



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM



CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Approved by the Citizen Advisory Committee
August 28, 2006
Revised October 5, 2006

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A. Introduction

The new city of Sandy Springs, Georgia has already demonstrated its commitment to public participation since its incorporation December 1, 2005. Public hearings have been held on new ordinances, community involvement seminars were held in January and February of 2006 on the topic of Smart Growth, enforcement workshops have been held on building codes, tree preservation, and the new sign ordinance, and community meetings have been held on the Interim Comprehensive Plan including the element of existing land use, future land use, and the remainder of the Interim Comprehensive Plan. All this was accomplished in the city's first six months of existence.

This plan for community participation builds upon that foundation. It is an important first step in obtaining citizen participation and involvement in the Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to ensure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process and are provided opportunities to comment on the plan and its individual components. Citizens will have the ability to actively participate in the process of defining the community's vision, values, goals, policies, priorities and implementation strategies.

This Comprehensive Plan also will build upon the work previously done by Fulton County in its *Focus on Fulton 2025* Comprehensive Plan and the Interim Comprehensive Plan for Sandy Springs, which is an extraction of those elements which have direct application to the new city. The Interim Land Use Plan and Future Land Use Plan along with the extracted plan texts together comprise the Interim Comprehensive Plan that was adopted by the Sandy Springs City Council on June 20, 2006.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

The community participation tasks are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Comprehensive Plan and to 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 Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) will aid and direct the planning, assessment, evaluation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan will be developed under the direction and active participation of informed stakeholders appointed by the Mayor and City Council. Those selected from the vast

body of interested citizens and organizations will comprise a Citizen Advisory Committee. The CAC will guide citizen participation and coordinate public contributions associated with specific plan elements. 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 CAC will direct the course and outcomes of the planning process. Members of the committee will share the common traits of:

- Proven experience in planning and development issues;
- Prior experience with the Fulton County Comprehensive Plan;
- Representative of a group or body of interest concerned about the planning process; and
- Have a demonstrated ability to build consensus on public issues.

The CAC will disaggregate into working sub-committees to address key work elements, specifically:

1. Transportation
2. Recreation and Park
3. Community Facilities and Land Use

The goal is to have each sub-committee fully knowledgeable of its assigned topic, represent its recommendations to the full CAC, and become champions for its recommendations.

The CAC is also a mechanism for continuous public involvement by the citizenry. Interested individuals can attend the CAC meetings, and notice of its meetings is and will continue to be provided. Time on each agenda is provided at each meeting of the CAC and its subcommittees for public comment.

C. Citizen Participation Techniques

Kick Off Public Meeting

The Sandy Springs Mayor and City Council will host a kick-off meeting to officially announce the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and the planning process to the citizens, the media and other interested parties. In addition to the Mayor and City Council, key department heads will be invited to introduce the process. The community will participate in the viewing of presentations covering the project purpose and the general approach to be taken in building the plan. Initial opinion surveys and volunteer sign up forms will be available at this meeting (this meeting was held July 24, 2006).

Community Meetings

The City will hold two community meetings following public distribution of the Community Assessment and this Community Participation Program. Advance notice of these meetings will be

provided. The city will also hold community meetings following public distribution of the Community Agenda.

Required Public Hearings

The City of Sandy Springs will legally advertise all public hearings in compliance with city policy and state law. It will also advertise public hearings in community print media and officially post the meeting notice at City Hall. Public hearings are anticipated at the initiation of the planning process and before submission of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program. An additional public hearing is scheduled at the completion of the Community Agenda but prior to its submission for state and regional review. Prior to the public hearings before City Council, work sessions will be scheduled for discussion of the elements of the Comprehensive Plan under review. The Sandy Springs Planning Commission will also hold public hearings on these matters.

Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

An appointed Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) will meet on a monthly basis throughout the planning process. The meetings of the Citizens Advisory Committee will be publicly announced through official postings, web page announcements, and media releases. Time during these meetings will be provided for citizen comments.



Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

The CAC sub-committees (transportation, recreation and parks, and community facilities and land use) will hold breakout sessions during the course of the general meeting and will encourage public participation during its breakout sessions.

