

DRAFT

**Northwest Georgia Regional Plan
2013 – 2033**

**Regional Assessment
Stakeholder Involvement Program**

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Stakeholder Involvement Program

Introduction

The fifteen counties of Northwest Georgia have a long history of joint comprehensive planning, dating back to 1999, ten years before the merger of the Coosa Valley and North Georgia Regional Development Centers to form the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission. In that year, the two Regional Development Centers developed their first Joint Regional Comprehensive Plan, and the fifteen county region has been planning as a unit ever since. The Stakeholder Involvement Program represents an early stage in the planning process, and is intended to provide the region's citizens with opportunities to contribute their ideas to the Comprehensive Plan.

State law requires Region 1 to prepare a new Regional Comprehensive Plan by June 30, 2013, and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs requires that a Stakeholder Involvement Program be submitted for approval before the beginning of the Stakeholder Involvement process. This document outlines the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's strategy to implement a public input program to aid in developing the new Joint Comprehensive Plan 2013 – 2023.

Purpose

The planning process is intended to enhance and strengthen all previous planning efforts by realistically identifying issues and opportunities, and establishing a functional community agenda and work program.

The Northwest Georgia Regional Plan has as one of its goals inclusion of a wide range of views from diverse constituencies throughout the region, since it is intended to set goals and policies of the Regional Agenda. That document will affect a great many people, since it is the official "To-Do List" for local governments. Anyone who affects or is affected by what happens in the region, including those who make policies, those who benefit, and those adversely affected, is a stakeholder.

The Regional Plan is ideally the result of some sort of consensus among stakeholders, since it advances strategies to solve perceived problems, and to enhance and capitalize on existing strengths. The more stakeholders become involved, the easier it is to foster consensus through mutual trust and cooperation.

There are three parts to the Stakeholder Involvement Program: 1) Identification and listing of those stakeholders who will help develop the Regional Agenda; 2) The identification of Participation Techniques to involve stakeholders and the public; and 3) the Schedule for the

Completion of the Regional Agenda, which sets target dates for accomplishing items on the “To-Do List.”

Scope

State law requires that the Northwest Georgia Region complete a new Comprehensive Plan and adopt an Agenda by July 31, 2013. The process will occur in prescribed phases between May of 2012, and July 31, 2013.

As prescribed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Comprehensive Plan follows the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005.

As outlined in the Rules for Comprehensive Planning, Section 110-12-1-.04:

“The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to ensure that the local comprehensive plan reflects the full range of community values and desires, by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the Community Agenda. This broad-based participation in developing the Community Agenda will also help ensure that it will be implemented, because many in the community are involved in its development and thereby become committed to seeing it through.”

This current document outlines the Stakeholder Involvement Program, and will be submitted for Department of Community Affairs approval prior to the start of the public involvement process.

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Planning Committee will act as the Steering Committee for the Plan. Committee members include:

Boyd Austin
Louis Tonsmire
David Campbell
Garry Fricks
Hubert Parker
Sam Payne
Bebe Heiskell
Mike Babb
Cleve Hartley
Alan Dean
Brian Anderson
Dan Penland

Technical Advisory Committee

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's Planning Department, together with other individuals appointed by the Steering Committee, will provide technical assistance to the Steering Committee.

Individuals from the Planning and GIS Departments who will assist in the process include:

David Howerin, Director of Regional Planning
Barnett Chitwood, Assistant Director of Regional Planning
David Kenemer, Principal Planner
Dan Latham, Senior Planner/Historic Preservation
Kevin McAuliff, Senior Planner/Environment
Charles Jones, Community Planner
Tanya Brown, Planner
Bettie Reid, GIS Specialist

Identification of Stakeholders

The Northwest Georgia Regional Commission's Planning Committee has identified the following stakeholders, chosen as representative of diverse interests, as vital to the planning process:

Federal and State Partners:

Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Commissioner's Office
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division
State Parks and Historic Sites in the Region
Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park
Georgia Emergency Management Agency
Georgia Forestry Commission
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
Rolling Hills Resource Conservation and Development Council
Limestone Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council
Georgia Association of Conservation District Supervisors

Regional Agencies and Organizations:

Council of the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission
NWGRC Transportation, Land Use, Environment, and Historic Preservation Committee

Northwest Georgia Area Agency on Aging
Northwest Georgia Workforce Investment Board
Northwest Georgia Public Health District
North Georgia Regional Water Partnership
Bike Walk Northwest Georgia
Land Trusts and Conservancies

Local Partners:

Northwest Georgia Residents
Northwest Georgia's 15 County and 48 Municipal Governments
Chambers of Commerce
Utilities
Development Authorities
Water Authorities
Waste Authorities
Housing Authorities
Airport Authorities
Convention and Visitors Bureaus
Main Street and Better Hometown Programs
Historical Societies
Historic Preservation Commissions
Ministerial Associations

Private Sector:

Beaulieu Group, LLC
Floyd Healthcare Management, Inc.
Hamilton Medical Center, Inc.
Mohawk Carpet Corporation.
Mt. Vernon Mills, Inc.
O'Reilly Automotive, Inc.
Pilgrims Pride Corporation
Roper Corporation
Shaw Industries Group, Inc.
Wal-Mart

Participation Techniques

Various techniques are available for compiling a Regional Plan and setting the Regional Agenda. The purpose of these techniques is twofold: 1) to share information with stakeholders, and 2) to generate stakeholder input into the Plan.

Among techniques that have been identified by Regional Commission staff for use during the planning process are the following:

- **Community Vision Survey**

A Community Vision Survey will be available on the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Website, www.nwgrc.org, to solicit citizen input to address the Issues and Opportunities identified in the region, and hard copies will be available at courthouses and city halls throughout the region. Citizens can respond on the website, or deliver or mail their responses to either Regional Commission office. The Rome office is located at 1 Jackson Hill in Rome, and the Dalton office is at 503 West Waugh Street in Dalton.

- **Stakeholder Meetings**

Stakeholder meetings will involve key stakeholders and planning staff meeting in visioning sessions to determine the general thrust of the Regional Plan. These sessions will involve a two-way exchange of information with opportunities for public input and comment, and will result in proposed goals and objectives.

There will be two public stakeholder meetings, one in early November at the Forum in Rome, and one in late January or early February at the Trade Center in Dalton, where good citizen participation can be expected. Both locations are 1) convenient to the general population; 2) easily accessible; 3) able to accommodate large crowds; and 4) furnished with ample parking.

- **Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Website**

As they are drafted, all press releases, public service announcements, the Draft Community Assessment, Stakeholder Involvement Program and the Community agenda will be available on the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission Website, www.nwgrc.org.

- **Press Releases and Public Service Announcements**

The Regional Commission will provide local newspapers and cable television outlets with press releases and public service announcements to inform the public of the progress of the planning process, and to advise them of upcoming stakeholder meetings.

- **Organizational E-Mail Lists**

Various organizations listed as stakeholders maintain contact lists that could be used to distribute meeting notices to their constituents.

Community Agenda Completion Schedule

TASK	5/ 12	6/ 12	7/ 12	8/ 12	9/ 12	10/ 12	11/ 12	12/ 12	1/ 13	2/ 13	3/ 13	4/ 13	5/ 13	6/ 13	7/ 13
Finish Stakeholder Involvement Program															
Complete and Submit to DCA RASS and RSIP															
Conduct Stakeholder Involvement Program															
Prepare Agenda															
Submit Agenda to DCA for Review															
Adopt Agenda															