

Community Participation Program



Steering Committee Meeting 6-12-06

**Joint Lee County and the Cities of
Leesburg and Smithville
2026 Comprehensive Plan**

Community Participation Program

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Community Participation Program

I. INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the *Community Participation Program* is an important first step in obtaining citizen participation and involvement in the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the *Community Participation Program* of Lee County and the Cities of Leesburg and Smithville Comprehensive Plan is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process and are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan, individual plan components, or plan amendments. More importantly, citizens should have the ability to participate actively in the process of defining the community's vision, values, goals, policies, priorities, and implementation strategies.

Due to the severe time constraint in preparing the Comprehensive Plan, the public participation involves the Steering Committee, Stakeholders and 4 public meetings in various locations throughout the county.

II. LIST OF SUGGESTED STAKEHOLDERS

The Lee County Board of Commissioners, Leesburg City Council and Smithville City Council, Planning Commission, Steering Committee, and Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center will work together to identify those individuals and groups that have a special interest in the development of the *Community Agenda* for Lee County and the Cities of Leesburg and Smithville. The stakeholders are comprised of representatives of the various organizations as listed in the table below. As the planning process moves forward, additional stakeholders are likely to be identified and will be added as appropriate. Stakeholders will be interviewed and called upon to assist with the development of the *Community Agenda*.

Stakeholder Listing

County Administrator
Utilities Authority Director
County Engineer/Zoning Administrator
Health Department Director
Parks and Recreation Director
Residential Developer/Builder
Major Landowners
Environmental Activists
Land Planner
Planning Commission Members
Board of Education Superintendent
Chamber of Commerce
Development Authority
Agricultural Representatives
Natural Resource Conservation Staff

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III. LIST OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center will guide the citizen participation and coordination efforts associated with the Comprehensive Plan. A series of meetings will be facilitated to build consensus through a collaborative planning process that serves to create an open, inclusive, and interactive forum.

The *Community Participation Program* tasks are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Comprehensive Plan and ensure a broad participatory base. A specific emphasis on the views of all segments of the community will also include representation from the low and moderate income and minority populations identified in the planning process. The following tasks will aid the planning, assessment, evaluation, and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Steering Committee

The Lee County Commission and Cities of Leesburg and Smithville shall appoint a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the following authorities, the business community, and citizens to direct, advise and help shape the *Community Agenda* and overall Comprehensive Plan process. Letters were mailed to Steering Committee members explaining the comprehensive plan process and a calendar with meeting dates through February 2007. At the first meeting, members received a notebook containing: DCA State Planning Recommendations- Issues and Opportunities, Policies, Development Patterns, Character Areas, committee member list with contact information.

2. Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee will meet monthly beginning June 2006 through February 2007 to provide guidance and feedback throughout the planning process. Due to the severe time constraint, public meetings will be held in July and August 2006.

3. Stakeholder Interviews

The purpose of Stakeholder interviews is to identify major community issues and develop a complete understanding of the public opinions, comments, and concerns, including potential sources of conflict, and anticipated barriers impeding effective implementation. Stakeholders were mailed a letter explaining the plan process. The interviewer will use prepared survey questions (see attached interview questions). The results will be incorporated into the development of the community vision and the Comprehensive Plan and used to illustrate the impact that the feedback has had on the progress of the plan.

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III. LIST OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES (continued)

a. Community Agenda Preference Meetings

The visioning process will be accomplished in four public meetings conducted in various areas of the county and both cities. These public meetings will be announced through flyers, personal invitations and the Lee County website- www.lee.ga.us

These public meetings will use a powerpoint slide show of county and statewide photograph preference exercise to draw out citizen opinions based on the community issues outlined in the plan. A Vision Statement will be developed from these public meetings.

b. Maintain Project Website

Lee County will have a special link on the homepage of www.lee.ga.us to provide information on the progress of the planning process including Steering Committee Members List and Meeting Agendas. Throughout the process, information will be updated. Comments, suggestions and pictures will be solicited. A direct link email address to reubanks@swgrdc.org will be provided for the Comprehensive Plan project and will be managed by the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center.

c. Public Information Outreach Plan

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center staff will coordinate the development of an effective media plan to publicize information on the planning process to its citizens and other stakeholders. The following tactics will be used to inform the citizens and media about the plan progress.

1. The Lee County Ledger (legal organ for the County-weekly newspaper) and The Albany Herald (daily local newspaper) will be educated about the plan using briefings and news releases. The development of creative press releases, feature stories, columns, and interviews will be used to better inform the public.
2. Public Information Materials-Outreach materials will be created and used to help the public understand the Comprehensive Plan. These materials will be distributed at public meetings and other geographical locations to educate and establish visible, continuous public feedback (for example: fact sheets; comment forms; displays; flyers; notices, etc)

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IV. LIST OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES (continued)

d. Required Public Hearings

The Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center will advertise all public hearings in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification for initiation of the Planning Process, review and adoption of the Community Participation Plan, and review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The first public hearing to receive comments on the Community Assessment will be held July 13, 2006. The second public hearing will be scheduled for October 2006 for review of the Community Agenda.

