

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PLAN

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1.1 Purpose

The primary intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide the community with documentation that reflects the overall vision for the community. The Community Participation Plan serves as a major component of the Comprehensive Plan and is designed to give citizens the opportunity to interact in the planning process. Public participation allows citizens to address issues and challenges unique to their community. Implementing a community participation plan reveals the full range of needs and values that help to shape the future of communities. An effective and strategic public involvement process ensures a successful comprehensive plan that enhances quality of life and preserves the unique character of a community.

1.2. Scope

Meriwether County is required by state law to complete an updated Comprehensive Plan by February 29, 2008. The Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005, provides a state mandated process for creation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Community Participation plan outlines a step-by-step approach to strategically identify effective public involvement methods that will guide the community in the comprehensive planning process. Proper execution of these tasks will improve the overall quality of the plan and clearly define the values of the community. Involving the public during the planning stage will encourage strong support of the goals and objectives described in the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 Public Involvement

Public involvement is most successful when all segments of the community are involved. This includes elected officials, the business community, and civic organizations. Overall community engagement is designed to improve the quality of decisions, increase ease of implementation, and provide greater public understanding of community goals and objectives. Lastly, public involvement is essential in creating a vision of the community that defines its unique character.

1.4 Identification of Stakeholders

To ensure proper management of the comprehensive plan, a stakeholder's steering committee has been created to work directly with the project management team. This outreach component serves as an important tool to accomplish the goals of the comprehensive plan and to build a strong network between the government, citizens, and private entities. This committee includes a network of community organizations and local companies. Committee members are listed below.

Meriwether County Commissioners

- Freddie Hines District 1
- Robert Moreland District 2
- Frank Keller District 3
- Frank Buce District 4
- Charley Neely, Chairman District 5

Stakeholder Steering Committee Members

- George Chapman
- Ronnie Doche
- Sally Estes
- Travis Ferguson
- Charlie Glanton
- Penny Hale
- Joe Humphries
- Regina Jackson
- Melvin Myrick
- Marilyn Parham
- Arthur Pearson
- Faye Perdue
- Kip Purvis
- Laurie Quinlin
- Lewis Routon
- Linda Wilburn

1.5 Identification of Community Participation Techniques



Meriwether County 2008- 2028 Comprehensive Plan

The 2008 - 2028 Meriwether Comprehensive Plan will be based on public participation and public input. There are several phases involved in the public participation component, all of which are outlined on the following pages. These explain the techniques to be used, their purpose, the process to achieve each and a timeline for completion of each component.

Community Participation Techniques

Public Awareness Technique

Participation Technique	Description	Meriwether County Proposal
Kiosk/Lobby Displays	Posting maps, photos, and alternative plans in a prominent location in City Hall, county courthouse, or public library. These displays provide information to visitors to view at their leisure and outside of a formal public meeting.	Posters/ Displays at County Courthouse offices and City Halls of local municipalities in Meriwether County.
Kick-Off Public Meetings	An event to announce the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders and to view a presentation covering the project purpose and general plan approach.	January 22, 2007 at Meriwether Council Chambers.
Printed Information	The printed information consists of brochures, fact sheets, maps, future meeting opportunities and newsletters, among others. The information can be disseminated through information centers, bill stuffing, or as newspaper inserts.	Meriwether County with the assistance of the Collaborative Firm will mail and release post-cards, flyers, and pamphlets to the public.
Newspaper/ Magazine Advertisement	Advertisements in newspapers should be placed in commonly read sections and during days most likely to reach intended audiences. The advertisements often satisfy legal requirements.	The Collaborative Firm, LLC will contact local newspapers to advertise public announcements.

Public Awareness and Input Techniques



Meriwether County 2008- 2028 Comprehensive Plan

Public Interaction Techniques

Participation Technique	Description	Meriwether County Proposal
Mailing Lists	Agencies use mailing lists throughout planning and project development to keep in touch with the community and other key people. Lists include mailing and email addresses but may also include telephone and fax numbers or other information to aid in contacting people in a variety of ways.	County to determine contacts from major organizations. The list may include: (neighborhood associations, business associations, clubs, etc.). Mass email listings, newsletters and other mailing will be sent to the public as necessary.
Media Strategies	Media strategies inform customers about projects and programs through newspapers, radio, television and videos, billboards, posters and variable message signs, mass mailings of brochures or newsletters, and distribution of fliers. Working with the media, an agency takes an active role in disseminating information.	The Collaborative Firm, LLC shall utilize various media strategies to inform the public and to gain feedback about the comprehensive plan.
Meetings/ Hearings	Public Meetings or Hearings are one of the more traditional methods of participation. These are legislative requirements to inform the public of changes and planning phases in the community, as well as proposals or issues that may already be on the table.	Public meetings will be held in different sub-areas of the County throughout the process.
Opinion Polls/Surveys	Opinion Polls are surveys of what the public would like to see done. If properly done, they will give a representative sample of the population polled.	Surveys will be distributed at the Comprehensive Plan Public Meetings. Drop boxes will be located within strategic locations.
Brainstorming	Participants "brainstorm" when they come together in a freethinking forum to generate ideas. As now used, brainstorming is no longer an unstructured method of eliciting ideas from a group. Used properly -- either alone or in conjunction with other techniques -- brainstorming can be a highly effective method of moving participants out of conflict and toward consensus.	The Collaborative Firm, LLC professionals will lead brainstorming sessions that will be conducted during public meetings, steering committee meetings, and stakeholder meetings.
Vision, Goals, and Objectives Meetings	Facilitated meetings to determine answers to the three key planning questions – “What do you have?” “What do you want?” and “How will you get it?”	Information will be obtained through public workshops, meetings, steering committee meetings and elected officials, and staff



