



GAINESVILLE 2030 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Community Participation Program

*Prepared by The Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
and Urban Collage, Inc.*

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Required Components

Procedural Requirements

II. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

IV. SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETING THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The Community Participation Program outlines the basic public involvement process that will be used to ensure Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan represents the values and desires of the residents. Ensuring the participation of a variety of stakeholder groups in developing the Community Agenda will also improve efforts for implementing the Plan by securing wider public understanding, support and cooperation.

The completion of the Community Assessment provides a baseline of information about the community to assist with the public involvement process, assuring the participants have a better understanding of the existing issues. The Community Participation Program will guide how this information is presented to the open public and various stakeholder groups, whose responses will refine the information, prioritize the issues and goals and identify the preferred alternatives for achieving those goals.

Required Components

(Taken from DCA's "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," section 110-12-1-.04)

The Community Participation Program is required for Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced planning levels. The three required steps for developing the Community Participation Program are listed below. The result must be a concise schedule to guide development of the Community Agenda, including planned community participation events or meetings at key points during this process.

(a) Identification of Stakeholders. Compile a list of all stakeholders who need to have a voice in the development of the Community Agenda. Refer to the list of suggested stakeholders provided in the State Planning Recommendations for suggestions.

(b) Identification of Participation Techniques. Review each of the recommended community participation techniques identified in the State Planning Recommendations to select those to be used locally for involving the selected stakeholders in the process of developing the Community Agenda.

(c) Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda. Review the suggested schedules for completion of the Community Agenda provided in the State Planning Recommendations and choose one that best fits local needs. Adapt this schedule as necessary for unique local circumstances, and substitute the specific participation techniques selected in the previous step at appropriate points in the schedule.

Procedural Requirements

(Taken from DCA's "Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning," section 110-12-1-.08)

(1) Transmittal and Review of Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. Upon completion, the local government must submit its Community Assessment and Community Participation Program concurrently to the regional development center for review. Both of these plan components must be completed well in advance of the local

government's recertification date, in order to allow adequate time for their review prior to initiation of the Community Agenda.

(a) First Required Public Hearing. The first required public hearing must be held once the draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program have been drafted and made available for public review, but prior to their transmittal to the regional development center. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the potential issues and opportunities identified through the Community Assessment, obtain input on the proposed Community Participation Program, and notify the community of when these plan components will be transmitted to the regional development center. Once public comments have been addressed, the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program must be transmitted to the regional development center by resolution of the governing body.

(b) Completeness Check. The regional development center shall determine whether the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program are complete, within seven days of receipt. A Community Assessment or Community Participation Program that does not meet the standard for completeness (as determined by the Department) shall be deemed incomplete and shall not be accepted for further review by the regional development center or be forwarded to the Department for review. The regional development center shall notify the local government of its findings regarding the completeness of the submittal and identify items that must be submitted, if any, prior to further processing. The regional development center shall forward a complete submittal to the Department immediately upon making the completeness finding.

(c) Notification of Interested Parties. Once the regional development center has determined that the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program are complete, it shall immediately notify any interested parties of the availability of these submittals for review and comment, providing the name of the local government, the general nature of the submittals, and a deadline by which comments must be received. At a minimum, interested parties shall include:

- Local governments inside or outside the regional development center's region that are contiguous to the submitting local government, and other local governments that are likely to be affected by the Community Assessment or Community Participation Program;
- Any local authorities, special districts, or other entities identified in evaluating intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes (if applicable);
- Regional development centers that are contiguous to the local government or that are likely to be affected by the Community Assessment or Community Participation Program; and
- Affected state agencies (including the Department of Transportation, the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, etc.) and the Department.

(d) Review of Community Assessment. The regional development center shall review the Community Assessment for its adequacy in identifying potential issues and opportunities to be dealt with in the subsequent portions of the plan. The regional development center shall also review the Community Assessment to identify potential opportunities for inter-jurisdictional/regional solutions to common issues.

(e) Review of Community Participation Program. The Department shall review the Community Participation Program for its adequacy in identifying specific mechanisms to ensure adequate involvement of the community in the development of the Community Agenda. The Department shall transmit a complete report of its findings and recommendations for addressing such findings to the regional development center for inclusion in the Report of Findings and Recommendations.