The plan will involve input from groups within Lee County and the Cities of Leesburg and Smithville, including but not limited to, the Planning Commission, development professionals, the general public and elected officials. The *Community Participation Program* will address the eight (8) community issues of the Comprehensive Plan: population; economic development; natural and cultural resources; community facilities and services; housing; land use; transportation and intergovernmental coordination.

IV. PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

The following is a schedule for the completion of the *Community Assessment*, *Public Participation* and *Community Agenda* portions of the 2026 Lee County and the Cities of Leesburg and Smithville Comprehensive Plan. This schedule will be followed throughout the update process, with minor adjustments dependent on the Plan's progress. For the most current information and schedule, visit the Lee County website at www.lee.ga.us, call Rozanne Eubanks at the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center at (229) 522-3552 or email reubanks@swgrdc.org

DATE	OBJECTIVE
June 7, 2006	Lee County Ledger-article explaining Comprehensive Plan Process and public Meeting Dates Website reflects above information plus Steering Committee Members list along with the June 12 th Meeting Agenda
June 12, 2006	Steering Committee Meeting-Discussion of Issues and Opportunities and Identification of Character Areas

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IV. PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE (continued)

June 2006	Prepare Community Assessment and Community Participation Program with Steering Committee Review
July 10, 2006	Steering Committee Meeting-Houston County Administrator and Perry City Manager to discuss growth Issues and how to address them Discussion of Public Meetings
July 13, 2006	Public Hearing on Community Agenda Local Governments sign Resolution to Adopt Community Agenda and Community Participation Program
July 17, 2006- August 10, 2006	4 Public Meetings in the county: Visioning Session, Issues and Opportunities, Character Areas, Public Input for Community Agenda
July-October 2006	Prepare Community Agenda with guidance from Steering Committee and Public Input
October 2006	Public Hearing and Review Period to Provide feedback of Draft Community Agenda
October 2006	Local Governments adoption of Transmittal Resolution and Submission of Community Agenda to DCA for Review
February 2007	Local Governments adopt Comprehensive Plan
March 2007	Community Agenda distributed and Publicized as stated in Community Participation Program

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V. **PUBLICIZING THE COMMUNITY AGENDA**

Upon completion of a draft version of the *Community Agenda*, the document will enter a 30-day review period during which citizen comments will be formally collected and appropriate revisions made to the *Agenda*. This review period is tentatively scheduled for October 1-30, 2006. Local governments will adopt Resolution to transmit *Community Agenda* to DCA on October 31, 2006.

Following final adoption of the complete Joint Lee County and Cities of Leesburg and Smithville 2026 Comprehensive Plan, a variety of methods will be utilized to publicize the document. An advertisement in The Lee County Ledger will identify all locations where the complete Comprehensive Plan will be available along with locations where the *Community Assessment Executive Summary* and the *Community Agenda* will be available. These locations will include the Lee County Library, Lee County Courthouse Superior Court Clerk's Office, Lee County Administrator's office and Leesburg and Smithville City Hall. Additionally, the document will be available on the Lee County website www.lee.ga.us, Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center website www.swgrdc.org and through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs at www.georgiaplanning.com. Local community organizations will be encouraged to provide a direct link to the document from their website. Copies will also be available through the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center.

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Joint Lee County/Cities of Leesburg and Smithville Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Carl Barkalow (Leesburg District-County Engineer)
Trish Batten (Redbone District)
David Byrd (Agricultural)
Yolanda Clayton (City of Smithville)
Henry Crisp (Smithville/Chokee District)
Greg Crowder (Economic Development)
Earline Davis (Environmental)
Ed Duffy (Palmyra District)
Cassandra Durham (City of Smithville)
Darrel Ealum (Leesburg District)
Troy Golden (Planning Commission)
Foxye Harper (City of Leesburg)
George “Smitty” Johnson (City of Leesburg)
Martie Jones (Builder/Developer)
Julian Lindsey (Redbone District)
Reggie Mobley (Smithville/Chokee District)
Ralph Moore (Smithville/Chokee District)
Rick Muggridge (Century District)
Jim Norris (Planning Commission)
Clayton Smith (Palmyra District)
Jerry Smtih (Smithville/Chokee District)
Tom Sumners (Agricultural)
T. P. Tharp (Retirement Community)
Lawson Vann (Century District)
Larry Walters (Board of Education Superintendent)

See sample Steering Committee Member letter on page 10
See Agendas for June and July Steering Committee Meetings on pp. 14-15

