

GREEN WITH GREENER DAYS AHEAD:

A Regional Plan for the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission



STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM May, 2013

Stakeholder Involvement Program

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STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

DCA Planning Standards for regional plans require the development of a Stakeholder Involvement Program consisting of a) the identification of stakeholders; b) the identification of participation techniques; and c) a schedule for completion of the Regional Agenda. The purpose is to assist in the development of a regional plan which has broad-based participation, ownership, and support, and therefore is more likely to generate more enthusiasm and actions for implementation. The Regional Assessment has portrayed the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Region as a growing rural region with a number of issues, but with much cause for optimism, and great opportunities for future quality growth. This Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Plan has been given the title of *Green with Greener Days Ahead* to catch attention and quickly convey the Region's position and potential. This title should make people examine the plan, and then hopefully, see benefit and put it to use. It is only the beginning of efforts to generate broad-based enthusiasm and support for the plan's implementation, and for making the Region a better place to live and work.

Identification of Stakeholders

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission realizes it is only a catalyst and facilitator of regional growth and development. The Regional Commission can provide education, leadership, suggestions, and guidance for improvement and development. While this guidance and leadership is primarily directed to local governments and their authorities, as well as to liaison and assistance with state agencies, Regional Commission activities and plans can also be a blueprint and guide for the many other public and private agencies and individuals concerned with growth and development and involved in the betterment of the Region. It is in this context that the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission will seek the involvement and input of as many as care to be involved in the development of a broad-based Regional Agenda.

The primary Region stakeholder will be the Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission Regional Council as official representative of the Region's local governments and their private sector. The Regional Council will serve as an overall Steering Committee because of their representation and their required approval of the Regional Plan. The Regional Council will be asked to appoint and approve a Regional Planning Advisory Committee comprised of one elected or appointed official from each regional county. This Advisory Committee will serve as the primary conduit of face-to-face input and feed back for Regional Commission Planning staff involved in the development of the Regional Plan.

The Heart of Georgia Altamaha Regional Commission has developed an extensive contact list of stakeholders in the course of its planning and other activities. This was particularly expanded in the development of the Regional Resource Plan to include more than 200 contacts. These stakeholder contacts will be utilized to ensure broad-based opportunity for input and feedback. Some of the stakeholders to be utilized include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following. Stakeholder contacts will continue to be upgraded and expanded as new information is discovered.

- All local governments
- Development Authorities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Historical Societies/Organizations
- Region colleges and technical colleges
- Riverkeepers and other environmental organizations
- Main Street and Better Hometown Programs
- Tourism Boards
- Agricultural and Forestry interests
- School Boards
- HOGARC Area Agency on Aging
- HOGARC Historic Resources Advisory Committee
- Region 9 WIA Board
- DHS Coordinated Transportation Committee

- Georgia Power/EMCs
- Fort Stewart
- Nature Conservancy
- State agencies
- Health Districts
- Region's newspapers/radio stations

Participation Techniques

A variety of techniques will be utilized to seek broad-based input and feedback in the development of the Regional Agenda. These will primarily include stakeholder interviews and meetings, the use of the Regional Commission website, e-mail blasts, and news releases.

The Regional Council will be kept informed and have the opportunity for direct input and feedback both through presentations at its regular monthly meetings and through direct mail/e-mail solicitations. The Regional Council will appoint the Regional Planning Advisory Committee, approve the Regional Agenda for submittal, formally adopt the approved final Regional Agenda, and provide any other overall guidance, input, or feedback desired.

The Regional Planning Advisory Committee will provide input and feedback in direct meetings, one-on-one interviews, and through e-mail/other contact. This Advisory Committee will be the primary vehicle to assist staff in formulating a draft regional vision, finalizing regional issues and opportunities, and developing a draft implementation program of guiding principles, goals, and policies, as well as action items, a work program framework, and performance standards. This Advisory Committee would also help refine the plan based on broader input and feedback received. Staff drafted/revised information will be provided ahead of meetings to allow the Advisory Committee ample time to consider and provide meaningful input and feedback, and to evaluate the suitability of staff efforts/revisions.

The Regional Commission's website will serve as the online clearinghouse and public information access to key draft elements of the plan preparation and development as they are

available. Staff contact information and opportunity for comment/input would be provided. This will avail the general public or other stakeholders not otherwise identified opportunity for timely input/feedback.

Direct mailings/e-mail blasts to all local governments and others will be utilized to both inform of website postings, and to seek direct input/feedback on critical elements such as issues/opportunities, guiding principles, performance standards, and the work program. News releases would also be utilized to further notify the general public and others of the availability of key draft elements and the opportunity for input/feedback.

As required by DCA's Regional Planning Standards, at least one regional hearing will be held once the Regional Agenda has been drafted and made available for public review prior to Regional Council submittal approval, and formal submission to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. If public input/feedback warrants, earlier public meetings may be held on key elements of the plan's development if it is deemed they would be of benefit.

Schedule for Completion of Regional Agenda

RC Approval of Regional Assessment/ Stakeholder Involvement Program	RC Appointment of Planning Advisory Committee	Transmittal Regional Assessment & Stakeholder Involvement Program	DCA review period	Development of Regional Agenda				
				Stakeholder Involvement				
May 2013		June	July	July	August	September	October	November

Draft Agenda to Regional Council/ Stakeholders	Public Hearing	RC Approval of Submittal	Transmittal By Regional Commission	DCA 60 day review period		Adoption By Regional Council
Stakeholder Involvement						
November 2013			December	January 2014	February	March