



# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 2009

# PALMETTO

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

Prepared for The City of Palmetto  
By Urban Collage, Inc.  
in association with  
Noell Consulting Group and Keck & Wood



## INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

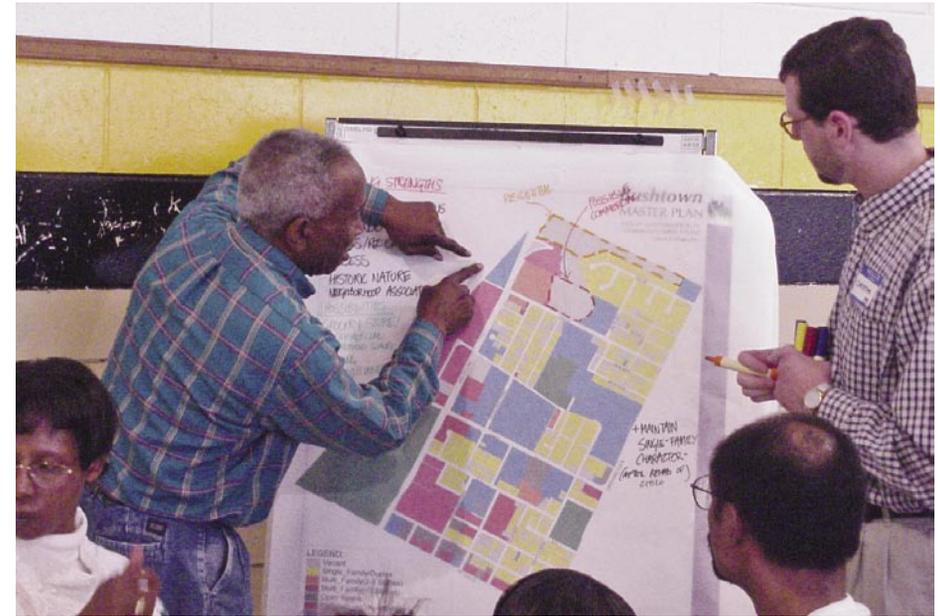
The City of Palmetto recently began a citywide update of their Comprehensive Plan. Since their last Comprehensive Plan Update in 2005, the city has been very proactive in planning for future growth. Not only has the city undergone significant leadership changes including a new Mayor, a new City Administrator and several new Council Members, but in January 2009 they completed an extensive “LCI” Planning Study for their Downtown Area.

The first phase of the City’s Comprehensive Plan development is the completion of a **Community Assessment** of existing conditions and this **Community Participation Program**, outlining the City’s strategy for involving local citizens and stakeholders in the planning process. Public participation and input is vital to the success of the Comprehensive Plan. Over the next 6 months, the City seeks to actively engage local residents and business owners in defining a 20-year vision and developing a series of strategies that will help maintain the City’s historic and pastoral character while providing high quality public services, managing growth, and creating greater employment, housing, economic, and recreational opportunities for Palmetto residents.

The Comprehensive Plan will outline the City’s goals and strategies to maintain and enhance Palmetto’s quality of life over the next two decades. Implicit in those goals will be challenges and opportunities associated with:

- *The “gateway” at the Interstate 85 interchange at Collinsworth and Weldon Roads;*
- *Accommodating mixed-use development, a range of housing types and encouraging a higher level of development quality through changes to local ordinances;*
- *Future annexation plans;*
- *The preservation of important historical and cultural resources;*
- *The ability to make needed capital improvements to enhance the area’s quality of life and accommodate alternative mobility options;*
- *Any alternative routes for commercial truck traffic other than Main Street/ Highway 29.*

The following Public Participation Plan details the organizational structure developed by the City to guide development of the Comprehensive Plan, the stakeholder groups that will play a vital role in guiding the Comprehensive Plan vision and process, the Public Participation Techniques to be utilized throughout the planning process and a preliminary schedule of meetings and events.



## ORGANIZATION

The Comprehensive Plan is being developed under the direction of the Mayor and City Council. City staff and a consulting team led by Urban Collage, Inc. are directly responsible for managing the Comprehensive Plan effort, facilitating public input, and developing the plan’s documentation and graphics.

The Team has outlined several stakeholder groups that will play a significant role in guiding the plan, as described below:

### **Project Management Team**

An executive committee comprised of the Mayor, the City Administrator, and Urban Collage staff will meet and communicate on a regular basis to monitor plan progress, identify strategic issues associated with the plan’s development, and ensure that plan goals and objectives are being addressed in an appropriate, timely manner.