Community Participation Program

May 26, 2006

Mr. David Byrd
476 Jordan Rd.
Leesburg, GA 31763

Dear David,

Doug Collins recommended you to serve as the Agricultural representative on the Lee County Comprehensive Plan *Steering Committee*. The Comprehensive Plan will involve Lee County and the cities of Leesburg and Smithville. Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires local governments to develop a 10 year plan addressing the following topics: Population; Community Facilities (water, sewer, public safety, schools, etc); Economic Development; Land Use; Housing; Intergovernmental Coordination; Natural and Cultural Resources; and Transportation. The Plan will ensure quality growth, assist the cities and county to prioritize expenditure of funds and coordinate future development efforts. The RDC has been contracted to render technical assistance in the development of this Plan.

The *Steering Committee* is designed to guide the planning process and is charged with providing feedback and advising the consultant planning team. Monthly meetings will be held from June to October (see attached calendar) to assist with keeping the project on schedule, review the preliminary data and findings, and make recommendations. The planning process normally takes 12-18 months. However, Lee County's plan deadline is October 31, 2006, so time is critical necessitating the monthly meetings.

The first part of the plan involves a Community Assessment to collect data and information, the assessment should be completed by June 30th.

During July and August, public meetings will be held weekly around the county to solicit community participation. A "Visioning" Session will be held at the first public meeting for citizens to share ideas, voice concerns, and describe their vision for the next 10 years. Additionally, one-on-one interviews will be conducted with key community leaders to gather more detailed information about a particular area of expertise.

Finally, the Community Agenda will serve as the road map for the community's future and will be developed from the Community Assessment and Public Participation.

We look forward to working with you in shaping the future of Lee County. Please call me with questions or concerns. My cell number is 886-1050.

Respectfully,

Rozanne Eubanks
Planner

Community Participation Program

Identified Stakeholders as of June 2006

* Additional stakeholders will be interviewed as they are identified during the planning process.

Alan Ours (County Administrator)

Jackie Sizemore (Elected Officials)

Morris Leverette

Jim Quinn

Sonny Thaggard (Agricultural)

Wendell Arrington

Pete Griffith

Stan Cannon (Landowner-Businessman)

W F Griffin

Roy Goodson

John B. (Jay) Williams

Chris Boswell (Utility Authority)

Dana Hager (Health Department)

Claire Leavy (Library)

Chief Deputy Parker (Sherriff)

Eddie Dixon (Parks and Recreation)

Chief Joe Pollock (Fire Department)

Eddie Hinman (Chamber of Commerce/Development Authority)

Winston Oxford

Jenny Crisp (Environmental)

Melissa Gordon (Natural Resources/Conservation)

Tommy Jowers (Builder/Developer)

Ray Lloyd

Focus Groups with Sertoma Club and First Baptist Church Senior Adults

See sample Stakeholder letter on page 12

See Stakeholder Interview Questions on page 13

Community Participation Program

May 25, 2006

Mr. Chris Boswell
Lee County Utility Authority
PO Box 889
Leesburg, GA 31763

Dear Mr. Boswell,

As Utility Authority Director, you serve as a *Stakeholder* in reference to Lee County's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will involve Lee County and the cities of Leesburg and Smithville. Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires local governments to develop a 10 year plan addressing the following topics: Population; Community Facilities (water, sewer, public safety, schools, etc); Economic Development; Land Use; Housing; Intergovernmental Coordination; Natural and Cultural Resources; and Transportation. The Plan will ensure quality growth, assist the cities and county to prioritize expenditure of funds and coordinate future development efforts. The RDC has been contracted to render technical assistance in the development of this Plan.

The planning process normally takes 12-18 months. However, Lee County's plan deadline is October 31, 2006, so time is critical. The first part of the plan involves a Community Assessment to collect current data and information, the assessment should be completed by June 30th.

During July and August, public meetings will be held weekly around the county to solicit community participation. A "Visioning" Session will be held at the first public meeting for citizens to share ideas, voice concerns, and describe their vision for the next 10 years.

Additionally, one-on-one interviews will be conducted with key community leaders- *Stakeholders*- to gather more detailed information about a particular area of expertise. As a *Stakeholder*, your input is invaluable. I have enclosed the interview questions for your consideration and look forward to meeting with you in the next 3 weeks. I will contact you to schedule a convenient time.

Finally, the Community Agenda will serve as the road map for the community's future and will be developed from the Community Assessment and Public Participation.

We look forward to working with you in shaping the future of Lee County. Please call me with questions or concerns. My cell number is 886-1050, you may reach me in the evenings at 759-2453.