Maintain Website Presence

The Comprehensive Plan will have a dedicated web page under the “City Government” heading on the City of Sandy Springs website. This site will allow for meeting announcements, posting of completed work, the opportunity for community input through completing questionnaires and a contact point for citizens’ inquiries with an e-mail auto response. Interested citizens may email the project manager from this dedicated web page.

Public Information Outreach

The Sandy Springs Director of Communication and Media will coordinate the development of an effective media plan to publicize information on the planning process to citizens and other

stakeholders. The following techniques will be used to inform the citizens and media about the progress in preparing the comprehensive plan.

1. Media - Media outlets will be informed about the plan using briefings, releases and media tours. Creative press releases, feature stories, photo opportunities, columns and interviews will be used to better inform the public. This department has access to business and community newsletter editors, an interactive website, e-blasts, the city quarterly newsletter, and access to over 100 home owner associations.
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 geographic locations to educate and establish visible, continuous public feedback in the form of fact sheets, comment cards, questionnaires, factoids, and meeting notices.

For meeting to solicit public comments on the Comprehensive Plan or for public hearings, meeting notices may also be issued to the City's list of home owners associations, community non-profit newsletter editors, and business newsletter editors and to the City's list of over 1,000 citizens who have previously been in attendance at public hearings or public presentations of planning issues.

Plan Development Timeline

Prior to commencing plan preparation, the City of Sandy Springs will develop and publish on its website a schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan indicating completion dates for key elements and identifying public meetings and Public hearings. The tentative schedule is attached.

Community Participation Techniques

The following communication techniques will be used to better engage and inform the public and the interests groups that have a specific interest in planning issues.



Jim Durrett, Executive Director of the Livable Communities Coalition, addresses the Sandy Springs Comprehensive Plan Citizen Advisory Committee

Technique	Description	Application
Kiosks, Posters, Displays	Displays, posters, maps, photos.	At prominent locations, both public and private.
Public Information Meetings / Public Hearings	PowerPoint presentations, with wall displays, handouts and response cards	Key points in the plan development, i.e., Assessment, Visioning sessions, Agenda development.
Website and dedicated e-mail and response and interactive surveys	Develop a page on the City webpage for updates, questionnaires and presentation materials.	Present schedules, announcements, responses and draft documents.
Speakers Bureau	The planning team provides information	Business and community meetings.
Facilitated meetings in council districts	Vision, goals, objectives	Community and council district based and interactive processes.
Surveys	Web surveys, handout questionnaires, comment cards, dedicated e-mail	At key points in the plan's development.
Technical Advisory Committee	Key officials with implementation responsibility	Vet all documents, serve speakers bureau and coordinate with intergovernmental agencies.

Attachment

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
SANDY SPRINGS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
AND DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE PROGRAM
Revised October 3, 2006
(Subject to Further Revision)**

October 9, 2006	Land Use Subcommittee meets at 7:00 p.m. to continue discussion of character area map and text description
October 16, 2006	Deadline for submission of transportation and recreation/park inventory and assessment parts of master plans for inclusion in Community Assessment document
October 18, 2006	Tentative date for completion of draft of Community Assessment for city staff review
OCTOBER MILESTONE:	DRAFT COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT COMPLETED
October 23, 2006	Citizen Advisory Committee Meets: Presentation by Transportation Consultant and discussion of transportation inventory and assessment (portion of Community Assessment)
October 25, 2006	City staff submits comments on Community Assessment
November 3, 2006	Submit revised Community Assessment for distribution to public and citizen advisory committee
November 27, 2006	Citizen Advisory Committee Meets: Presentation by Recreation/Parks Consultant and Comprehensive Planning Consultant and discussion of recreation/park and other components of Community Assessment
November 29, 2006	Public Forum #1: Riverwood High School Auditorium, 5900 Heards Drive, 7:00 p.m. to present and discuss draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program
November 30, 2006	Public Forum #2: Sandy Springs City Hall, 7840 Roswell Road, City Council Chambers to present and discuss draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program

December 21, 2006	Planning Commission holds “initial” public hearing on Capital Improvement Element for Impact Fees ¹ and public hearing to consider transmittal of Community Assessment and Community Participation Program for state and regional review
January 9, 2007	Mayor and City Council holds work session on transmittal of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program for state and regional review
January 16, 2007	Mayor and City Council holds “initial” public hearing on Capital Improvement Element for Impact Fees and public hearing to consider transmittal of Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. Voting item: Resolution transmitting the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program to the ARC and Georgia DCA for review and comment)