(f) Report of Findings and Recommendations. Within 30 days after certification of the completeness of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program, the regional development center must transmit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the local government and to the Department. The report must include:

- Comments submitted by interested parties that reviewed the Community Assessment;
- The regional development center's findings and recommendations from its review of the Community Assessment; and
- A copy of the Department's findings and recommendations resulting from its review of the Community Participation Program.

(g) Publicizing the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. Once reviewed by the regional development center and the Department, the availability of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program must be publicized by the local government for public information. This requirement may be met by providing notice in a local newspaper of general circulation identifying where complete copies of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program may be reviewed.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Gainesville is the largest city within the very metropolitan Hall County, meaning it harbors a diverse and dynamic group of people with varying interests in the community. This suggests a comprehensive approach will be required to ensure all those interests are represented during the public involvement process. To facilitate this effort, the City will rely on the assistance of a consulting agency to solicit and collect public input in close coordination with local staff. In addition there will be a task force to guide the overall process and assist the City staff with the assessment of information and stakeholder input.

During the public participation process comments will be gathered from any and all residents and stakeholders within the community. Select interests, however, will be pursued directly for their assured participation, based upon their unique and/or valued knowledge of the community and ability to help shape the planning process for Gainesville. Participation from local businesses and industries will be closely coordinated with the Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce and Gainesville Main Street staff. The Chamber has recently developed their own plan for Hall County (Vision 2030) and is considered an invaluable asset for communicating with area business leaders and fully understanding their needs and concerns.

One element of the local residents that must garner special consideration is the City's growing ethnic population. Gainesville is home to a large Latino/Hispanic population, many of whom are still developing their English speaking and reading skills. To ensure a broad representation, the City should have as part of its participation process some meetings and/or programs directed in Spanish and within largely Latino neighborhoods.

Another element to be considered is the City's Neighborhood Planning Units. Currently there are two such NPU's within Gainesville but the City is interested in developing more. These bodies provide unofficial committees and critical local involvement in community development matters for their respective neighborhoods. Engaging these NPU's directly will reinforce their roles and strengthen community support.

Special effort will be made to involve representatives from the banking, real estate and development industry. Though these businesses may not represent the highest share of employees/residents within the community, these sectors are critical to the community's economic well-being and represent the private sector forces behind the potential growth and new construction for the area. Understanding their objectives, issues and concerns will help the City and County better prepare for future development patterns.

Also, a special effort will be made, to engage the City's civic officials as represented by the City Council, the Planning and Appeals Board and key City administration and staff. Their direct involvement is critical considering that the comprehensive plan process is devised to provide local public discourse and direction about the management of local communities.

Planning Process Project Management Team

Rusty Ligon, Community Development Director
Matt Tate, Planning Manager
Angela Sheppard, Assistant City Manager
Chris Rotalsky, Assistant Public Works Director
Phillippa Lewis Moss, Community Service Center Director
Jon Canada, Fire Chief
Michael Graham, Deputy Director, Parks and Recreation
Myron Bennett, P.E., Public Utilities Department

Planning Process Task Force

Bob Hamrick, Gainesville City Council Ward 2
George Wangemann, Gainesville City Council Ward 4
Christine Brosky, Gainesville City Schools
Jody Wall, Brenau University Chief of Staff
Martha Randolph, Monique's Hair Salon
Tim Evans, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce
Meg Nivens, Vision 2030
Brian Daniel, Carroll Daniel Construction Company
Lee Hemmer, The Simpson Company
Garland Reynolds, Reynolds Architects PC
Larry Long, Fore Star Group
Joan Alford, Bradford Ridgewood NPU
Berlinda Lipscomb, Fair Street NPU
Jennifer Rudeseal, Green Street Circle
John Vardemann, Longstreet Hills
John O'Sullivan, Honeysuckle Neighborhood
Kevin Myer, Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission
Haydee de la Fuente-Anderson, Mexico Lindo
Camille Viera, Real Estate Professional
Randy Knighton, Hall County Planning Director
Dean Dadisman, Gainesville Planning & Appeals Board Chair

Key stakeholders identified for future input during the planning process:

Gainesville City Council

Ruth Bruner (Mayor)
 Danny Dunagan (Mayor Pro-tem)
 Georga Wangeman
 Robert L. Hamrick
 Myrtle W. Figueras

Gainesville Planning and Appeals Board

Dean Dadisman (Chair)
 Doyle Johnson (Vice Chair)
 Dexter Stanley
 Jane Fleming
 Connie Rucker
 George Hokayem
 John Snyder

