

# Cooperative Planning Contracts

## Fulton County

The Fulton County Planning Department has four (4) full-time professional staff persons and one (1) full-time secretarial position. The professional staff includes a Planning Director, Senior Planner, Civil Engineer and GIS Administrator. This staff has background and experience in many fields including land use planning, land use controls, comprehensive planning, capital budgeting, all aspects of public construction, GIS and others.

The services provided by the County Planning Department are services that are often desired and needed by other levels of government in Fulton County. Cities, town, villages are often in need of professional planning services, design and construction administration services for public works projects or GIS mapping work. Yet, these local governments are faced with their own fiscal challenges and therefore often cannot afford to pay to have these types of full-time professionals on their own payroll.

To address these local needs, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors put into place a policy to allow the Fulton County Planning Department to share its professional services and expertise with local municipalities. The policy allows for local governments to contract with Fulton County to have the Planning Department provide specified planning services to a particular municipality. The policy stipulates that:

1. The Fulton County Planning Department shall provide up to 10 hours of service during any calendar year at no cost to any municipality or local government agency within Fulton county requesting professional planning services from said Department;
2. Prior to providing in excess of 10 hours of professional planning services in any one calendar year to any municipality or local governmental agency within Fulton County, said municipality or local governmental agency within Fulton County shall enter into a contract with the County;
3. The contract shall identify the specific work the Planning Department is being hired to perform, the estimated number of hours it will take to provide these services and the negotiated lump sum fee for the Planning Department to provide these services;

4. The fee to be charged shall include the estimated number of hours each staff person is to provide under the contract times the person's hourly salary rate;
5. The fee charged to municipalities shall not include a fringe benefit factor; contract with all other entities shall include such a factor;

As a result of this policy, the Fulton County Board of Supervisors promotes the sharing of its professional planning staff with local governments. Local governments in Fulton County are able to contract for specific work to be done, obtain professional planning services and not have to hire expensive consultants or full-time staff to do so. Local governments contract for and obtain only those services they specifically request. Fulton County only bills the municipality for actual work performed. This policy allows local governments to pay for only the services they need and at a far lesser cost than if they had to hire full-time staff or hire private consultants.

Fulton County's policy has proven to be an excellent model for sharing of professional services between various levels of local government. At present, Fulton County has ten (10) active Planning Services Contracts with the 15 units of local governments in Fulton County. Through these contracts, Fulton County is able to provide valuable and important professional services to local governments at a fraction of the cost they would incur if they had to contract with consultants or hire their own staff. In return, Fulton County is able to generate some revenue by providing these services.

This policy has been a successful approach to sharing of services and inter-governmental cooperation in Fulton County.