### **Stakeholder Interviews**

Stakeholder interviews provide key participants with the opportunity to relay important issues or critical success factors at the outset of the process and cultivate a sense of ownership in the plan. As part of the recent LCI planning effort, Urban Collage conducted over 20 one-on-one stakeholder interviews with key players



in Palmetto including Palmetto City Council members, local developers, local historians, the South Fulton Chamber of Commerce, a Fulton County Commissioner, Palmetto Community Association, CSX Railroad, MARTA, the City of Chattahoochee Hills, several local business owners and dozens of residents. Although additional interviews will be conducted as part of this planning process with key service providers and stakeholders as needed, the stakeholders interviewed during the LCI process represent a wide cross section of the city, including areas outside the LCI boundary and the city limits. The opportunities and challenges that arose as part of the LCI interviews are very thorough and will be instrumental in shaping this Comprehensive Plan Update's long-term vision.

**Steering Committee**

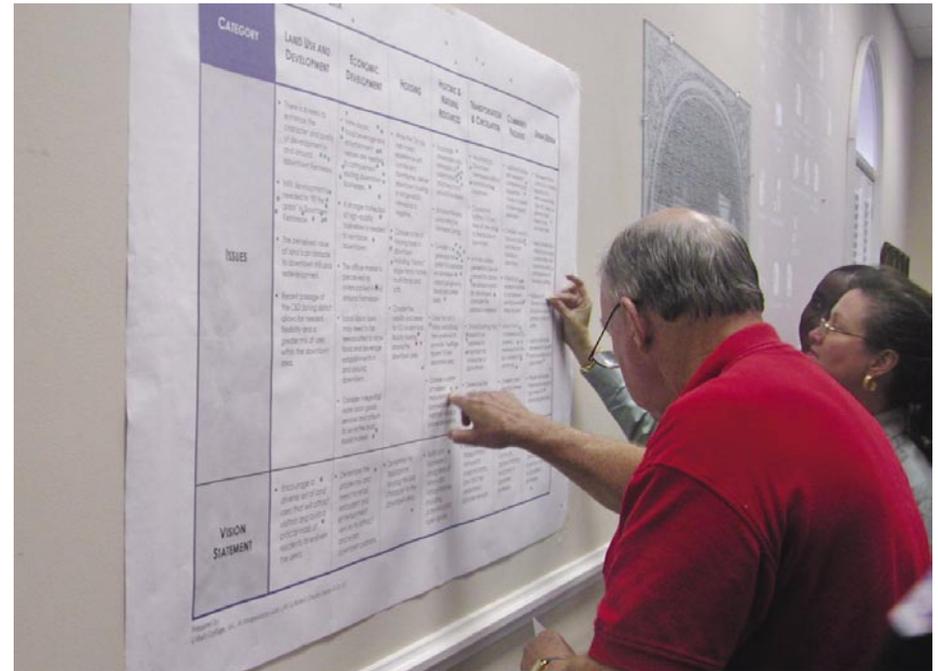
Establishing a local Steering Committee provides a platform for a group of community volunteers to be engaged in the development of the Comprehensive Plan on a more detailed basis on behalf of the larger community. The Steering Committee of community leaders and stakeholders will meet approximately 6 times throughout this process in order to:

- Review and comment on materials prior to each public workshop,
- Assist the consulting team in reviewing, summarizing, and affirming input from each workshop,
- Discuss planning elements and strategies at a more detailed level, and
- Formalizing plan recommendations for review and approval by City Council.

In addition to the four Steering Committee working meetings, it will be important that Steering Committee members attend the general public workshops as well. The proposed steering committee members include the Mayor, the City Administrator, all City Council representatives, the City Clerk, the Director of Public Works, and the Police and Fire Chiefs.

**Public Workshops**

In addition to the groups just described, the General Public will be invited to participate in (4) public meetings, including (2) public hearings and (2) interactive design charrettes. Generally, each workshop will last approximately two hours and will include a mix of informational presentations, issue education, and interactive input exercises. Public workshops will be broadly advertised on the City's website, through e-mail distribution lists maintained by the City and other partner organizations and in local media, to seek the greatest amount and broadest public input feasible. The first public hearing as part of the Community Assessment Phase was held on August 6, 2009 and included participation of approximately 30 city residents, city council, city staff, business owners, community leaders and various other local stakeholders.



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUES**

In addition to the stakeholder groups outlined in the previous section and the series of projected planning meetings with those groups, the City will utilize a series of tools to promote public input and participation:

**Online**

The City will prominently feature the development of the Comprehensive Plan and the four public workshops on the City's website ([www.citypalmetto.com](http://www.citypalmetto.com)). Comprehensive Plan meetings and announcements will also be circulated through the Mayor's e-mail distribution list. Citizens will be added to the distribution list for Comprehensive Plan bulletins upon attending any Comprehensive Plan meeting or by request. Participants from recent LCI meetings and workshops will also be re-engaged as part of this process.

**Visual Preference Surveys**

As part of the second Public Workshop, a community preference survey including visual images will be utilized to gauge community opinion and help facilitate detailed discussion of Character Areas as part of the Community Agenda phase.

**Local Media**

Media outlets such as The South Fulton Neighbor, the Coweta Citizen, and the Newnan Times-Herald have been alerted regarding the upcoming plan process. City staff will also alert other media outlets as needed to Comprehensive Plan events and milestones in order to gain exposure for the plan and increase input opportunities throughout the planning process.

