

# BUTTS COUNTY COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM 2005 - 2030



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# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

## Introduction

The overall purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a community with a documented vision for the future and a guide for achieving that vision. The purpose of the Community Participation Program (CPP) is to ensure that the community vision developed through the Butts County Comprehensive Plan Amendment process reflects the full range of community values and desires. A multi-faceted participation process can strengthen the Butts County community by providing a venue for citizens to work side by side with local leaders and government staff to collaboratively address the issues and opportunities that will shape their future.

## Scope

Butts County last conducted a full update of their Comprehensive Plan between 2004 and 2005. This update satisfies the county's legal requirement to conduct a full update to the Comprehensive Plan once every 10 years, under the 1989 Georgia Planning Act. In 2007 the county began a major amendment to their Comprehensive Plan in order to address the challenges of growth that were not anticipated in the 2004-2005 planning effort. In addition, the 2007 Comprehensive Plan Amendment is intended to bring the county's planning documents in line with new DCA planning standards enacted in May, 2005. However, the amendment process does not require the full DCA procedures for a complete comprehensive plan update. For example, the amendment process does not require multiple review periods for the three major elements of the comprehensive plan.

The May 1, 2005 DCA standards and procedures for comprehensive planning created a three-stage planning process including the Community Assessment, Community Participation Program, and Community Agenda. The Community Assessment represents an existing conditions analysis with an inventory of numerous data sets relating to the current and projected future conditions of the community. From this review of various data sources, a set of potential issues and opportunities is created as the starting point for public outreach efforts. Next, the Community Participation Program is conducted in order to test and refine the potential issues and opportunities into a vision for the future. Finally, the Community Agenda represents the community's vision for the future that has been developed through the two earlier stages of the planning process.

## Requirements and Goals

Public involvement is essential to the success of any planning effort. Plans have a greater likelihood of implementation if they provide solutions that have been developed through the cooperative efforts of all segments of the community – citizens, elected officials, the business community and civic organizations. Community involvement creates benefits for the community through education, as well as through the formation of a product that includes local knowledge and preferences. These important steps in the planning process ensure support and acceptance of the vision

and the supporting plan document. Community participation in the 2007 Butts County Comprehensive Plan Amendment seeks to accomplish the following goals:

- ❑ Raise the level of awareness and understanding of planning in the Butts County community.
- ❑ Provide a process for community input that allows citizens of Butts County to voice their concerns and aspirations in individualized settings and also provide chances for these citizens to come together and collaboratively address growth and development issues that cross municipal boundaries.
- ❑ Improve the quality of the decisions that are made during the planning process.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for stakeholders to make decisions and create the identity they envision for the Thomas community.
- ❑ Increase interest and facilitate ease in the implementation of solutions.
- ❑ Provide tangible evidence that the community created its own vision for the future.
- ❑ Engage traditionally underserved communities (minority, low-income, elderly, etc.) in the planning process.

### **Identification of Stakeholders**

Coordination and oversight are important parts of the comprehensive planning process. To ensure that the comprehensive plan is truly inclusive of the vision, needs, and desires of all community members, and that the plan adequately addresses the challenges and opportunities that are most important to the community, the involvement of a wide network of individuals is essential. In the public sector, local officials, planning staff and other key department staff from the county must be engaged and provide oversight throughout the planning process. Additionally, the wide network of civic organizations and local businesses in the Butts community must be engaged in the process. Large-scale efforts must be made to distribute meeting notices and information about the plan to the entire community.

