

Community Participation Program

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I. PURPOSE

Recognizing the need for, and benefit of, extensive community involvement in the Comprehensive Planning process, the following *Community Participation Program* has been established for the Greater Brooks 2030 Comprehensive Planning process.

The purpose of the *Community Participation Program* is to ensure that the *Greater Brooks 2030 Comprehensive Plan* reflects the full range of community values and desires by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the *Community Agenda*. Meaningful participation by a broad range of stakeholders will help ensure implementation of the *Community Agenda*. As the community is involved in the *Agenda's* development, it becomes invested and committed to seeing the established goals and policies realized through the achievement of scheduled projects.

II. STATE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs sets forward specific minimum standards each community must meet in order to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and thus remain eligible for certain state funding and permitting programs. These planning requirements emphasize the meaningful involvement of stakeholders and the general public in preparation of plans that include an exciting, well-conceived and achievable vision for the future of the community. Within these standards is the requirement of a *Community Participation Program*.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPES

The following principles will guide the implementation of this *Community Participation Program* and the development of the *Community Agenda*:

- 1) The public has a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- 2) The public is involved as early as possible in the community participation and decision-making process in order to build trust;
- 3) The involvement of those potentially affected is sought and participants are encouraged to assist in defining how they participate;
- 4) Participants are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;
- 5) Education and participation are directly combined whenever possible;
- 6) The needs and concerns of the public are listened to and their input is integrated into the outcome.

IV. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders are those who effect and/or are affected by the development and implementation of the *Greater Brooks 2030 Comprehensive Plan*. The following is a list of stakeholders whose involvement would be beneficial to the development of the *Community Agenda*. By no means should this list be considered all-inclusive and all interested parties are encouraged to actively participate in the development of the *Community Agenda*.

Brooks County Board of Commissioners	Brooks County Board of Education
Brooks County Board of Tax Assessors	Brooks County Sheriff's Department
Brooks County Board of Elections	Brooks County Zoning Administration
County and City Departments, Division Directors, and Staff	Law Enforcement Agencies
Barwick Mayor and Council	Morven Mayor and Council
Pavo Mayor and Council	Quitman Mayor and Council
Quitman-Brooks County Chamber of Commerce	Libraries, Historical Groups, the Brooks County Museum and Cultural Center
Property Owners	All Residents
Students	Community Service Organizations
Churches and Religious Organizations	Neighborhood Organizations
MIDS Inc. and Brooks Transit	People who Frequently Use or Desire to Use Alternate Modes of Transportation
Schools (Public and Private)	Valdosta State University
Thomas University	Surrounding Technical Colleges
UGA Cooperative Extension Office	Agricultural Community
Health Care Agencies and Hospitals	Business Community
Development Community	

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IV. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS (cont.)

Homebuilders Association of South Georgia	Utility Companies
State Delegates	Media
Brooks County Division of Family and Children Services	Georgia Department of Labor
Georgia Forestry Commission	Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Regional Office)
Brooks Development Authority	Valdosta Technical College

V. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The information below details how the public will be educated on the purpose and function of the Comprehensive Plan, how the public can provide input on the plan's development, opportunities for public interaction, and methods of public partnership for plan implementation.

PUBLIC EDUCATION - Training, instruction or informative experiences communicating knowledge to the community

KICK-OFF PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING (1ST PUBLIC HEARING)

An initial meeting will be held to announce the planning process to all citizens and other stakeholders and to educate attendees regarding the plan's purpose and general approach for completion. The purpose of the meeting as well as the time and place will be advertised in the *Quitman Free Press* and the *Barwick Advertiser*. Informational flyers will be distributed throughout the community. The meeting is scheduled for:

**August 15, 2006
5:30 pm
Brooks County Administrative Building
610 S. Highland Rd
Quitman, GA 31643**

PRINTED PUBLIC INFORMATION

Printed public information includes flyers, brochures and newsletters providing information on the progress of the plan and announcements of future public involvement opportunities. This information will be provided to public facilities, businesses, and churches throughout the County.

PRESS RELEASES

Throughout the planning process the South Georgia Regional Development Center will update the *Quitman Free Press* and other media outlets on important events in the planning process.

WEBSITE

www.sgrdc.com/Brooks/

The South Georgia Regional Development Center has constructed a website for the Comprehensive Plan. The site will be updated throughout the planning process and will include draft documents and announcements.

PUBLIC INPUT - Contribution, comments, and suggestions solicited from the public to help make decisions

PUBLIC INTERACTION - Communicating and working with the public to make decisions

PUBLIC HEARING

A hearing is a formal meeting of the elected or appointed body where the public may comment or provide testimony on the matter presented for voting. This meeting is used during approval and transmittal to the local Regional Development Center of the completed draft *Community Assessment* and the *Community Participation Program* and again during approval and transmittal to the local Regional Development Center of the completed draft *Community Agenda*. The first public hearing will be the Kick-Off Public Information Meeting in Quitman, Georgia. The second required meeting is also planned to be held within Quitman and will occur after the draft *Community Agenda* is completed.

