The RPCGB’s Building Communities Program is designed to provide RPCGB local governments with technical assistance as it relates to planning services and regulatory tools.

Municipalities are eligible if they are located within the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Area (shown to the right), which includes all of Jefferson and Shelby Counties and portions of St. Clair and Walker Counties.

The primary service of the Building Communities Program is preparing long-range planning documents (typically covering 5 to 15 years) that are intended to serve as policy guides with specific recommended actions for implementation. The range of topics include future land use, housing, community renewal, accessibility and transportation mobility, parks and green systems, city services and economic development, etc.

The Building Communities Program is the perfect tool for municipalities that want to utilize robust public input, data analyses and best practices to create policy documents and regulatory tools that municipal leaders, business owners, developers and citizens can use in order to:

- Formulate goals and recommended actions projects that can be incorporated into an annual work program or new fiscal year budget.
- Guide public and private decisions that will affect future land use, growth management and capital improvements.
- Guide the form, intensity, and placement of new development and redevelopment. How and where future growth should occur.
- Address existing and future needs related to multi-modal transportation, community facilities, public services and infrastructure.
- Formulate goals and recommended actions projects that can be incorporated into an annual work program or new fiscal year budget.

Tools utilized by the RPCGB when creating planning and regulatory documents:

- GIS mapping
- In-person public meetings, open houses, pop-up events, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, online surveys
- Adobe Indesign, Illustrator, Photoshop
- SketchUp 3D software

Map showing the limits of the Birmingham Metropolitan Planning Area.
The RPCGB offers an 80/20 funding match through its Building Communities Program for eligible projects. That means that a RPCGB local municipality only pays for 20% of the total project cost. For example, if a new Comprehensive Plan costs $150,000, then the municipality would only have to pay $30,000 to the RPCGB as the 20% local match for the project. The Building Communities Program would provide the 80% funding for the project utilizing a pool of federal transportation dollars that have already been approved for the program.

After a project is deemed eligible, a scope of work and fee will be negotiated between the RPCGB and the local government and an agreement will be signed by both entities.

Throughout the process of the planning project, the RPCGB Community Planning team will develop and manage the project with direction from the local elected officials and related city staff. The RPCGB will actively engage the general public and key stakeholder groups to ensure that the plan reflects the community's aspirations, vision and desires.

Local governments should contact the RPCGB to discuss opportunities to utilize the program. Funding for projects can only be used for planning projects and not for construction projects. Projects are subject to funding availability.

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