

**COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
FOR
HARRIS COUNTY**

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

2009-2030



Prepared by
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REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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**HARRIS COUNTY
Comprehensive Plan 2009-2030
Community Participation Program**

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Introduction

Purpose

The development of a meaningful Comprehensive Plan begins with the insightful input of a community's citizens, government officials and staff addressing the issues of today, the opportunities of tomorrow and the steps necessary to effectuate positive change over the next 20 years. The Harris County Community Participation Program was designed to encourage as much public participation, open dialogue and communication as possible. Consensus on the Community Plan will translate into better government decisions and greater community agreement with those decisions.

State Comprehensive Plan Requirements

Harris County is required by State law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by June 30, 2009. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Intermediate Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), effective May 1, 2005.

Requirements for Creating a Successful Comprehensive Plan

The major challenge in developing a successful plan for Harris County is convincing its citizens that the Comprehensive Plan belongs to each and every citizen of Harris County and that broad based public participation is necessary to obtain citizen ownership of the plan. It is also necessary to educate plan participants that the plan should represent a balance of community interests defined by a give and take process that seeks local opinion and knowledge on planning issues. The end result of which creates community consensus (a Vision) in regard to future development policies and practices. Successful communities create a vision, agree upon a course of action to achieve the vision and take the steps necessary to implement the vision.

Identification of Harris County Stakeholders

The following is a list of the Harris County Stakeholders. A "stakeholder" is considered to be someone who has a vested interest in the process. It may include an individual, an organization, community, agency, etc. Stakeholders are an integral part of the community planning process, and the Community Participation Program should include tools to identify and engage representatives who have a present or future stake in the community. Key stakeholders include: 1. the community residents representing a diverse range of backgrounds and interests; 2. residents, specifically those that have been historically left out of the decision making process, like members of low-income communities, immigrant communities, and ethnic and minority groups; 3. business, industry and civic leaders; 4. the development community including real estate professionals, media representatives; and 5. city and county staff and elected officials. Other key stakeholders include agriculture and forestry interests, banks, churches and church leaders, civic clubs, students, tourism officials, service organizations, military leaders and members of the military with a vested interest in the community. Local property owners, local business owners, as well as representatives from Callaway Gardens and the Georgia Conservancy have also been identified as key stakeholders.

Stakeholders are vital to the process, because they create and are affected by change. Participation of these groups can help foster community understanding and support for the Comprehensive Plan document and provide fuel for the implementation of the plan.

This list is not inclusive. As more organizations and interested parties are identified throughout the process, names will be added to this list.

In order to assure all interested parties have a voice in the process, Harris County Board of Commissioners and the County Manager will serve as the steering committee for the comprehensive planning process.

The following list is a list of identified stakeholders and has been reviewed by the County Manager and the Harris County Board of Commissioners.

Harris County Board of Commissioners

J. Harry Lange, Chairman
Joe F. Manning, Commissioner
Patrick Whearley, Commissioner
Charles Wyatt, Commissioner
Joey M. Loudermilk, Commissioner

The Harris County Planning Commission

James Rodgers, Chairman
Tom Chambless
Ron Gibson
Garnett Ray, III
Willie Rutledge, Vice Chairman
Lewis Sturdivant
Harvey Weldon, Secretary

Harris County Staff

Daniel B. Bridges, County Manager
Nancy McMichael, Assistant County Manager, County Clerk
Jeff Culpepper, Water Works Director
Alex Haden, CI Warden
Allen Culpepper, Public Works Director

Harris County Sheriff

Mike Jolley

Harris County Chamber of Commerce

All members (Lynda Dawson - Contact Person)

Harris County Development Authority

All members (Ken Napier - Contact Person)

Harris County School Board

All Members (Glenda Johnson-Contact Person)

Harris County Leadership Class

All Members (Lynda Dawson – Contact Person)

Developers/Builders/Realtors

W. C. Bradley Company, George Woodruff Company
West Point Holdings, West Georgia Land Group

DFACS

Josephine Bray, Director

Family Connection

John Winchester, Contact Person

Harris County Senior Center

Pam Sanchez, Contact Person

Harris County Housing Authority

Josephine Ramsey, Contact Person

Health Department

Sandra Wilson, Director Environmental Health

Christi King

Agricultural /Forestry

Pine Mountain Soil Conservation (Jack McClung-Contact Person), Forestry Commission, Plum Tree Timber, MeadWestvaco, Saunder's Family Holdings, F.D. Roosevelt State Park, Harris County 4-H Club (Steve Morgan, Contact Person) etc.