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee convened to assist in the preparation of the Butts County Comprehensive Plan Amendment was intended to represent a wide spectrum of stakeholders and interest groups throughout Butts County. First, members of the Steering Committee included county planning staff as well as a member of the Planning and Zoning Commission. Likewise, representatives from the municipalities in Butts County were invited to participate. Because the Growth Management program and Capital Improvements Element directly link public services with land use planning, representatives from key service providers such as the Butts County Water & Sewer Authority and School Board were included. In order to represent the housing and service needs of low-income residents, a representative from the Jackson Housing Authority participated in the Steering Committee. In order to represent the interests of longtime residents and historic preservationists, a member of the Butts County

Historical society was included in the Steering Committee. Finally, several representatives from the county's business community were included as a means of providing input on economic development issues. A full list of Steering Committee members is provided as follows:

- ❑ Harry Clark – Planning and Zoning Commission
- ❑ Bruce McFarland – Smith, Welch, Britannia
- ❑ Marcie Seleb – Butts County Water & Sewer Authority
- ❑ Melinda Atha – Butts County Chamber of Commerce
- ❑ Sheri Hudson – Butts County Historical Society
- ❑ Alicia Washington – McIntosh Financial Services
- ❑ Terri Evans – Spring Properties Real Estate
- ❑ Linda Godin – Butts County School Board
- ❑ David Lyons – Butts County Development Authority
- ❑ Lanier Burford – City of Jenkinsburg
- ❑ Christy Taylor – Butts County Community Development Planner
- ❑ Shashi Madan – S. Madan MD PE
- ❑ Johnnie Prifogle – Jackson Housing Authority

The first major task of the Steering Committee was to analyze, prioritize and balance community issues and opportunities. The list of preliminary issues and opportunities developed in the Community Assessment was reviewed and refined by the Steering Committee. Next, discussions were held in order to establish meaningful goals and policies for the county based on the community's issues and opportunities.

The Steering Committee was also directly involved in formulating land use plans for the county. First, the committee reviewed and helped refine the Character Areas Map included within the Community Assessment element of the plan. This helped established the general vision for each character area as well as the areas that were perceived to be experiencing growth pressure. Second, the Steering Committee was involved in the formulation of the Growth Phasing program included in the Growth Management Report. This input allowed for a coordination of public desires for growth management and preservation with infrastructure phasing plans. Finally, the Steering Committee was involved in reviewing and refining the land use recommendations provided in the Future Development Map and Future Development Narrative.

## **Community Design Charrette**

In order to obtain direct citizen input on desired land use patterns in the county, a community design charrette was conducted on February 28, 2007. Charrette exercises are hands-on workshops where participants are invited to mark up maps with desired land use patterns. Blank maps of the county were provided including “base” features such as roads, rivers, city limits, parcel lines, and parks. In addition to the county-wide basemaps, two breakout tables were held addressing the Indian Springs/Flovilla sub-area. This sub-area was of importance due to the large proposed master planned community of RoseHill just south of Indian Springs. Furthermore, the breakout groups focused on the Indian Springs area were intended to serve as a starting point for the county’s upcoming Signature Communities Study.

In order to make the exercise accessible to the general public, a generalized group of land use categories was created. A workshop packet was provided with a description of these generalized “character areas,” permitted land uses, and illustrative photos. Color coded stickers were printed featuring pictures of the representative land uses included in the workshop packet. The use of stickers was intended to overcome the reluctance of some participants with limited drawing skills. In addition, magic markers were provided corresponding to the colors of each character area category. Markers allow for more detailed delineation of linear features and large planning areas.

The results of the community design charrette were incorporated into both the Future Development Map and Growth Phasing Map.

## **Community Vision Survey**

In order to test and refine many of the issues and opportunities developed in the Community Assessment, a Community Vision Survey was conducted. The statements tested in the Community Vision Survey also helped establish the county’s goals, policies, and vision for the future. In addition, the Community Vision Survey included several questions directly related to land use and transportation. These questions were helpful in formulating the Future Development Map and implementation recommendations.

The Community Vision Survey was administered in both paper and online versions. Online versions were transmitted via e-mail links to community newsletters. The survey was also publicized in the Jackson Progress Argent newspaper. Paper versions of the survey were distributed through the county planning office and at public meetings. In total 240 participants filled out the survey. Since the online version accounted for the majority of these responses, a unique IP address was recorded for each response. This ensures that participants were only allowed to fill out the survey once per computer.

