

The City of **Newnan** **Georgia**



Comprehensive Plan 2006:

Where Tradition Meets the Future

Community Participation Program



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I. Introduction

Purpose

One of the best ways to strengthen communities is to create opportunities for citizens to work collaboratively on the challenges that shape their community. Accomplishing this requires political leadership, citizen education, and active involvement. A successful comprehensive plan begins with a process of thinking about and visualizing the future. It is about carrying on a dialogue with the community concerning its vision for evolving and growing. This Community Participation Program was crafted with these principles in mind and establishes a two-way communication between local citizens and their government officials, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public.

Scope

The City of Newnan is required by state law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by October 31, 2006. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Advanced Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), effective May 1, 2005.

The City of Newnan began developing its Comprehensive Plan update under the earlier standards that were in effect as of January 1, 2004. Therefore, the City held a “kickoff” public meeting on July 27, 2004 to officially announce the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders. In addition, five visioning workshops were held over a three month period during the fall of that same year to obtain citizen input on all elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The City also distributed a survey to determine citizen preferences and opinions regarding quality of life issues. This survey was distributed at all workshops and was available on-line at the City’s website.

Requirements for Success

Experience in public involvement has shown that lasting solutions are best identified when all segments of a community—individuals, elected officials, educators, the business community, and civic organizations—are brought together in a spirit of cooperation. A collaborative approach to community engagement is not an opportunity, but a necessity. Community engagement and involvement is done for three reasons:

- 1) To educate and increase public awareness
- 2) To capture the knowledge and preferences of the people who live in and support the communities
- 3) To mobilize 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 the 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 peoples’ values and philosophies. These values and philosophies must be interpreted into meaningful information to guide the project. It is essential to know the community’s values to avoid



and mitigate impacts as well as narrow the field of alternative solutions. This process is designed to accomplish the following:

- 1) Improve the quality of decisions
- 2) Increase ease of implementation
- 3) Provide greater public understanding of community goals and objectives
- 4) Provide tangible evidence that the community created its own identity



II. Identification of Stakeholders

American Association of Retired Persons
Apartment Complexes
Association for Retarded Citizens
Board of Realtors
Chamber of Commerce
Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center
Citizen Courthouse Committee
City Boards and Commissions
City Council
City Departments
College/Temple Homeowner's Association
Community Action for Improvement
Convention and Visitors Bureau
Council on Aging
Coweta County Commissioners
Coweta County Departments
Coweta County Farm Bureau
Coweta County School Board
Coweta Cycling Club
Greenville/LaGrange Homeowner's Association
Habitat for Humanity
Home Builder's Association
Leadership Coweta
Local Churches
Local Civic Organizations
Main Street
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Newnan Historical Society
Newnan Hospital
Newnan Housing Authority
Newnan-Coweta Art Association
Pathway Communities
Rainbow Ministries
SummerGrove Homeowner's Association
United Daughters of the Confederacy



III. Identification of Participation Techniques

The State Planning Recommendations suggests three types of community participation techniques to use in developing a City's comprehensive plan. In proceeding with the update, Newnan has selected a variety of techniques based on budget, schedule, and target audience. The following reflect the participation techniques that have been used during the development of the assessment or will be used during preparation of the Community Agenda:

Informative

A. Kick-off Public Information Hearing

The City held a kick-off public information hearing on July 27, 2004, during the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. The hearing was for the purpose of giving a presentation on the Comprehensive Plan. Included in the presentation was information regarding the purpose of the plan, the proposed schedule, the public participation efforts, and the overall planning process.

B. Speakers Bureau

The City of Newnan Planning Department staff has spoken to several civic groups regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the importance of having public input. The staff will continue to make these presentations as it begins the Community Agenda phase of the update.

