

2025 YEAR END LEGISLATIVE REPORT



PRESENTED BY THE
GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION

2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



On Friday, April 4, the Georgia General Assembly adjourned Sine Die.

The 2025 session saw the introduction of over **1,300 bills** and **1,500 resolutions**. GMA's advocacy team tracked hundreds of bills that could impact municipal operations and revenues.

On the final day of the 2025 legislative session, several major initiatives with significant impact on cities successfully crossed the finish line.

SOVEREIGN IMMUNITY DECISIONS: ALLOWING FOR IMMEDIATE APPEAL

Senate Bill 298 allows for **direct appeal of adverse immunity rulings**—a critical step in ensuring efficient judicial process for cities.

It would set a **30-day deadline for filing an appeal after an adverse ruling** and serves as a way to increase the efficiency of litigation – ensuring timely decisions on immunity issues.

PUBLIC WORKS BIDDING: INCREASE THRESHOLD FROM \$100,000 TO \$250,000

House Bill 137 raises **the exemption limit for public works contracts from \$100,000 to \$250,000**. This increase **reduces administrative burdens** and speeds up project timelines for small projects.

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY: FIXING TECHNICAL ISSUES

House Bill 513 clarifies certain provisions of last year's **HB 1407**, the comprehensive revision of the Service Delivery Strategy Act. This bill **provides a process for counties to account for the use of unincorporated revenue to fund unincorporated services**. The provisions of HB 1407 as modified by HB 513, **take effect January 1, 2026**, but **will not require mandatory renegotiation of SDS agreements until the next ten-year cycle anniversary**.

ANNEXATION: DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS; ZONING: PERMIT PROCEDURES

House Bill 155 improves **annexation dispute resolution by extending the arbitration panel appointment timeline and allowing cities and counties to review and remove panelists if needed**. The bill also includes language which introduces a **voter approval requirement for "spoke" annexations**. Another addition within the bill seeks to **clarify the process for approval and appeal of administrative land use permits**.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: REQUIRING IN-STATE STAFF

House Bill 399 requires **out of state owners of single-family and duplex rental homes to hire a licensed property manager**. The manager must either be the owner, a licensed real estate agent, or a local family member. The contact information must be given to the tenant but also must be provided to local code enforcement when there is reason to suspect a code violation.

2025 LPC Chair



College Park Mayor,
Bianca Motley Broom

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PASSED

The *Georgia Municipal Association's* governmental relations team worked all session to advance our member cities' interests. Our team is happy to announce that we were successful in passing the following bills.

Budget Wins

- GMA **successfully** advocated for state **budget investments benefiting Georgia's cities**, including increased **LRA grants** (doubling LMIG without a local match), additional **GEFA water/sewer loan funding**, and an expanded **DCA Downtown Revolving Loan Fund**.

The Amended **FY2025 budget** includes:

- \$266 million for GEFA's infrastructure loan program
- \$265 million for LRA grants
- \$46 million for the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank
- \$28 million for rural workforce housing
- \$5 million for DCA's Downtown Revolving Loan Fund

Municipal Government

- New system for direct appeal of adverse immunity rulings **(SB 298)**
- The threshold for public works bidding has been increased from \$100,000 to \$250,000. Projects under \$250,000 are now exempt from the public works bidding process. **(HB 137)**
- Reforms the annexation dispute resolution process by extending the timelines for appointment to a panel, while increasing city/county oversight of arbitrators. Also includes a referendum requirement for spoke annexations. **(HB 155)**
- Clarified the sources of revenue that counties can use to fund unincorporated services and establishes procedure to avoid conflicts over the delivery of these services **(HB 513)**

Community Development

- Out-of-state landlords who own or operate single-family or duplex rental properties are required to have at least one - in-state licensee responsible for receiving and managing tenant communications, complaints, and maintenance requests **(HB 399)**

Revenue and Finance

- Requires cities that opted out of the floating homestead exemption to reaffirm their decisions by 2027 but gives a second-look recission as FLOSTs become more popular **(HB 92)**

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DID NOT PASS

- Capping Local Government Revenue from Citation Fines and Forfeitures (**HB 140**)
- Speed Cameras in School Zones: Elimination of School Zone Speed Cameras (**HB 225**)
- Local Government Maintenance of a Nuisance: Compensation for Property Owners (**HB 295**)
- Speed Cameras in School Zones: New Requirements on Installation and Use of Funds (**HB 651**)
- Jails: Require Municipal Detention Facilities to Be Available for Use by Sheriffs Upon Request (**SB 7**)
- Immigration Sanctuary Policies: Waiver of Sovereign Immunity for Non-Compliance (**SB 21**)

Liability Limitations for Cities (HB 531), carried by Rep. Matt Reeves, **was not passed** this session but **remains alive in the Senate for consideration in 2026**, and GMA will continue to advocate for its passage.

STUDY COMMITTEES

GMA staff will monitor the following study committees to ensure city interests are represented:

HR 429 - House Study Committee on Funding for Next Generation 9-1-1

HR 885 - House Study Committee on Election Procedures

SR 283 - Senate Height Restrictions Surrounding Georgia Airports Study Committee

SR 424 - Senate Study Committee on Franchise Fees

STAYING CONNECTED CONSIDER HOSTING A HOMETOWN CONNECTION

A Hometown Connection is a local initiative where city officials invite their state legislators to visit and engage with the community, offering a firsthand look at city operations, challenges, and successes. The goal is to strengthen relationships between local and state government, fostering better understanding and cooperation. Hosting a Hometown Connection helps bridge the information gap by showing legislators the daily responsibilities and tough decisions city officials face. It also serves to educate lawmakers about local issues and highlight city achievements and initiatives.

By building personal relationships with state representatives, cities can improve their advocacy efforts and influence state policy more effectively. Planning a Hometown Connection involves setting a budget, choosing a date, deciding on invitees, and coordinating with GMA.

For support and guidance on hosting a Hometown Connection, contact Katrina Cochran at GMA, kcochran@gacities.com.