

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM
CITY OF COMMERCE, GA, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
December 2009**

Defined

“Community Participation Program” means the portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government’s program for insuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan. According to local planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the community participation program is prepared in conjunction with the “community assessment” part of the comprehensive plan, then submitted along with the community assessment, after public hearing, for regional and state review (see “review process” below).

There are three required components of the community participation program:

- (a) Identification of Stakeholders
- (b) Identification of Participation Techniques
- (c) Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

Objective

The program seeks to obtain meaningful involvement of stakeholders and the general public in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. This community participation program describes the City of Commerce’s strategies for ensuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the *Community Agenda portion* of the comprehensive plan. It is important to emphasize here that this means little if any active involvement in preparing and conducting the “community assessment” part of the plan, other than what is obtained through the required public hearing for the community participation program and the community assessment.¹

Review Process

The community participation program is submitted along with the Community Assessment to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission for review, after holding a public hearing. Within seven (7) days of receipt, the commission will determine whether the Community Participation Program meets or does not meet the standard of completeness as determined by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Upon determination of completeness, the commission transmits the participation program to DCA. DCA will review the program for its adequacy in identifying specific mechanisms to ensure meaningful involvement of the community in the development of the Community Agenda. DCA will transmit a complete report of its findings and recommendations for addressing such findings to the commission for inclusion in its Report of Findings and Recommendations.

¹ Commerce was advised by its planning consultant to proceed with appointment of a comprehensive plan steering committee at the outset of the planning process, and it did so. The steering committee was formed and met twice in order to provide some preliminary feedback on issues and opportunities as well as preliminary character areas and areas requiring special attention.

Publication of the Approved Program and Community Assessment

Once reviewed, the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment must be publicized by the local government for public information. This requirement may be met by providing notice in a local newspaper of general circulation identifying where complete copies of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program may be reviewed.

City of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee²

Lula Pittman
 Patsy Morrison
 Barry Lord

Jimbo Stephenson
 Sammy Thomason
 Joe Leffew

Stakeholders Suggested in the State Planning Recommendations and their Applicability in the City of Commerce

The State Planning Recommendations provide a list of almost fifty suggested stakeholders. For simplicity, they have been grouped into like or similar interests below – along with comments as to their applicability in Commerce. For stakeholders not formally represented on the committee, through a media release, individual businesses will be invited to submit e-mail addresses to receive information and regular updates to be posted on the city’s web page.

Private Business and Related Interests

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Agricultural and forestry interests	Not of central importance in the municipality
Banks	One bank specifically identified as stakeholder
Business owners, managers	Downtown Development Authority members noted
Chamber of Commerce	Mail all notices and materials;
Developers, for-profit	Represented on steering committee + stakeholders
Employers – major	Major employers identified as stakeholders
Entrepreneurs	Reasonably covered under employers and business owners
Homebuilders association	May be represented on steering committee
Insurance companies	None identified
Media – local and regional	Mail all notices and materials
Real estate professionals	(see Developers, for profit); included in stakeholders
Schools and universities -- private	None identified
Utilities -- private	None identified – City of Commerce is major utility provider

Non-Profits and Community/Environmental Organizations

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Bicycle, hiking clubs	None identified
Churches, ecumenical councils	None identified but outreach may be initiated
Community development corporations	Unknown at this time
Community service organizations	Unknown at this time

² The initial committee appointments included Hasco Craver IV, Executive Director the City of Commerce Downtown Development Authority, but he subsequently took a position with the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission. A detailed interview was conducted with Mr. Craver prior to him leaving his position with the city.

Developers, non-profit	Unknown at this time
Downtown or area business people	DDA members are all identified stakeholders
Environmental organizations	None identified except regionally (Athens0
Ethnic and minority groups	Represented on steering committee
High school / college students	Active involvement of students not sought at this time
Historic or preservation society	Jackson County Historical Society should be consulted
Immigrant groups	None identified (see ethnic and minority)
Land trusts	Conservation opportunities within city may be limited
Low-income groups	(see ethnic and minority)
Neighborhood organizations	None identified but outreach may be initiated
Under-represented/marginalized groups	(see ethnic and minority)

Public Agencies and Organizations

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Agricultural and forestry interests	Cooperative Extension Service; Georgia Forestry Commission (inform); not central to municipal plan
City Council	Decision makers (will hold hearings and adopt plan)
Cities in County – planning depts.	Maysville; Banks County are most important
City agencies – others not listed	City planner and consulting planner will contact
Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and/or Local/regional tourism officials	Downtown Development Authority members are all listed as stakeholders
Federal agencies with local jurisdiction	None stands out as justifying specific involvement
Health – public	Involve in facility planning process
Library boards	Involve in facility planning process
Military base planners	Inapplicable
Public utilities	City of Commerce is the major utility provider
Planning commission (city)	Represented on steering committee – also role in holding hearing/recommending plans
Regional agencies	Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (RC)
Safety – public	Police; Sheriff; emergency management, fire districts – involve through facility planning process
Schools – public	Commerce (City) Public School System
State agencies with local jurisdiction	None stands out as justifying specific involvement
Zoning board of appeals	Inapplicable in city (Council serves as Appeal Board)
Universities -- Public	University of Georgia – in Athens – an important stakeholder given proximity