Gainesville Historic Preservation Commission

Kathy Amos (Chair)	Jim Walters
Dick Bachman (Vice Chair)	Linda Hutchens
Kevin Meyer	

City of Gainesville Staff

City Manager	Kip Padgett
Assistant City Manager	Angela Sheppard
Communications and Tourism Dir.	Catiel Felts
Fire Chief	Jon Canada
Police Chief	Brian Kelly
Public Utilities Director	Kelly Randall
Public Works Director	David Dockery
Traffic Engineering	Dee Taylor
Parks and Recreation Director	J. Melvin Cooper
Gainesville City Schools	Dr. Marianne B. Dyer

Local Agencies & Organizations; Local Governments; State and Federal Organizations

Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce*	Us Army Corps of Engineers
Hall Area Transit*	Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
Gainesville City Schools*	1071 Coalition
Hall County	Metro North Ga. Water Planning District
City of Oakwood	Ga. Dept. of Transportation
City of Flowery Branch	Ga. Dept. of Community Affairs
City of Lula	Ga. Dept. of Economic Development
City of Gillsville	Ga. Dept. of Natural Resources
City of Clermont	Georgia Mountains Regional Commission
Elachee Nature Center	
Fair Street NPU*	
Bradford/ Ridgewood NPU*	

*=Candidates for Primary Stakeholder Group

Local Businesses and Private Organizations

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Northeast Georgia Medical Center* | The Norton Agency* |
| Brenau University* | Wal-Mart |
| Riverside Military Academy* | Home Depot |
| Lakeview Academy* | Lowe's |
| Fieldale Farms | Publix |
| ConAgra Poultry | Kubota Manufacturing* |
| Mar-Jac, Inc. | Wrigley Manufacturing |
| Koch Foods | Siemens Automotive |
| Beaulieu of America | ZUA Autoparts |
| Pilgrims Pride Corp | Willstaff Inc. |
| Cargill* | Pacolet Milleken Enterprises, Inc.* |
| Simpson Company* | Rochester & Associates* |
| Peach State Bank* | Jackson EMC* |
| United Community Bank* | Georgia Power* |
| SunTrust* | Atmos Energy* |
| Regions Bank* | Home Builders Association* |
| Newtown Florist Club* | Mountain View Drive HOA* |
| Mundy Mill/ Maple Forge neighborhood* | Cresswind* |

*=Candidates for Primary Stakeholder Group

This list represents only the preliminary identification of private entities to be solicited for input. Other businesses and organizations may be added to this list as the process evolves, and all stakeholders throughout Gainesville are welcome to provide comment, questions and input in the development of the Community Agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A variety of measures will be employed to secure involvement from each key group of stakeholders, and to ensure the proper dialogue is made between the City and the residents and businesses. Participation techniques will also be geared toward the particular stage and objective of the planning process.

Area Meetings

Throughout the process several public meetings will be held to foster direct interaction with residents and allow staff to answer questions. These will be largely input driven, focusing on the collection of comments, citizen surveys and generally receiving and listening to input.

These meetings will be conducted across the City in a coordinated effort to reach out to the various geographic and demographic subsets of the community, and they will be done both at the front end of the Visioning process and to discuss and review the draft of the completed Agenda. This participation measure will include a concerted effort to engage the Neighborhood Planning Units and the Hispanic community.

Planning Workshops

In addition to the public meetings, the City will conduct three public workshops designed to build consensus on future development and public investments in several character areas. Each workshop will be tailored to the geography and issues at hand; and all will feature interactive, exciting, hands-on exercises. Participants will be divided into multiple groups and will be asked to actually “design and build” the future of the chosen character area or sub-area in small facilitated table settings. The workshops are fast-paced events typically featuring drawing, cut-and-paste image exercises, writing on note cards, and modeling using suitably-scaled building blocks. They typically take about two hours to administer. The workshops will generally follow the format below:

- Workshop #1** Corridors including Thompson Bridge Road, Limestone Parkway, etc.
- Workshop #2** Central Core including Downtown, Midtown, Northeast Georgia Medical Center, Brenau University, Fair Street Neighborhood and Bradford-Ridgewood Neighborhood, and other downtown residential areas.
- Workshop #3** The West side including Browns Bridge Road, Atlanta Highway Corridor and the Lakeshore Mall area.