## **Survey Results**

The results of the Community Vision Survey are provided as follows. The responses to several of the open-ended questions have been omitted due to the lengthy tabulation of all responses.

<b>1. Butts County should encourage continued growth and evolve from a rural to a suburban community.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	29.37%	79
Agree	29.37%	79
Neutral	7.43%	20
Disagree	19.70%	53
Strongly Disagree	14.13%	38
<i>answered question</i>		269
<i>skipped question</i>		2

<b>2. Butts County should adopt a “slow growth” policy in order to maintain its rural heritage.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	27.14%	73
Agree	24.91%	67
Neutral	10.04%	27
Disagree	27.88%	75
Strongly Disagree	10.04%	27
<i>answered question</i>		269
<i>skipped question</i>		2

<b>3. Growth in the population over 65 will require Butts County to adapt County services for seniors.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	24.54%	66
Agree	44.98%	121
Neutral	20.45%	55
Disagree	7.81%	21
Strongly Disagree	2.23%	6
<i>answered question</i>		269
<i>skipped question</i>		2

<b>4. Senior housing is needed in order to accommodate the rising proportion of elderly residents.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	14.90%	38
Agree	42.35%	108
Neutral	30.20%	77
Disagree	10.20%	26
Strongly Disagree	2.35%	6
<i>answered question</i>		255
<i>skipped question</i>		16

**5. A balanced mix of housing types should be provided in the County, including single family residential, duplexes, townhomes, apartments, and manufactured housing.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	16.27%	41
Agree	37.30%	94
Neutral	10.71%	27
Disagree	23.41%	59
Strongly Disagree	12.30%	31
<i>answered question</i>		<b>252</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>19</b>

**6. Butts County is in need of additional special needs housing, such as housing for the disabled, group homes, and women’s shelters.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	9.41%	24
Agree	30.59%	78
Neutral	33.73%	86
Disagree	17.25%	44
Strongly Disagree	9.02%	23
<i>answered question</i>		<b>255</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>16</b>

**7. Affordable housing is needed in order to meet the needs of County residents.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	11.42%	29
Agree	32.68%	83
Neutral	24.02%	61
Disagree	19.69%	50
Strongly Disagree	12.20%	31
<i>answered question</i>		<b>254</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>17</b>

**8. List any residential neighborhoods that are in need of improvement or redevelopment.**

answer options	Response Count
	71
<i>answered question</i>	<b>71</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>200</b>



**9. The County should try to attract light industrial, distribution, and logistics industries in order to take advantage of our location between Atlanta and Macon.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	56.25%	135
Agree	32.50%	78
Neutral	5.42%	13
Disagree	2.92%	7
Strongly Disagree	2.92%	7
<i>answered question</i>		<b>240</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>31</b>

**10. The County should offer business assistance such as tax abatements in order to attract economic growth.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	35.56%	85
Agree	40.17%	96
Neutral	11.30%	27
Disagree	7.11%	17
Strongly Disagree	5.86%	14
<i>answered question</i>		<b>239</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>32</b>

**11. The County should implement workforce training programs in order to ensure that residents have the skills to match future growth industries and the needs of existing business.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	33.19%	79
Agree	42.02%	100
Neutral	15.13%	36
Disagree	5.88%	14
Strongly Disagree	3.78%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>238</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>33</b>

<b>12. The County should conduct a coordinated marketing campaign in order to attract new businesses.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	45.83%	110
Agree	37.08%	89
Neutral	6.67%	16
Disagree	6.25%	15
Strongly Disagree	4.17%	10
<i>answered question</i>		<b>240</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>31</b>