List of Stakeholders and Persons to Receive Communications

Defined broadly, a stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in an outcome of the comprehensive planning process. Based on the suggestions in the State Planning Recommendations, a final (not necessarily limiting) list of stakeholders has been identified and compiled with input from the City of Commerce Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

List of Stakeholders

Clark Hill, MD
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
1935-A Homer Road
Commerce, GA 30529
Hill Medical Group
706-335-9060

Chris McCoy Bray
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
1696 South Broad Street
Commerce, GA 30529
706-318-0808

Tricia Massey
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
153 Ashland Drive
Commerce, GA 30529
706-335-7827

Hon. Charles L. "Buzzie" Hardy Jr., Mayor
P.O. Box 419
Commerce, GA 30529
Commerce Printing & Office Supply
706-335-5121

Stan Patrick (Pat) Hodsdon
1215 South Elm Street
Commerce, GA 30529
706-335-3194

Janice Minish
Pilot Club of Commerce

Cindy Patterson
SE Toyota Distributors
648 Highway 334
Commerce, GA 30530-5987
(706) 335-7677

Richard Milsap
Roper Pump Co.
3475 Old Maysville Road
Commerce, GA 30529-1397
(706) 335-5551

Barbara Reid
Jackson Creative

Keith Ariail
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
P.O. Box 785
Commerce, GA 30529
McDonald Ace Hardware
706-335-5519

Claudine Smith
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
1671 South Elm Street
Commerce, GA 30529
Our Town Antiques
706-335-8065

David Sanders
Commerce Downtown Development Authority
P.O. Box 347
Commerce, GA 30529
Sanders Furniture
706-335-3189

Brad Johnson
Commerce Area Business Association

Diane Wright
Kiwaniis Club

Brandy Martin
Commerce City Schools PTO

Eddie Cartee
J M Huber Corporation
1442 Highway 334
Commerce, GA 30530-5941
(706) 335-7661

Michael Williams
Boys & Girls Clubs

Elton Collins and Jud Trapnell
Community Bank & Trust

1851 N Elm St
Commerce, GA 30529
706-335-3151

Henry Slocum
Health Department

Howard Ledford
Lanier Technical College
631 South Elm Street
Commerce, GA 30529
Phone: 706-335-1931

Dr. James Bouchard
Bouchard Farms?
706-335-2718

Cindy Adams
Commerce Planning Commission
217 Arlington Lane
706-335-6288

Jackson County Area Chamber of Commerce
Jackson County Industrial Development
Authority
270 Athens Street, PO Box 629, Jefferson, GA
30549
Phone: 706-387-0300
Fax 706-387-0304
info@jacksoncountygga.com

Jackson County Builders Association, Inc.
122 Washington Street, Jefferson, GA 30549
Phone: 706-367-0611
Fax: 706-367-0610
jcbuilders@jacksoncountybuilders.com

Athens Grow Green Coalition
PO Box 1085, Athens, GA 30603
moderator@athensgrowgreen.com

Upper Oconee Watershed Network
P.O. Box 531, Athens, Georgia, 30603
upperoconee@yahoo.com

Jackson County Historical Society
P. O. Box 1234, Commerce, GA 30529
706-335-3881

Wilber (Will) A. Storing
1114 Crossing Place
Commerce, Georgia 30529
706-436-9247

The Garden Club of Georgia, Inc.
2450 Milledge Avenue, Athens, Georgia
30602-5817
706-227-5369

Jackson County Habitat for Humanity
Commerce, GA
706-367-5281

MainStreet Newspapers, Inc.
PO Box 908, Jefferson, GA 30549
706-367-5233
Fax: 706-367-8056

The Gainesville Times
345 Green St. N.W.
Gainesville, GA 30501

City of Maysville
P. O. Box 86
Maysville, Georgia 30558
Phone 706-652-2274
Fax: 706-652-3511
cityofmaysville@windstream.net

University of Georgia
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
Attn: Strategic Planning
Bob Boehmer, Associate Provost for
Institutional Effectiveness
Phone: (706) 542-2558
bboehmer@uga.edu

Advance Community Participation Completed

As already noted, the steering committee for this project has been appointed and met twice. The Commerce Area Business Association was briefed at a luncheon on September 9, 2009, about the upcoming Commerce comprehensive planning process as a part of the county’s planning process. Jackson County held a community meeting in Commerce September 29, 2009, which was attended by city representatives and which included some discussion about Commerce’s planning efforts. The Commerce Kiwanis Club was briefed at a luncheon on October 29, 2009, about the upcoming Commerce comprehensive planning process as a part of the county’s planning process.