Citizen Notification

Various media will be used to promote citizen involvement in the planning process. Civic leaders, civic groups, and churches will be contacted to assist in notifying citizens regarding involvement opportunities. Press releases, website postings, posters, announcements at public meetings and flyers attached to utility bills will be used to notify the public about upcoming meetings and to generate public interest. Specific invitations to public hearings and planning meetings will be extended to representatives of the Georgia Conservancy and Callaway Gardens.

Participation Techniques

Public Hearings

The State of Georgia rules and regulations for Local Comprehensive Planning require that two public hearings be held in association with the development of a Comprehensive Plan. The first required public hearing was held to inform the public that the planning process is underway and to go over the draft Community Assessment and draft Public Participation Program. The first public hearing was held December 16, 2008 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Harris County Court House. Public hearing attendees were briefed on the plan's timeline (Vision Meeting, Future Development Charrette, Final Review Meeting and Final Public Hearing Meeting) and how they could participate in the planning process. Attendees were also given an opportunity to comment on the draft Public Participation Plan and draft Community Assessment.

Vision Meeting

A meeting to review a general Vision Statement created for the Harris County Comprehensive Plan during the 2004/2005 planning process is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, 2009, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., at the Harris County Court House. Attendees will be briefed on what a Vision Statement is and the elements of a good vision statement. The meeting has two primary goals:

1. Review existing general Vision Statement and modify, if necessary.
2. Review/survey participants about Harris County issues and opportunities.

In order to achieve the above goals, a S.W.O.T. (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) Analysis will be conducted. Issues and opportunities for the planning period will be discussed, quality of life issues will be reviewed and major steps necessary to achieve desired results will also be discussed and measures that can be taken to identify future success will be developed.

Future Development Charrette

The Future Development Map design meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 2009, at the Harris County Court House. The meeting will start with a review of the general vision statement developed previously at the Vision Meeting. Next will be the review of the draft Character Area Map identified in the Community Assessment. The majority of the meeting time will be used to modify the draft Character Areas and to conduct the S.W.O.T Analysis. A draft Future Development Map will be developed based on participant input. A second Future Development Map meeting will be held Tuesday, April 7, 2009. Both meetings will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This exercise will give the community members an opportunity to experience the planning process hands on and will allow for further input to the Comprehensive Plan.

Final Review Meeting

The Final Review meeting is tentatively scheduled on Tuesday, April 21, 2009. The purpose of the meeting will be to allow citizens to review and comment on the Community Agenda. All draft documents and maps will be available for review. Staff will be positioned at various stations to receive comments. The meeting will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and will take place at the Harris County Court House.

Transmittal/Adoption Process

On May 5, 2009, a draft Community Agenda will be presented at a second and final public hearing during a regularly scheduled Harris County Board of Commissioners meeting. The Community Agenda will be transmitted to the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center (RDC) for review May 5, 2009. After the RDC and Georgia Department of Community Affairs review the Community Agenda, the final draft will be presented to the Harris County Board of Commissioners at a regularly scheduled meeting for adoption July 7, 2009.

Public Information Resources

Harris County will maintain information dedicated to the Harris County Participation Program and to the Comprehensive Plan linked directly to their website. The Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center (LCRDC) will also make this information available on their webpage. The webpage will include public meeting notices as well as a means for reviewing the draft plan components. The web site will also offer an easy way for the public to communicate with County staff and the LCRDC.

Schedule of Completion of the Harris County Comprehensive Plan

The graphic below shows the schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Milestones in this schedule include:

Participation Plan/Community Assessment Public Hearing	December 16, 2008
Transmittal of Public Participation Plan and Community Assessment to Lower Chattahoochee RDC	February 3, 2009
Submission of Transmittal Resolution to DCA	February 6, 2009
Vision Meeting	March 5, 2009
Future Development Charrettes	March 26, 2009 and April 7, 2009
Final Review Meeting	April 21, 2009
Second/Final Public Hearing	May 5, 2009
Transmittal of the Community Agenda to RDC	May 5, 2009
Submission of Community Agenda to DCA	May 8, 2009
Adoption of the Community Agenda	July 7, 2009

* All dates are tentative and subject to change.

	August	Sept.	October	November	Dec.	Jan.2009	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July
Community Assessment												
Community Participation Program/Plan												
Public Hearing												
Community Agenda												
Vision Meeting												
Future Development Charrette												
Final Review Meeting												
Second/Final Public Hearing												
Transmit Agenda to RDC/DCA												
Submit to DCA												
Adoption												