**PUBLIC WORKSHOP DETAILS**

**Workshop #1** (Project Kickoff Workshop, held on August 6, 2009) was an opportunity to introduce the general public to the planning effort. The meeting’s first half included introductions, a brief overview of the project scope and schedule, a summary of the Community Assessment / Existing Conditions and a preliminary presentation of potential Character Areas. The second half of the workshop was more of a discussion forum in which the audience asked more detailed questions about Assessment findings, overall Comprehensive Planning and the Department of Community Affairs. The audience also began to weigh-in on and validate the preliminary Character Areas.

**Workshop #2** will be a highly interactive and entertaining visioning session. First will be the administration of a Character Area “Compass” - a graphically-rich survey tool developed by Urban Collage to help communities identify where they are and where they are going. The Compass includes a wide array of visual preference surveying and short-answer questions for both the city as a whole, as well as within each potential character area. The entire survey should take no more than an hour. The second part of this workshop will focus on more geographically-specific design and planning exercises. Based on input from the PMT and the steering committee, several key character areas will be validated and explored in more detail.

**Workshop #3** will “zoom in” on priority character areas identified in previous workshops and steering committee meetings. Participants will be divided into multiple groups and will be asked to “build” the future of the chosen character area in small facilitated table settings. This will be a fast-paced evening of drawing, image cut-and-paste exercises, writing on note cards, and modeling using suitably-scaled building blocks. The workshop typically takes about two hours to administer.

**Workshop #4** (Final Public Meeting) will close the process with a presentation of the draft Community Agenda highlights and an implementation/project prioritization survey. The Community Agenda would be finalized after input from this fourth public meeting. Consistent with the planning process structure previously described, the steering committee meetings, analysis of previous goals and objectives,



citywide visioning and character area selection, definition of character area issues, and identification of potential implementation projects each contribute to the preparation for each workshop.

**SCHEDULE**

The schedule on the following page outlines the anticipated timing of public participation meetings and techniques throughout the Comprehensive Plan Update process.



**STAKEHOLDER LIST**

CITY STAFF & OFFICIALS	
John Miller	Mayor
Lorraine Allen	Council Member
Natalie McFadden	Council Member
Laura Mullis	Council Member
Gregory Rusch	Council Member
Leon Sumlin	Council Member
Mike Basaric	Council Member
Lucinda Rockemore	Council Member - Elect
Terry Todd	City Administrator
Cindy Hanson	City Clerk
Butch Gaddy	Public Works Director
Henry Argo	Fire Chief
Luther Graham	Police Chief

DEVELOPERS & BUSINESS OWNERS	
Steve Nygren	Serenbe
Garfield Cannon	Developer
Harrison Merrill	Developer
Shirley Turner	Property Owner
Randy Hembree	Property Owner
Bill Shell	Business Owner
Bonita Houston	Business Owner
Jim Pullium	Business Owner
Ishmael Hernandez	Business Owner
Don Britt	Business Owner
Todd Spurlin	Business Owner
Jayshir Kala	Business Owner
Mark Shugart	Business Owner
Lea Bonner	Business Owner
Dawn Scarborough	Realtor
Kathleen Barlow	Realtor

GOVERNMENT & INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS	
Bill Edwards	Fulton County Commissioner
Lavonne Deavers	South Fulton Chamber of Commerce
Dr. James Harper	Georgia Baptist Children's Home
Maureen Wheeler	Palmetto Elementary School
Ryland McClendon	MARTA
Katie Chimelewski	CSX Railroad
Stu Jones	MEAG Power

RESIDENTS & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES	
Gordon Lacoste	Community Leader
Emily Sumlin	Community Leader
Marjorie Morrow	Community Leader
Ginny Basaric	Community Leader
Kimberly Adams	Community Leader
Carol Harper	Historic Preservation Advocate
Peggy Bay	Resident
Dianne Arnold	Resident
Hunter Gillam	Resident
Ketty Calderon	Resident
Chris Gould	Resident
Fecelia Holt	Resident
Dianne Horne	Resident
Mabel Reid	Resident
Dorothy Carlton	Resident
Anthony Slaughter	Resident



**PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES SCHEDULE**

PHASE / TASK	COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT				PLAN REVIEW	COMMUNITY AGENDA			PLAN REVIEW (2010)	
	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Steering Committee Meetings	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		
Additional Stakeholder Interviews			X	X						
Public Meetings/Hearings				X		X X		X		
Workshop 1: Kickoff Meeting / Existing Conditions				X						
Workshop 2: Character Areas Workshop / Compass						X				
Workshop 3: "Focus Areas" Design Charrette						X				
Workshop 4: Final Implementation/Prioritization Meeting								X		
Website / Email Blasts / Flyers			X	X	X	X	X	X		
Press Releases / Coverage				X		X		X		
Visual Preference Survey						X				