<b>13. The County should encourage growth in tourism through cross-promotion of historic, cultural, and recreational resources.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	45.00%	108
Agree	41.67%	100
Neutral	8.33%	20
Disagree	3.75%	9
Strongly Disagree	1.25%	3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>240</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>31</b>

<b>14. The County should explore public-private partnerships and agreements with neighboring jurisdictions for major economic development projects.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	34.32%	81
Agree	42.37%	100
Neutral	10.17%	24
Disagree	9.32%	22
Strongly Disagree	3.81%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>236</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>35</b>

**15. The County should invest in broadband internet infrastructure in order to provide for modern workforce needs and remain competitive with new technology.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	46.22%	110
Agree	38.24%	91
Neutral	9.66%	23
Disagree	4.20%	10
Strongly Disagree	1.68%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>238</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>33</b>

**16. The County should explore innovative funding solutions for new infrastructure, such as Tax Allocation Districts (TADs). TADs can be used to fund new infrastructure improvements by issuing bonds based on future increases in surrounding property values.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	22.88%	54
Agree	35.17%	83
Neutral	31.36%	74
Disagree	8.47%	20
Strongly Disagree	2.12%	5
<i>answered question</i>		<b>236</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>35</b>

**17. List any commercial or industrial areas that are in need of improvement or redevelopment.**

answer options	Response Count
	55
<i>answered question</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>216</b>

**18. Butts County should ensure that new development does not exceed the capacity of public services, such as schools.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	42.80%	101
Agree	37.71%	89
Neutral	11.02%	26
Disagree	4.66%	11
Strongly Disagree	3.81%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>236</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>35</b>

**19. New growth should be required to help pay for it's impact on public infrastructure and services through development fees.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	47.41%	110
Agree	36.64%	85
Neutral	11.64%	27
Disagree	3.02%	7
Strongly Disagree	1.29%	3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>232</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>39</b>

**20. Do you think the County needs additional investment in:**

answer options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Count
Police	31	85	70	34	12	232
911 & Emergency Medical Service	45	96	60	26	5	232
Fire Protection	41	100	62	20	5	228
Roads and Streetscapes	72	111	37	13	2	235
Parks & Recreation	49	95	61	22	6	233
Utilities (water & sewer)	55	94	62	15	6	232
Trash Disposal	25	68	105	27	6	231
Health Care	70	81	57	20	6	234
Libraries	49	75	73	31	5	233
Schools	100	78	31	19	5	233
<i>answered question</i>						<b>235</b>
<i>skipped question</i>						<b>36</b>

**21. Historic buildings in Butts County should be preserved.**

answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	52.10%	124
Agree	38.24%	91
Neutral	7.14%	17
Disagree	2.10%	5
Strongly Disagree	0.42%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>238</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>33</b>

<b>22. The County should promote arts and cultural events in order to attract tourism and provide entertainment activities.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	43.10%	103
Agree	38.91%	93
Neutral	12.55%	30
Disagree	4.60%	11
Strongly Disagree	0.84%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>239</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>32</b>

<b>23. Additional bicycle/pedestrian facilities, such as trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes, should be provided to connect parks, residential neighborhoods, and schools.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	39.92%	95
Agree	35.71%	85
Neutral	14.71%	35
Disagree	7.98%	19
Strongly Disagree	1.68%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>238</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>33</b>

<b>24. Water resources such as river corridors, floodplains, and wetlands should be protected.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	54.01%	128
Agree	37.13%	88
Neutral	7.17%	17
Disagree	1.27%	3
Strongly Disagree	0.42%	1
<i>answered question</i>		<b>237</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>34</b>

<b>25. Commercial development should be concentrated in walkable “Main Street” style villages, as opposed to auto-oriented strip shopping centers.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	31.60%	73
Agree	32.90%	76
Neutral	23.81%	55
Disagree	9.52%	22
Strongly Disagree	2.16%	5
<i>answered question</i>		<b>231</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>40</b>