JANUARY MILESTONE: COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT IN REVIEW PROCESS

Jan. 2007 – Feb. 2007	Interviews of Stakeholders by Comprehensive Planning Consultant
January 22, 2007	Citizen Advisory Committee: Meet to review and discuss citizen questionnaire and plan for conduct of visioning workshops
February 2007	Conduct Three Visioning Workshops with Citizenry. Prepare and release a survey (questionnaire) for residents to complete at visioning forums and on the city’s web page

FEB 2007 MILESTONE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IS UNDERWAY

February 2007 (early)	Recreation/Parks Consultant submits master plan draft to City staff for review, revises, and master plan gets distributed to Citizen Advisory Committee
February 26, 2007	Citizen Advisory Committee: Meets to discuss one or more components of the Community Agenda and Recreation/Parks Master Plan

¹ A separate set of administrative rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs establishes a review procedure for impact fee programs which entails an “initial” public hearing prior to initiating the process.

February 2007 (TBD)	First meeting of Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee ² to discuss public safety planning (police and fire; recreation/parks)
FEB 2007 MILESTONE	DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE ADVISORY COMMITTEE IS FORMED AND BEGINS ITS WORK
March 2007 (early)	Transportation Consultant submits master plan draft to City staff for review, revises, and master plan gets distributed for public review and comment including Citizen Advisory Committee
March 2007 (early)	Comprehensive Planning Consultant submits draft of complete Community Agenda for city staff review; revise as appropriate
March 2007 (mid)	Tentative deadline for public dissemination of draft Community Agenda for review
MARCH 2007 MILESTONE	DRAFT COMMUNITY AGENDA IS COMPLETE
March 2007 (mid)	Second meeting of Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee to discuss transportation master plan
March 26, 2007	Citizen Advisory Committee meets - Discussion of Community Agenda including transportation master plan
April 2007 (mid)	Third meeting of Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee to discuss impact fee study and calculations
April 23, 2007	Citizen Advisory Committee meets - Finalize comments on Community Agenda including transportation master plan
May 2007	Planning Commission holds public hearing on draft Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for Impact Fees
June 12, 2007	Mayor and City Council hold work session on Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for Impact Fees (2 nd Tues.)
June 19, 2007	Mayor and City Council hold public hearing and consider passing a resolution to transmit the Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for Impact Fees to Atlanta Regional Commission and Georgia Department of Community Affairs for regional and state review (3 rd Tues.)

² This is a committee separate from the Citizen Advisory Committee that must consist of 5-10 members, 40% of which have development-related interests. The Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee will, however, be drawn from the Citizen Advisory Committee.

JUNE 2007 MILESTONE COMMUNITY AGENDA IS IN THE REVIEW PROCESS

- June-September 2007 Community Agenda is in the review process; revise documents if necessary based on regional and state reviews
- June 2007 Fourth meeting of Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee to discuss draft impact fee ordinance(s)
- June 2007 Additional meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee if needed
- July 2007 Fifth and final meeting of Development Impact Fee Advisory Committee to discuss draft impact fee ordinance(s)
- August 2007 Planning Commission holds public hearing on Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for impact fees
- September 2007 Mayor and City Council holds work session Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for impact fees³ (2nd Tues.)
- September 2007 Mayor and City Council considers adoption of the Community Agenda and Capital Improvement Element for impact fees (3rd Tues.)

SEPT 2007 MILESTONE COMMUNITY AGENDA IS ADOPTED

- October 31, 2007 Recertification deadline for Sandy Springs to adopt the comprehensive plan (Community Agenda)
- October 2007 Planning Commission holds public hearing and considers recommendations on impact fee ordinance(s)
- Oct. - Nov. 2007 Mayor and City Council holds two public hearings on draft impact fee ordinance(s)
- November 2007 Mayor and City Council considers adopting impact fee ordinance(s)

NOV 2007 MILESTONE IMPACT FEE ORDINANCE(S) ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED

³ Plan adoption is a prerequisite to adoption of the impact fee ordinance(s). However, public hearings on the ordinances can take place prior to plan adoption.