

Community Participation Program

Stewart County and the Cities of Lumpkin and Richland

Submitted to Georgia Department
of Community Affairs

May 2006

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

One of the best ways to strengthen communities is to create opportunities for citizens to work together on the issues that face 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 conversation with the community concerning its vision for evolving and growing. With this in mind, Stewart County and the Cities of Lumpkin and Richland created a Community Participation Plan which establishes an interchange of ideas between local citizens and their government officials, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public.

1.2 State Requirements

Stewart County, the City of Lumpkin and the City of Richland are required by state law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by February 28, 2007. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Basic Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), effective May 1, 2005.

1.2 Requirements for Success

In order for any planning process to succeed, all levels of the community must be brought together in an open atmosphere which allows for frank discussion of issues. When all of the relevant entities, including elected officials, educators, individuals, businesses in the community, and civic organizations, work together to ensure a spirit of cooperation, a better product is generated. Community engagement and involvement is done for three reasons:

- To increase public involvement
- To define the values of vision of residents of Stewart County and the cities of Lumpkin and Richland
- To gather public support and acceptance of the comprehensive plan

The quality of life in a community will only improve when the citizens work together. Success of any Community Participation Plan can be measured by the information provided by the public that contributes to decisions supported by 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 plan. It is essential to know the community's

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

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

2 Identification of Stakeholders

Coordination and oversight are very important parts of the overall work effort for this project. This approach, to ensure proper management of the process, includes oversight by the Stewart County Board of Commissioners, Lumpkin City Council and Richland City Council. In addition, a network of community organizations and local companies has been identified early in the process for distribution of meeting notices and posters as part of a broad public outreach effort.

Stewart County Board of Commissioners

John “Stonie” Patterson – Chair
Joe Lee Williams – Vice Chair
Jimmie Lee
Ernie Brown
Arcola Scott

Richland City Council

Adolph McLendon – Mayor
Kenneth Josey – Mayor Pro-Tem
Valerie Mayes
J.C. Clark
Lucious Brogden
Mona Dudley

Lumpkin City Council

Weyman E. Cannington – Mayor
Lawrence Young – Mayor Pro-Tem
Randy Mathis
Charles Gibson
Jean Armour
Jimmy Lynch
Kenneth Seay

Stewart County Comprehensive Plan Committee

Barbara Cullefer
Sherry Witherington
David Barrett
Ed Cannington
Adolph McClendon
Jo Downer
Stonie Patterson

3 Identification of Participation Techniques

3.1 Initial Public Hearing

As required under the state Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, an initial public hearing before the Stewart County Board of Commissioners, and representatives of the Lumpkin and Richland City Councils,

will be held to announce to the public that the planning process for creating a new comprehensive plan is underway and to present the draft Community Participation Program and draft Community Assessment to the public. The meeting is scheduled for April 28, 2006 at 10:30 a.m. at the Stewart County Courthouse. The public will be informed of the plan's project schedule (the Community Visioning Meeting, an Open House, and the Adoption Hearing) and how they can get involved. The public also will be given an opportunity to comment on the process, the two draft documents, and their vision for the future of the County and each of the cities.

3.2 Planning Committee Meetings

The Stewart County Comprehensive Plan Committee will provide guidance and feedback throughout the planning process. Meeting will be held as needed to review progress on development of the plan. Committee meetings will be held prior to all public meetings.

3.3 Community Visioning Meeting

The Community Visioning Meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2006, from 6:30 pm – 8: 30 pm at the Stewart County Elementary School. The participants will be led through a series of exercises that will help them create a vision for the Stewart County. Stewart County and each of the cities has been the subject of two studies by the University of Georgia and Georgia Tech in the past three (3) years. Results of these studies have identified community issues and opportunities facing the County and each of the cities. This meeting will not attempt to repeat this work but will briefly summarize the issues/opportunities identified and identify any changes. The workshop will have three goals for the County:

1. verify community issues and identify any changes.
2. Establish a vision
3. Identify strategies for Success

The end product of the Community Visioning Meeting will be a narrative description for each plan area expressed in the following terms:

- ☐ Strengths and weakness of the quality of life for the County including each of the cities.
- ☐ The opportunities and threats that confront the quality of life in the County including each of the cities over the next 20 years.
- ☐ The quality of life that the stakeholders and participants in the workshop envision for the County including each of the cities 20 years from now.
- ☐ The factors of change and big decisions that will be required to move the County including each of the cities from where it is today to where participants want it to go.
- ☐ Benchmarks, or measurable indicators, or quality of life that will be used to indicate success in the future.

3.4 Open House

An Open House, tentatively scheduled for September 13, 2006, will be an opportunity for participants to review and comment on the draft Community Agenda. Attendees will be provided copies of the draft Community Agenda and will be provided opportunities to comment. Committee members will engage the audience members to solicit input on specific goals and objectives contained in the Community Agenda. Displays, comment cards, handouts, and other information materials will be distributed. Formal written comments, collected at the conclusion of the Open House, will be summarized and responded to in a timely manner. The Open House will be up to 2 hours in length and will take place after the Stewart County Board of Commissioners, Lumpkin City Council and Richland City Council have had an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Community Agenda.

3.4 Adoption Process

The draft Community Agenda will be presented during a regular Stewart County Board of Commissioners meeting before transmittal to the Lower Chattahoochee Regional Development Center (RDC) for regional and state review. After the RDC and DCA review the Community Agenda, the final draft will be presented to the Stewart County Board of Commissioners and the public at a regular Stewart County Board of Commissioners meeting. It will also be presented at the regular City of Lumpkin and City of Richland City Council Meetings. Public comment will be received at the Stewart County Board of Commission hearing. The tentative date for this transmittal hearing is October 10, 2006.

3.5 Outreach

Varieties of techniques will be used to get the information out to participants. Articles publicizing the public hearings, Community Visioning Meeting, and Open House will be sent to the local newspaper. Local businesses, civic leaders, and churches will be contacted to assist in getting the word out regarding public participation opportunities through posters and other information pertaining to the project.

4 Timeline 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:

Initial Public Hearing County Commission.....	April 28, 2006
Adoption of Resolution for Transmittal of the Community Participation Plan and Community Assessment	May, 2006
Community Visioning Meeting.....	May 11, 2006
Open House	September 13, 2006

Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community
 Agenda to DCAOctober 10, 2006
 Adoption of Resolution for Transmittal of the Community
 Agenda to the RDC October, 2006
 Submission of Community Agenda to DCA November 1, 2006
 Adoption of the Community Agenda.....February 2007

	Jan. 2005 - Jan 2006	Feb.	April	May	June - August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan. 2007	Feb.
Community Assessment											
Community Participation Program											
Initial Public Hearing											
Adoption of Resolution for transmittal of Community Assessment & Community Participation program to RDC											
Community Agenda											
Community Visioning Meeting											
Open House											
Public Hearing for Transmittal of Community Agenda											
Adoption of Resolution for transmittal of Community Agenda to RDC											
Submission to DCA											
Adoption by Stewart County, City of Lumpkin and City of Richland											