Identification of Participation Techniques

During the process of preparing a work scope, the consultant considered various community participation techniques. The work scope was written to meet the county’s specific needs for public involvement while also considering budget limitations. The following techniques were considered and as applicable included in the Community Participation Program.

Community Participation Techniques Considered

Participation Technique	Included in Program?	Explanation
Kiosk/Lobby displays	Yes	City Planner to determine appropriate locations
Speaker’s Bureau – briefings, presentations to civic clubs	No	Limited opportunities
Kick off public information meeting	No	Steering Committee will serve this function
Printed public information	Yes	City will rely on electronic media (web page) but may distribute printed information as needed; steering committee members will receive written copies of materials
Website – information only	Yes	Central communication tool (City Website)
Website – interactive	No	Not part of budget for project
Website – e-mail response capability	No	City planner will reply to e-mail inquiries; forward to consultant as appropriate
Cable TV information	No	Not part of budget for project
Press Releases	Yes	City Planner and Consulting Planner may prepare press releases at strategic intervals as appropriate
Posters, fliers, brochures, mailouts	No	Budget limitations have led to use of website as primary dissemination media
Direct mail surveys	No	Budget limitations preclude this option
Visioning exercises, workshops and charrettes, and community preference meetings	Yes	Two workshops proposed to be held
Student programs	No	Not planned, budget is limited
E-mail blasts	Yes	Notices of meetings, drafts, etc. will be sent to all e-mail addresses compiled
Technical advisory committee	No	information will be distributed or notice of all drafts available for download and comment
Steering committee	Yes	Appointed by the City Council and includes a diversity of representation

Participation Technique	Included in Program?	Explanation
Stakeholder meetings and interviews	Yes	Planner and Consulting Planner will interview stakeholders
Intergovernmental partnerships	Yes	Coordination with county through consulting planner; work with other cities and local governments as needed

Schedule for Completion of the Comprehensive Plan Including Community Agenda

Recertification Deadline: October 31, 2010

Monthly Calendar by Major Component of the Comprehensive Plan

Month	Community Assessment	Community Participation	Community Agenda
June 2009			
July 2009		C Complete	
August 2009	C Complete	S Complete	
September 2009	C Complete		
September 2009	SC first meeting held 8/25/09		
October 2009	S Complete		
October 2009	SC second meeting held 10/15/09		
October 2009	PC hearing 10/26/09		
December 14, 2009	Council approved submission for review	Council approved submission for review	
December 2009	RC/DCA	RC/DCA	
January 2010			Interview Stakeholders
February 2010			Interview Stakeholders
February 2010			Workshop (1) SC Meeting #3
March 2010			Workshop (1) C Complete SC Meeting #4
April 2010			PC hearing
May 2010			CC hearing and submit for review
June 2010			RC/DCA
July 2010			RC/DCA
August 2010			RC/DCA
September 2010			PC recommends
October 2010			CC Adopts

Legend:

C -- Consultant
PC – Planning Commission

S – Staff Review
CC – City Council

SC – Steering Committee
RC/DCA – Regional and state review

COMMERCE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN SCHEDULE

STEERING COMMITTEE (4 Meetings)

July 2009	Steering Committee (SC) appointed by City Council
August 2009	Initial introductory materials to SC including schedule
August 25, 2009	<u>Meeting #1</u> : introduction/overview, schedule, participation program
September 2009	Distributed “community assessment” (general feedback)
October 26, 2009	<u>Meeting #2</u> : Reviewed Community Assessment
February 2010	<u>Meeting #3</u> : First Review of Draft Community Agenda
March 2010	<u>Meeting #4</u> : Second Review of Draft Community Agenda

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS (2)

February 2010	Workshop (Community Agenda)
March 2010	Workshop (Community Agenda)

PLANNING COMMISSION (5 meetings)

October 26, 2009	Public hearing on community assessment and community participation program
November 12, 2009	Work session was held on the draft community assessment
November 23, 2009	Voted to recommend submission of community assessment to City Council and on to region/state for required review
April-May 2010	Public hearing on community agenda
September 2010	Planning Commission recommends adoption of community agenda after receiving results of regional/state review

CITY COUNCIL (4 meetings)

December 7, 2009	Work session held to brief Council on community assessment and participation program
December 14, 2009	Comment opportunity on community assessment and community participation program – Resolution authorizing submittal for review
May 2010	Public hearing on community agenda – Resolution authorizing submittal for review
October 2010	City Council adopts community agenda after receiving results of regional/state review