Web Interface

A special comprehensive plan web site will be developed and accessible through the City of Gainesville web site and from those of other key stakeholders. This form of media enables all stakeholders to monitor progress with the planning process, participate in online surveys and forums at any time, download and review draft material and resources, and learn about upcoming planning process events.

As advised by the Steering Committee and the project consultants, the web page may feature copies of presentations, meeting minutes or recordings, questionnaires and other material. A means of accepting citizen input through the web site will also be used, through online forms, chat pages or email links. The draft of the web page will be activated within March of 2011 and will be accessible for at least 3 months after the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted.

The Compass (Online Survey)

The planning team will build and administer an online survey tool - the “Sustainable Gainesville Compass”, which is designed to help the communities identify what they are and where they are going. The Compass is a graphically-rich application that includes a wide array of visual preference surveying and short-answer questions for the City as a whole, as well as within each potential character area or sub-area. The online posting of the Compass ensures broad accessibility and ease of use, with participants free to take it at their convenience. Depending on Project Management Team and Task Force preference, the Compass can remain posted throughout Phase 2; or it could be treated as a temporary exercise to segue into the more detailed workshops.

Public Displays and Promotional Material

In addition to the web page, the City will also seek to distribute surveys and promotional material through various public and civic areas. Copies of such material will be available throughout City offices frequented by the general public, including City Hall, the Community Development Offices and the Joint Administration Building. The City will also provide displays and/or promotional material in the library, the Georgia Mountains Center and at local businesses where amenable. These materials will provide information about the process, indications of where and how to participate and who to contact for additional information.

Direct Outreach

In an effort to ensure communication with critical stakeholders and organizations, the City will also directly reach out to many of the persons and groups listed within the Identification of Stakeholders Element. This includes regular emails notifying them of upcoming events, the status of the planning process and copies of materials as needed. This will also provide the City with a means to maintain a dialogue with these stakeholders, encouraging their involvement. City staff will also be available for special meetings or presentations at outside functions, such as neighborhood association meetings, business luncheons, and more.

Media Interaction

The City's Community Development Department and Communications Director will combine to provide full information and copies of plan material and notifications to the *Gainesville Times*, Jacobs Media and all other appropriate press associations. Local TV access station, TV18, will be used as able for broadcasting Planning Forums and/or public meetings. Special efforts will also be made to communicate with local Hispanic media outlets, both for print publication and possibly through radio stations, as well.

Local Media Outlets

Gainesville Times	WDUN AM 550
Mexico Lindo newspaper	WDUN FM 102.9
TV-18	AM 1240 ESPN radio (local)
accessnorthga.com	

SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETING THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

Development of the Community Agenda will commence once the City has completed the draft of the Community Assessment and Participation Program and submitted same to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for review. At that point the City will begin formally contacting key stakeholders to begin coordinating their involvement and scheduling preliminary events. Promotional material and the comprehensive plan web site will also be developed and refined in advance of public notification.

Once the Community Assessment and Participation Program have been approved the City will work with the Task Force to confirm the schedule for public events and begin formally collecting and assessing public comment as part of the visioning process. City staff will then work with the consultants and others as needed to begin crafting the Community Agenda document, and will work with the Task Force to monitor progress.

Proposed Community Agenda Development Process

Activity	Schedule (from process kickoff)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Confirm membership for Task Force</i> • <i>Confirm general public participation methodology, schedule</i> • <i>Develop plan web site</i> 	Complete
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Develop and distribute promotional and educational material</i> • <i>Develop and post Compass</i> • <i>Develop agendas / presentations for workshops</i> • <i>Continue Task Force meetings</i> 	0 - 60 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Conduct planning workshops</i> • <i>Review workshop results with PMT / Task Force</i> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Draft community Vision; Confirm final Issues and Opportunities</p>	30 - 90 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Begin crafting draft Community Agenda document</i> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Emphasis on defining final community Vision, establishing preliminary issue resolutions and proposed action items</p>	3 - 4 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Continue drafting Community Agenda with input from the PMT and the Task Force</i> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Emphasis on Future Development Strategy and preliminary Implementation Strategy</p>	4 - 5 months
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Finalize Action Plan / Agenda document with input from the PMT and the Task Force</i> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Review and refine final draft document</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final hearing and approval of Community Agenda</i> 	6 – 8 months