COMMUNITY PREFERENCE SURVEYS

Community Preference Surveys regarding land use and development may be distributed at community meetings. Survey results will be used to gather stakeholders' preferences for a variety of development styles and community features.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

In contrast to the public hearings will be informal roundtable discussions. These meetings will take place in every city and town in Brooks County and will be designed with input by the city leaders according to what works best for each community. In general, though, these meetings will involve group facilitators who will work with small groups of citizens in determining the community goals, current community resources, and methods of solving community problems.

CONTACT LIST

For citizens who would like to stay updated on current events during the planning process, they can sign up for the email contact list. Email addresses on this list will receive regular updates on news and upcoming meetings regarding the Comprehensive Plan.

PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP - Mutual cooperation and responsibility for the purpose of achieving a specific goal.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A countywide steering committee will assist in development of the *Community Agenda* portion of the Comprehensive Plan. This varied group will represent all sectors of the community and will provide guidance and insight on developing the necessary goals, policies, and implementation program.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

There will be meetings to include input from stakeholders in the community. Stakeholders include local elected and appointed officials, key property owners, neighborhood leaders, chamber and other economic development professionals, community service providers, area residents, and others with strong opinions and some stake in the future development of the area. Efforts will be made to ensure that these meetings achieve a maximum of attendees.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS

This includes “summit” meetings held by elected officials with groups interested in the comprehensive plan, such as the board of education, appointed boards and authorities, other city and county government representatives, utility providers, state agencies and departments, and regional planning entities. Efforts will be made to ensure that any intergovernmental meetings that have already been scheduled will be utilized during the planning process.

VI. COMMUNITY AGENDA COMPLETION SCHEDULE

The following is a schedule for the completion of the *Community Agenda* portion of the 2030 Comprehensive Plan for Brooks County and the Cities of Quitman, Morven, Pavo, Barwick and Barney. This schedule will be followed throughout the update process however there may be some minor adjustments dependent on the Plan’s progress.

DATE	OBJECTIVE
June 1- July 31, 2006	Community Assessment completed Community Participation Program completed
August 2006	1st Public Hearing (Kick-off Event) to explain planning process to the community Steering Committee established to guide development of plan Community-wide events* to discuss and prioritize the <i>Preliminary Issues and Opportunities</i> list
September, 2006	Community-wide events to discuss and prioritize the <i>Preliminary Issues and Opportunities</i> list Community-wide events to produce/refine the <i>Future Development Map</i> begins Processing of community input by steering committee
October, 2006	Community-wide events to produce/refine the <i>Future Development Map</i> Processing of community input by steering committee Development of draft <i>Implementation Program</i> by staff, steering-committee, and South Georgia Regional Development Center
November, 2006	Community-wide events to react to draft <i>Implementation Program</i> Processing of input by steering committee
December, 2006	Assembly of draft <i>Community Agenda</i> by staff and steering committee.

DATE	OBJECTIVE
January, 2007	2nd Public Hearing to react to draft <i>Community Agenda</i> . Receive final suggestions, additions, and revisions Events to receive community input continued Processing of input by steering committee
February, 2007	Adoption of transmittal resolution by local government and submittal of <i>Community Agenda</i> to DCA for review (60-day Review Period)
March- May, 2007	Processing of Comments Received.
By June 30, 2007	Local Governments adopt Comprehensive Plan
July, 2007 and on	<i>Community Agenda</i> distributed and publicized as stated in <i>Community Participation Program</i>

*Community-wide events will include but not be limited to public meetings, stakeholder interviews, community organization presentations, newsletters, email correspondence, and community preference surveys.

VIII. REVIEW OF DRAFT COMMUNITY AGENDA

Upon completion of a draft version of the *Community Agenda*, the document will enter a 60-day review period during which citizen comments will be collected and reviewed. This review period is tentatively scheduled to begin February 28th, 2007.

IX. PUBLICIZING THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

Following final adoption of the *Greater Brooks 2030 Comprehensive Plan* a variety of methods will be utilized to publicize the document. An advertisement in the newspaper will identify all locations where the complete Comprehensive Plan will be available along with locations where the *Community Assessment* Executive Summary and the *Community Agenda* will be available. These locations will include local libraries, civic and governmental buildings, and area non-profit organizations. Additionally, the document will be available online on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs at www.georgiaplanning.com. Local community organizations will be encouraged to provide a direct link to the document from their website and to provide copies for review at their organization. Copies will also be available at the South Georgia Regional Development Center.



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July 2006