Respectfully,

Rozanne Eubanks
Planner

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Lee County Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Interview

Date: _____

Stakeholder: _____

1. List three (3) specific planning concepts or policies that work well and should be retained as we revise the comprehensive plan.
2. Identify the three (3) most critical problems with the current planning policies and implementation procedures.
3. If you could identify one (1) thing that is missing from the old comprehensive plan in order to achieve the kind of development you want, what would you add?
4. Please list any other information you think is helpful as we revise the comprehensive plan- what do you envision for the future and how can this be accomplished?
5. List current and potential issues facing the community and how these may be addressed through the comprehensive plan.
6. List current and potential opportunities for the community and how to plan accordingly.

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**Steering Committee Agenda
June 12, 2006 6:30pm
Lee County Commission Room**

I. Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes) Rozanne Eubanks

Paul Forgey- issues and opportunities (10 minutes)

II. Discussion of Issues and Opportunities facing Lee County, Leesburg and Smithville relating to :

Break into 3 groups- (20 minutes)

- **Population**
- **Economic Development**
- **Housing**
- **Natural and Cultural Resources & land Use & intergovernmental**
- **Community Facilities and Services & Transportation**
- **Land Use and Development Issues**
- **Intergovernmental Coordination**
- **Transportation**

Group Reports- 10 minutes

III. Discussion of Character Areas in Lee County, Leesburg and Smithville discuss definitions- (10 min)

A *character area* is defined as a specific geographic area within the community that:

- * has **unique** or **special characteristics** to be preserved or enhanced
(such as downtown, historic district, or transportation corridor)
- * has **potential** to evolve into a unique area with more intentional guidance of future development through adequate planning and implementation (such as strip commercial corridor that could be revitalized into a more attractive village development pattern)
or
- * requires **special attention** due to unique development issues
(rapid change of development patterns, economic decline, etc.)

IV. Consistency with Quality Community Objectives

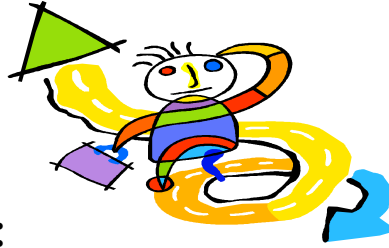
V. Adjourn

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**Steering Committee Agenda
July 10, 2006 6:30pm
Lee County Commission Room**

- I. Welcome Rozanne Eubanks**
- II. Guest Speakers- Steve Engle, Director of Administration
Houston County Board of Commissioners
Lee Gilmour, Perry City Manager**
- III. Discussion of Community Assessment**
- IV. Discussion of Public Participation in Comprehensive Plan**
- V. Adjourn**

Help shape the Future of Lee County!



Public Meetings Scheduled:

Monday, July 17, 2006

6:30 pm

Lee County Commission Room

Monday, July 24, 2006

6:30pm

Smithville City Hall

Monday, July 31, 2006

6:30pm

Leesburg Fire Station (Hwy 195)

Thursday, August 10, 2006

6:30pm

Redbone Fire Station

Vision Session-

**What do you see for Lee County in the next
20 years?**

Joint Lee County and the Cities of Leesburg and Smithville
2026 Comprehensive Plan

For more information, contact Rozanne Eubanks @ 522-3552 or www.lee.ga.us

Community Participation Program

**Vision Session Agenda
July 17, 2006 6:30-8:30pm
Lee County Commission Room**

- 6:30 Welcome and Introductions
Overview of Meeting
Goal- Create a Vision for Lee County for the next 20 years**
- 6:50 Breakout Session - Discussion of Issues and Opportunities facing Lee County, Leesburg and Smithville relating to:**
- Population
 - Economic Development
 - Housing
 - Natural and Cultural Resources
 - Intergovernmental Coordination
 - Community Facilities and Services
 - Transportation
 - Land Use and Development Issues
- 7:20 Group Reports - top 5 issues and opportunities**
- 7:40 Breakout Session- Create Vision Statement using top 3 Issues/Opportunities**
- 8:10 Group Reports**
- 8:15 Development of overall Vision Statement**
- 8:30 Adjourn**

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**Vision Session Agenda
July 17, 2006 6:30-8:30pm
Lee County Commission Room**

Issues and Opportunities

- Rapidly increasing population
- Migration of graduates to other areas
- Increasing public service demands
- Lack of commercial and industrial growth and infrastructure
- Predominately a bedroom community
- Income and taxes lost to other counties
- Growth has been dictated by developers rather than local plan
- Need to protect important natural areas and water resources
- Control growth in floodplain
- Student growth outpacing school capacity
- Unimaginative new subdivisions
- Traffic and transportation problems resulting from growth
- Disconnect between northern and southern portions of County
- Preservation of Rural Character-Agricultural/Forestry land
- Tourism Opportunities-Cultural/Heritage/Agricultural/Natural Resources
- Increase intergovernmental communication
- Promote and protect the necessity of Agricultural/Forestry and Wildlife Management Practices

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Document prepared by:

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