C. Printed Public Information

The City developed a brochure regarding the Comprehensive Plan. This document was sent to a wide variety of stakeholders including over 1,000 residential property owners. The brochure outlined the purpose of the plan and gave dates and times for the visioning workshops. It also invited stakeholders to complete the department's preference survey which was available at the office or on-line through the City's website.

In addition, the City has participated in the Chamber of Commerce's Newnan-Coweta 2020 Vision program that included the "Be Something Different" survey, which had over 5,500 responses from Coweta County citizens. This document helped in the development of the proposed issues and opportunities that will be discussed at future public meetings.

D. Website – Information Only

The Planning Department has created a page on the City's website that discusses the Comprehensive Plan and provides updated information regarding the development process. The site also includes survey results as well as media materials and past presentations. This page will continue to be updated until the plan has been adopted.



E. Press Releases

Through its public information officer, the City has provided a series of press releases regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the public participation process. The City will continue to provide this information to the local media as it begins developing the Community Agenda portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

F. Media Strategies

The City has worked on disseminating information regarding the Comprehensive Plan through a series of news articles and press releases published in the *Newnan Times-Herald*. We will continue to work closely with the media as we begin our second series of workshops and stakeholder interviews.

G. Cable TV Information

Staff will continue to work with the local cable television provider on public service announcements regarding the Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the staff will appear on the show *Spotlight on Newnan* to discuss the plan and ways that the public can continue to participate in the development of the Community Agenda.

Public Input

A. Public Hearings

The City has already held a public hearing to kick off the comprehensive planning process. Additional public hearings will be held for the transmittal of the draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program and the draft Community Agenda to the RDC & DCA for review.

B. Website Response Capability (E-mail)

The webpage that contains information regarding the Comprehensive Plan is designed to allow visitors to contact the planning staff by e-mail by clicking on the staff person's name.

Interactive

A. Workshops

The City conducted five workshops facilitated by the Planning Department staff in order to discuss issues and opportunities that need to be addressed in the Comprehensive Plan. These workshops were held in different locations throughout the City in order to obtain diverse input representative of all areas within the City. Additional meetings will be held as the City begins developing the Community Agenda. These meetings will primarily focus on the proposed character areas and additional issues and opportunities that were identified in the assessment. A workshop will also be held to receive comments on the Community Agenda's initial draft.



B. Website Interactive with Surveys

The City included a copy of its survey on the website to provide easy access for those citizens unable to visit City Hall. In addition, e-mail addresses for staff were provided as a means of creating another channel of communication.

Partnerships

A. Stakeholder Interviews

The Staff will begin conducting one-on-one interviews with key community leaders. A list of standardized questions will be developed in an effort to obtain more detailed information about the stakeholders' areas of expertise. These interviews will be a key component in the creation of the Community Agenda.

B. Intergovernmental Partnership Meetings

The County has been holding intergovernmental partnership meetings with other jurisdictions and stakeholders as part of their Community Participation Program. Newnan is currently participating in these meetings and will continue to be involved in this process. The staff will be working closely with our representatives on this Committee to ensure consistency with the County's vision for Coweta County over the next twenty years.



IV. Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

Event/Activity	Month																							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Kickoff event to explain the planning process																								
Gathering of ideas, opinions, and information from public, to develop Community Assessment																								
Community-wide event(s) to discuss and prioritize the Preliminary Issues and Opportunities list																								
Research for Community Assessment																								
Drafting of Community Assessment																								
Completion of Community Assessment																								
Public Hearing on Community Assessment Transmittal																								
30 day review period for Community Assessment																								
Community events* to produce/refine the Future Development Map and revisit the preliminary Issues and Opportunities List																								
Development of draft Implementation Program by plan preparers																								
Community events* to react to draft Implementation Program																								
Assembly of draft Community Agenda by plan preparer																								
Community events* to react to draft Community Agenda (2nd public hearing)																								
Adoption of transmittal resolution by local government and submittal of Community Agenda to RDC for review																								

*As specified in the "Identification of Participation Techniques"