

Community Participation Program For Bacon County and the City of Alma Comprehensive Plan

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The preparation of the Community Participation Program is an important first step in obtaining citizen participation and involvement in the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Community Participation Program of the Bacon County, City of Alma Comprehensive Plan is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process and are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan, individual plan components, or plan amendments. More importantly, citizens should have the ability to participate actively in the process of defining the community's vision, values, goals, policies, priorities, and implementation strategies.

1.2 Scope

Bacon County and the City of Alma are required by state law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by June 30, 2006. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Basic Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) effective November 28, 2005.

1.3 Requirements

Experience in public involvement has shown that lasting solutions are best identified when all segments of a community; individuals, local officials, educators, and the business and civic communities are brought together in a spirit of cooperation. A collaborative approach to community engagement is not just an opportunity, but also a necessity. The following are reasons for this involvement:

- ❖ Educate and increase public awareness
- ❖ Capture knowledge and preferences of people who live in and support their communities
- ❖ Mobilization of support and acceptance of the plan

Communities that prosper do so because people work together to improve the quality of life that they want to sustain. The measure of effectiveness of a public involvement program is not that the public has been informed, but that public input has contributed to making a decision that is feasible and is supported by a large segment of the community.

Public comment and sentiment are a rich source of information about people's values and ideas. These values and ideals must be interpreted into meaningful information to guide the project. It is essential to know the community's values to

avoid, minimize, and diminish impacts as well as narrow the field of alternative solutions. This process is designed to accomplish the following:

- ❖ Improvement in quality of decisions
- ❖ Increase ease of Implementation
- ❖ Provide greater public knowledge of community goals and objectives
- ❖ Evidence of community created identity

2 List of Suggested Stakeholders

The Bacon County Board of Commission, planning commission, City of Alma Council, staff, consultants, and SEGa RDC staff will work together to identify those individuals and groups that have a special interest in the development of the community agenda for Bacon County and the City of Alma. The stakeholders are comprised of representatives of the various organizations as listed in the table below. As the planning process moves forward, additional stakeholders are likely to be identified and will be added as appropriate.

Bacon County Commission

Chairman Eugene Dyal
Vice Chairman Billy Aycock
Commissioner James Tobler
Commissioner Mary Evelyn Hyers
Commissioner Bob Hendricks
Commissioner Donald Taylor
County Clerk Mary Edna Wheeler

Mayor & Alma City Council

City of Alma Mayor- Corman Jordan
City Clerk Jackie Medders
City Manager Glover Scott
Grady Head
Peggy Murphy
James O. Holton, Jr
Frances Tobler
Rosie Williams
Alma Fire Chief/EMS Director Charles Carter
Alma Public Works Director Carl Leggett
Alma City Attorney Kenneth E. Futch

Bacon County Staff

County Attorney James D Hudson
School Board Superintendent Richard Wheeler

Sheriff Richard Foskey
District Attorney Rick Currie
Tax Commissioner William B Johnson
School Board Chairman John Deloach
Clerk of Superior Court Sherry Tillman
Judge of Probate Court Joe Boatright

Alma-Bacon County Chamber of Commerce
Rebecca Palmer

Alma Downtown Development Authority
Kenny Wade

Bacon County Development Authority
John Tanner

Alma-Bacon County Planning Commission
Gary Taylor
Fred Kopp
Danny Turner

Yvonne Staten
Larry Barnes
Lawrence Bennett
Jon Lott
Robert Rentfrow
Kim Vickers
Jay Williams
Frances Tobler
Marsha Ahl
Chris Williams

3 Identification of Participation Techniques

3.1 Initial Hearing

As required under the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, an initial hearing will be held to announce to the public that the planning process for updating the comprehensive plan is underway and to present the draft Community Participation Program and draft Community Assessment to the public. The meeting was held April 13, 2006. The public was informed of the project schedule and adoption hearings and how they can get involved. The public were also given the opportunity to comment on the process, draft documents and their vision for the future.

3.2 Steering Committee

A volunteer based Steering Committee will be established with a Chair and Vice-Chairperson being nominated and elected by Committee members. The Committee will implement a monthly meeting schedule with added communication by email and phone when needed and warranted between meetings. It is the goal of this Committee enlist more volunteers that represent a cross section of interests in the community Following is a sample list of activities planned by the Steering Committee:

- ❖ Create flyer for publicity campaign and post in visible areas in community
- ❖ Create Power Point presentation

3.3 Scenario Building

The participants will be challenged with different scenarios representing a different future for their community such as maintaining the status quo, growing into a different kind of area, improving in a particular way or other future conditions. For each scenario the group answers some specific questions that will help them determine which scenario is best for the area, or to merge parts of two or more scenarios to make the best possible choice for their community. These findings will be implemented into the visioning workshops scheduled.

3.4 Visioning

Several visioning workshops are planned from October 2006 through March 2007 implementing information garnered from scenario building and SWOT exercises. During the visioning workshops brainstorming will be initiated which will produce the following:

- Generating Ideals
- Consensus on the Issues and Ideals
- Prioritization of Issues
- Addressing multiply topics

3.5 SWOT

In this visioning process, the participants will be asked to make lists of Bacon's and Alma's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. The participants will then rank them from most to least importance. The information gathered here will be used in the visioning workshops.

3.6 Outreach

Notices, editorials, flyers, survey and articles will be posted in newspapers, community message boards, public service announcements and any other place where citizens will see it. This will be done throughout the planning process.

4 Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

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

Initial Hearing April 13, 2006
Steering Committee July 2006
Scenario Building.....October 2006
Visioning Workshops.....October-December 2006
Visioning Workshops..... January-March 2007
SWOT..... January-March 2007
Public Hearing Transmittal of Community Agenda to DCA April 2007
Adoption of Community Agenda.....May 2007

Figure 2 Comprehensive Plan Schedule

	2006										2007				
	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	
Initial Hearing															
Community Assessment															
Community Participation Program															
Community Agenda															
Transmittal/Adoption															
Steering Committee															
Scenario Building															
Visioning															
SWOT															