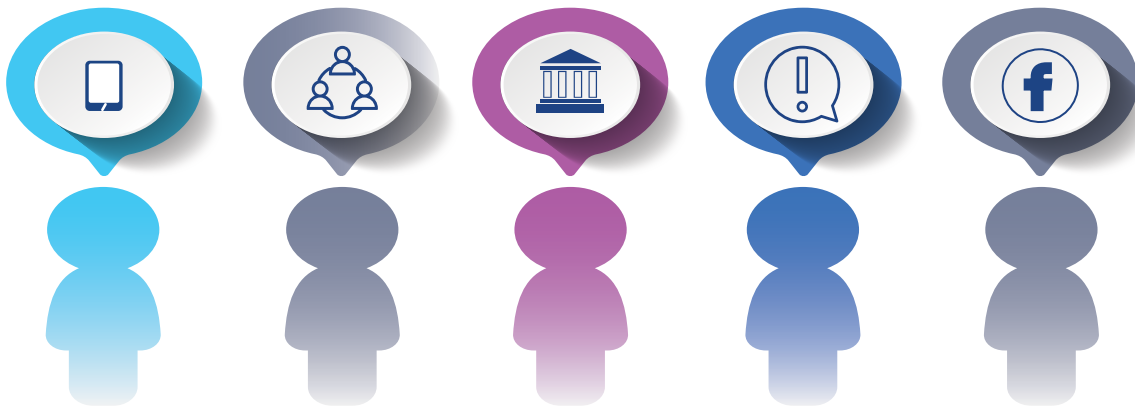
LAND USE

County officials must have the ability to make reasonable decisions for zoning, comprehensive planning, and infrastructure issues to ensure that the local community grows and develops in a way that adds value to the community and improves the quality of life for all residents. This includes a county's right to adopt local land use and other environmental regulations to protect its unique natural resources and vision for the community. Citizens expect the county commission to exercise its ability to manage and direct growth without being subjected to prohibitive claims for damages for infringement on private property rights. Likewise, county land use decisions should not be thwarted by municipal annexations. Locally elected officials are in the best position to balance the rights of individual property owners with the rights and wishes of all property owners within a county.

STATE/COUNTY PARTNERSHIP

Counties were created to function as local subdivisions of the state. To tailor services to the needs of the different geographic and demographic areas of the state, decision making power must be granted to locally elected representatives. The state sets general parameters, including minimum standards and levels of service, then local officials should decide what additional services and enhancements the local community desires. The state and its local county subdivisions must work in tandem to improve the quality of life for all Georgia residents. To facilitate this partnership the state should:

- Fully fund state services and not require or attempt to coerce counties into subsidizing the service.
- Provide support (i.e., funding and technical assistance) to attain a minimum level and standard of services needed statewide (i.e., crime information center, crime lab, utility assessments, training public safety officers, establishing uniform assessment procedures and transportation improvements).



POLICY COMMUNICATIONS

Read the Weekly Legislative Update to Stay Informed and Engaged

ACCG publishes the Legislative Update every Friday during the legislative session. County officials are encouraged to read the weekly report to stay informed about the various issues moving through the General Assembly. Contact Nicole Logan (nlogan@accg.org) if you would like to receive this publication.

Action Alerts

The association will periodically release Action Alerts regarding issues that require immediate action from county officials. The Action Alerts will include background information on the issue as well as talking points that county officials can use when speaking to their legislators about the legislation.

Return of Facebook Live During the Legislative Session

Tune in every Friday at 9 a.m. for the Facebook Live Legislative Update. Join the policy team as they provide weekly recaps of what took place under the Gold Dome. Be sure to friend ACCG on Facebook at facebook.com/georgiacounties.

Save the Date

County Days at the Capitol

◆ February 28 ◆ March 7

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