<b>26. The aesthetics and design of commercial corridors should be carefully regulated to ensure that commercial districts do not decline.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	36.09%	83
Agree	47.39%	109
Neutral	13.91%	32
Disagree	1.74%	4
Strongly Disagree	0.87%	2
<i>answered question</i>		<b>230</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>41</b>

<b>27. “Big Box” retailers (such as Wal Mart, Target, and Home Depot) should be regulated in order to mitigate negative impacts on small businesses and traffic.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	20.94%	49
Agree	23.93%	56
Neutral	18.80%	44
Disagree	18.80%	44
Strongly Disagree	17.52%	41
<i>answered question</i>		<b>234</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>37</b>

<b>28. Mixed-use development, which combines commercial and residential within one development, should be encouraged in the County.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	19.13%	44
Agree	31.30%	72
Neutral	26.09%	60
Disagree	15.65%	36
Strongly Disagree	7.83%	18
<i>answered question</i>		<b>230</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>41</b>

<b>29. What is your opinion of the proposed Rosehill golf community in southwest Butts County near Indian Springs State Park? This proposed 2,600 acre development includes a golf course, 3,680 housing units, and a small commercial town center area.</b>	
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	175
<i>answered question</i>	<b>175</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>96</b>

<b>30. Alternative modes of transportation should be encouraged in order to provide for the needs of all citizens and age groups.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	19.31%	45
Agree	38.20%	89
Neutral	27.04%	63
Disagree	10.30%	24
Strongly Disagree	5.15%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>233</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>38</b>

<b>31. The most intensive development should occur along major roads that can handle the increased traffic.</b>		
<b>answer options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Strongly Agree	28.57%	66
Agree	49.78%	115
Neutral	14.29%	33
Disagree	5.63%	13
Strongly Disagree	1.73%	4
<i>answered question</i>		<b>231</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>40</b>

32. Identify any roads or intersections which should be improved in order to alleviate traffic.	
answer options	Response Count
	135
<i>answered question</i>	135
<i>skipped question</i>	136

33. Identify any areas where speed bumps or crosswalks are needed in order to increase pedestrian safety and slow down traffic.	
answer options	Response Count
	62
<i>answered question</i>	62
<i>skipped question</i>	209

34. Butts County, its cities, and surrounding counties should work together to ensure that land use plans are consistent across jurisdictions.		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	30.87%	71
Agree	48.26%	111
Neutral	13.91%	32
Disagree	4.35%	10
Strongly Disagree	2.61%	6
<i>answered question</i>		230
<i>skipped question</i>		41

35. Butts County, and the Cities of Jackson, Jenkinsburg, and Flovilla should work together to provide quality public services.		
answer options	Response Percent	Response Count
Strongly Agree	54.11%	125
Agree	40.26%	93
Neutral	5.63%	13
Disagree	0.00%	0
Strongly Disagree	0.00%	0
<i>answered question</i>		231
<i>skipped question</i>		40

Please use the space below to tell us what issues related to the future development of Butts County are most important to you?	
answer options	Response Count
	146
<i>answered question</i>	146
<i>skipped question</i>	125



**Table CPP 1 – Public Participation Schedule**

<b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SCHEDULE</b>	
<b>Event and Date</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
-	-
<b>Citizen Advisory Panel</b>	
3/29/2007	Issues and Opportunities Survey
4/18/2007	Goals and Policies Discussion
5/17/2007	Character Area Discussion
6/20/2007	Growth Management Discussion
	Review Draft Future Community Agenda and Future Development Map
<b>Community Vision Survey</b>	
5/4/2007 - 9/9/2007	Issues and Opportunities, Goals and Policies, Future Development
<b>Public Workshop</b>	
7/11/2007	Future Development Patterns
<b>Open House Presentation</b>	
TBD	Present Draft Future Development Map, Community Agenda
<b>Public Hearing</b>	
TBD	Transmittal Hearing
TBD	Adoption Hearing