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Participation Technique	Description	Meriwether County Proposal
		input.
Email Blasts	Periodic mass mailings by email to provide important notices and other information. Public meetings offer the option of attendees providing their e-mail addresses on the sign in sheet. Create a database and send periodic progress e-mails and future meeting announcements to the distribution list.	<u>Via availability:</u> from County e-mail lists, and other contact sources, mass e-blasts will be forwarded regarding public meetings, progress, and any other significant information.
Workshops	Workshops are often small informal meetings that may include exhibits and presentations designed to be interactive among participants. They foster one on one and small group communication and are excellent for the discussion and critique of problem solving. They may require several facilitators depending on the size of the group.	Public Workshops will be held in sub-areas throughout the Comprehensive Planning Process.
Charrettes	The charrette method is a presentation of information; the information is reviewed; then there are questions and answers; and the group breaks up to voice their ideas notably about what should be done regarding a particular problem. This method is best used when there is sufficient time set aside for the process. Given the length, this method may be viewed as a more participatory approach of public involvement.	Charrettes will be held during sub-area public workshops.
Community Preference Survey	The community preference surveys are community meetings where the public evaluates a series of visual images commonly categorized by housing types and styles, streetscape, open space, commercial areas and other land uses, etc. Participants are asked to select "preferences" displayed as photos or renderings.	The Collaborative Firm, LLC will conduct a Community Preference Survey that will provide essential citizen input to the future of Meriwether County.



Meriwether County 2008- 2028 Comprehensive Plan

Public Partnership Techniques

Participation Technique	Description	Meriwether County Proposal
Technical Advisory/Steering Committees	Established to provide feedback, advise the planning team and shape the overall planning process. The Steering Committee will be comprised of representatives from the local neighborhood associations, authorities, the business community, key non-profit agencies, and citizens groups.	A large steering committee consisting of 22 persons has been advocated. See attached list of selected participants.



1.6 Comprehensive Plan Schedule

The table below outlines the schedule for the completion of the Community Agenda. Additionally, it includes the schedule time frame for public involvement meeting.

TIME LINE FOR MERIWETHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Task	Duration
Development of Community Assessment (CA) & Public Participation Plan (PPP) Schedule	March 18, 2007 – May 2007
Submit Draft Community Assessment & Public Participation Plan to staff, stakeholders and officials for review and comment	May 2007
Citizen Stakeholder Committee Meetings	May 2007- January 2008
Public Kick-off Meeting for Community Assessment & Public Participation Plan	June 2007
Public Hearing #1 Submit Community Assessment & Public Participation Plan	June 2007
Review period for Certificate of Completion	August 2007
Review Period for Community Assessment & Public Participation Plan	August 2007- September 2007
Revisions to Community Assessment & Public Participation Plan	August 2007- September 2007
Begin Community Agenda (CAG)	October 2007
Community Workshops in various locations throughout County	October 2007 – November 2007
Revisions to the Community Issues and Opportunities	October 2007 – November 2007
Revisions to Character Areas	October 2007 – November 2007



TIME LINE FOR MERIWETHER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Task	Duration
Development of Future Development Map/Future Land Use Map	October 2007
Development Short Term Work Program	October /November 2007
Submit DRAFT Community Agenda to staff, stakeholders and officials for comments	November 2007
Open House & Presentation of the Community Agenda and Review Period	November 2007
Revisions to Community Agenda	December 2007
Public Hearing #2 County to Vote to submit Community Agenda for review to RDC and DCA	December 2007
Completeness Checklist Review	December 2007
Review by RDC & DCA	December 2007 –February 2008
Revisions to Community Agenda	December 2007 – February 2008
Submit Final Community Agenda to RDC for review	December 2007- January 2008
County to adopt the Final Comprehensive Plan	February 2008
Adoption Deadline	February 2008