



## CITY OF ATLANTA

City Auditor's Office  
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### ***Why We Did This Audit***

City Council requested assistance from the city auditor in conducting a comprehensive review of the city's Economic Development Plan. They asked whether the plan was realistic and if it provided for an equitable distribution of jobs and development.

Our audit assessed whether systems and processes were in place to effectively track and report progress in implementing the economic development plan, and whether the data and reports ADA uses are reliable.

### ***What We Recommended***

Our recommendations are intended to provide more systematic tracking and public reporting of the city's progress in meeting the goals established in the New Century Economic Development Plan.

We recommend that ADA:

- Develop clear criteria for the performance measures it uses to track goals and ensure that the data are consistent from one reporting cycle to the next, or identify and explain changes in the performance measures.
- Understand how the data are collected, what is actually being measured, and report significant uncertainties regarding data.
- Develop measures to track and report progress within the priority areas.

For more information regarding this report, please contact Amanda Noble at 404.330.6750 or [anoble@atlantaga.gov](mailto:anoble@atlantaga.gov).

## ***Performance Audit:***

### **Review of the New Century Economic Development Plan**

#### ***What We Found***

The city is making progress in implementing its New Century Economic Development Plan. The plan uses data and analysis to set goals and priorities in three primary components of Atlanta's economy. The 7 goals to be achieved by 2009 are aggressive but specific and measurable. Action items intended to achieve the goals are relevant and assigned to appropriate agencies. We reviewed the status of 12 action items assigned to city departments with expected completion dates in 2005 and 2006. Half of the action items were completed, and the others were notably progressing.

While the Atlanta Development Authority has reported overall progress in meeting the goals, it could improve its data collection and external reporting processes. The agency now reports economic development activities through media such as its official website, a monthly newsletter, and an annual highlights report. The reports provide information on some initiatives within the plan and other development activities throughout the city, as well as the status of overall goals. However, the reports haven't addressed progress in the specific areas identified in the plan such as underserved, and some external data ADA is using to assess progress may be unreliable. Because the underserved areas are a primary focus of the plan, which, in our view, is one of the plan's strengths, we recommend that ADA develop measures to track the progress being made in underserved areas, and that this information be provided to city and community leaders.

We also recommend the ADA strengthen its processes for ensuring the data it reports are reliable. Much of the data ADA compiles and reports come from outside sources. When possible, ADA uses data collected and maintained by federal, state and local government agencies. ADA believes the responsibility for verifying such data lies with the provider. We agree that the owner of the data is ultimately responsible for its quality, but because ADA is reporting and relying on the data, it too has a responsibility to understand how the data are collected, what actually is being measured, whether this has changed over time, and the level of uncertainty. Otherwise, results can be misleading.