



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2008-2028

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

for

THE CITY OF OXFORD

December 2007

As Adopted

Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
Planning Department



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW	-1-
1.2 Scope	-1-
1.3 Requirements for Success	-1-
2. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS	-1-
2.1 Government & Education	-2-
2.2 Civic and Religious Groups	-2-
2.3 Major Property Owners	-2-
3. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES	-2-
3.1 Initial Public Hearing	-2-
3.2 Community Input & Visioning	-2-
3.3 Adoption Process	-3-
3.4 Outreach	-3-
4. SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA	-3-



1. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1.1 Purpose

One of the best ways to strengthen communities is to create opportunities for citizens to work collaboratively on the challenges and opportunities that shape their hometown. Accomplishing this requires political leadership, citizen education, and active involvement. A successful comprehensive plan relies on a process of thinking about and visualizing a desired future. It is about establishing and carrying on a dialogue within 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 line of communication between residents and their government officials, with the overall goal of quality decisions supported by the public.

1.2 Scope

The City of Oxford is required by Georgia law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by February 28, 2008. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Advanced Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA; Chapter 110-12-1), effective May 1, 2005.

1.3 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. Involvement and engagement of the community is done for three reasons:

- Educate the public and increase awareness
- Capture the knowledge and preferences of the people who live in and support the community
- Mobilize support for and acceptance of the plan

The measure of effectiveness of a public involvement program is not how well the public has been informed, but to what degree its input has contributed to making decisions that are feasible and are supported by a large segment of the community and its elected officials.

Public comment and sentiment are a rich source of information about peoples' values and philosophies. These tenets must be interpreted into meaningful information to guide the project. It is essential to know the community's values to avoid, minimize, and mitigate potential impacts as well as narrow the field of possible solutions. This process is designed to accomplish the following:

- Maximize the quality of decision-making
- Increase ease of implementation
- Provide greater public understanding and ownership of community goals and objectives
- Provide tangible evidence that the community has created its own identity



2. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

Coordination and oversight are critical parts of the overall work effort for this project. In addition, a network of community groups, agencies, and individuals will be identified early in the process for distribution of meeting notices and activities as part of a broad public outreach effort.

2.1 Government & Education

Elected Officials of The City of Oxford and Newton County
Planning Commissioners of the City of Oxford
City of Oxford Trees, Parks, & Recreation Board
City of Oxford staff (City Clerk, Superintendent, Chief of Police, Fire Chief)
Oxford College
Palmer-Stone Elementary
Cousins Middle School
Newton County Board of Education

2.2 Civic and Religious Groups

Allen Memorial United Methodist Church
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Oxford Baptist Church
Rusk Chapel United Methodist Church
Amitie Club
Oxford Historical Cemetery Foundation
Oxford Historical Shrine Society
Oxford Lions Club

2.3 Major Property Owners

Property owners holding five acres or more within the City of Oxford



3. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

3.1 Initial Public Hearing

A public hearing to present the draft Community Participation Program and draft Community Assessment to the public is scheduled for October 18, 2007.

3.2 Community Input & Visioning

Meetings will be held for the City of Oxford during October and November. Participants will be led through a series of exercises to create a vision and refine the issues and opportunities identified in the Community Assessment.

The end product of the Community Visioning Meetings will be an illustration and description of a desired community, as expressed in the following terms:

- Strengths and weaknesses of quality of life for the City.
- Opportunities and threats that could affect the quality of life in Oxford over the next 20 years.
- Quality of life that the stakeholders and participants in the workshops envision for the City 20 years from now.
- Factors of change and major decisions that will be required to move the City from where it is today to where participants would like it to be.
- Benchmarks, or measurable indicators, of quality of life that will be used to evaluate success over the course of the planning horizon.

Additionally, mailed, telephoned, faxed, and emailed comments will be accepted throughout the planning process.

3.3 Adoption Process

The Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center (RDC) will present the draft Community Agenda at a public hearing before transmittal from the City to the RDC for regional and state review. After the RDC and DCA review the Community Agenda, the final draft will be presented to the City Council and the public for adoption at a regular local government meeting. The tentative date for these transmittal hearings is January 2008 with final adoption in March.

3.4 Outreach

Varieties of techniques will be used to disseminate pertinent information to participants. Civic leaders, churches, and educational groups will be contacted to assist in notifying the public regarding participation opportunities through press releases, fliers, and other information pertaining to the project. Additionally, the RDC will work with the local newspaper, the Covington News, to see that details on the planning process are periodically published as well as a reminder that information concerning the plan and draft documents will be posted to the Northeast Georgia Planning web site (www.negplanning.org).

A joint effort of the City Council and the Planning Commission has ensured that every household in Oxford will receive mailed notice about the planning process, public meetings, and other matters.



4. SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

The graphic below shows the schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Major upcoming milestones in this schedule include:

- Community Input Meetings - October-December 2007
- Community Visioning Meetings - October-November 2007
- Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community Agenda to RDC - December 2007
- Adoption of the Community Agenda - March 2008

	October	November	December	January	February	March
Community Input Meetings						
Community Visioning Meetings						
Public Hearing						
Review of Community Agenda						
Adopt Community Agenda						