

**Coffee County 2007 - 2027 Comprehensive Plan Update:  
Community Participation Program**

**August 2006**



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# 1 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 two-way communication between local citizens and their government officials, with the overall goal of better decisions supported by the public. This document was prepared as part of the update of the Joint Coffee County-City Comprehensive Plan (Plan). This joint Plan is for Coffee County and the cities of Ambrose, Broxton, Douglas, and Nicholls.

## ***Scope***

Coffee County and its cities are required by state law to complete their Comprehensive Plan Update by October 31, 2007. As prescribed by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Plan will be created following the intent of the Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning effective May 1, 2005.

## ***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:

- To educate and increase public awareness.
- To capture the knowledge and preferences of the people who live in and support the communities.
- 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 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, 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 elected officials and Planning Commission. In addition, a network of community organizations and local companies will be identified for receipt of meeting notices and posters as part of a broad public outreach effort. Newspaper announcements, flyers at local businesses, the local cable access channel, the City of Douglas website, and direct mailing will be used to gain higher levels of participation.

### **Coffee County Commissioners**

- Earl Brice , Commissioner
- Donnie Graham, Commissioner
- Frank Jackson, Commissioner
- Jimmy Kitchens, Commissioner
- Don Paulk, Commissioner

### **Coffee County Staff**

- Wesley Vickers, County Finance Director, Acting County Manager
- Ralph Jowers, County Fire Chief
- Chris Kitchens, Code Enforcement
- JoAnn Metts, County Clerk
- Wendall Troupe, Roads
- Sheriff

### **City of Douglas Mayor and Commission**

- Mayor Tony Paulk
- Commissioner Franklin Threatt
- Commissioner Dennis Josey
- Commissioner Oscar Street
- Mayor Pro-Tem Johnnie Lee Roper, Sr.
- Commissioner Ronnie Anderson
- Commissioner Olivia Pearson

### **City of Douglas Staff**

- Jackie Wilson, City Manager
- Dale Batten, Community Development Director
- Roger Johnson, Douglas- Coffee County Recreation Department
- Jerome Adams, Attorney
- Ray Parker, Planning and Zoning
- Randall Parker, Planning and Zoning
- Ernie Crussel, Sewer/Wastewater
- Larry Royal, Roads

- Chief Clifford Thomas, Public Safety
- Chief Tim White, Fire
- Jacqueline Vickers, Library Director

**Cities of Ambrose, Broxton, and Nicholls**

- Larry Paulk, Mayor of Ambrose
- DeWayne Streat, Mayor of Nicholls
- James Reynolds, Mayor of Broxton

**Downtown Development Authority**

- Marvelyne Fletcher
- Scott Moore
- David Norris
- Mary Francis Smith
- Elsworth Swanson, Sr.
- Tommy Watkins
- Jarrell Litman
- Ex-Officio Member, Sid Cottingham, Attorney at Law
- Ex-Officio Member, Norma Preston

**Douglas-Coffee County Economic Development Authority**

- Luke Morgan/President, County Commission
- Oscar Street/Vice President, City Commission
- Gene Merritt/Secretary-Treasurer, County Commission
- Rudy Porter, City Commission
- Mr. William H. Elliott, City Commission
- Jeff Johnson, Chamber/City/County
- Earl Brice, County Commission

**Coffee County Chamber of Commerce**

- JoAnne Lewis
- Beth Evans

**Historical Society**

- Norma Preston
- Diane Lott
- Corey Carver
- Juanita Speight
- Kim Arnett
- Brenda Veal
- Luke Morgan
- R.L. O’Steen, Jr.
- Becky Miller
- Jarrell Litman
- Charles Williams, Jr.

### **Douglas – Coffee County Planning Commission**

- Frank Pridemore, Sergeant at Arms
- Joseph D. Murray-Chairman
- Kevin Pfoutz
- Linda Christian
- Roger Thompson, V. Chairman
- Wayne Roberts

### **Department Representatives**

- Fire Services
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Information Systems
- Keep Douglas/Coffee Beautiful (KCNB)
- Landfill
- Parks and Attractions
- Planning and Development
- Public Buildings
- Public Works
- Recreation
- Sheriff
- Stormwater Management
- Coffee County School System
- Coffee County Water and Sewer Authority

### **Coffee County Organizations**

- Citizens
- Main Street Program
- Developers
- Farmers
- Neighborhood Associations
- Churches
- Civic Groups
- General Coffee State Park
- The Nature Conservancy
- Schools
- School Board
- College and Technical School
- Business groups
- Industrial groups
- Large property owners
- Planning organizations
- Homebuilders Associations
- Residents
- Property Owners
- Media
- Library

- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Southeast Georgia RDC
- US Department of Agriculture

### **3 Identification of Participation Techniques**

#### ***Multi-jurisdictional Advisory Committee***

The Multi-jurisdictional Advisory Committee (MAC) will be a central part of community involvement for the joint plan. The MAC will be composed of 12 to 20 members selected to be representative of the various stakeholders in the community. The MAC will provide guidance to the Project Team regarding the important issues and opportunities that need to be discussed within the Comprehensive Plan and will provide other valuable insights from a citizen perspective. The consultant will meet with the MAC four times during the course of the project to:

- Kick the project off and discuss the issues and opportunities facing the community.
- Review the results of the Community Assessment and discuss the Service Delivery Strategy.
- Prepare for the community vision workshops.
- Discuss strategies for the Community Agenda, discuss the draft recommendations, and prepare for the Open House.

#### ***Initial Public Hearings***

As required under the State Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, public hearings before the Board of Commissioners and City Councils will be held to announce to the public that the planning process for updating the Comprehensive Plan is underway. These meetings likely will be held in early September. The public will be informed of the Plan's project schedule and how they can get involved as outlined in this document. The public also will be given an opportunity to comment on the draft Community Assessment, which highlights the issues and opportunities that will be taken into consideration in developing the Plan. Following the public hearings, and based on input from the public and County officials, this document and the Community Assessment will be transmitted to the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Center (SGRDC) for review and comment.

#### ***Visioning Workshops***

A total of five Visioning Workshops will be held throughout the County in January 2007. Each workshop will have four goals:

1. Identify strengths and weaknesses of the area.
2. Discuss issues and opportunities facing the community.
3. Establish a vision.
4. Discuss the challenges of growth or the lack of growth and the future character of the community.

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

- Strengths and weaknesses of the quality of life in each plan area.
- The role of each plan area in the County as a whole.
- The opportunities and threats that confront the quality of life in the plan area over the next 20 years.
- The quality of life that the stakeholders and participants in the workshop envision for the plan area 20 years from now.
- The factors of change and big decisions that will be required to move the plan area from where it is today to where participants want it to go.

The meetings are anticipated to be held at city halls, civic centers, and community centers around the County; including two workshops in Douglas, and one each in Ambrose, Broxton, and Nicholls. The various locations and dates will give residents several opportunities to give their input on the future of Coffee County. The number of meetings scheduled was for the convenience of the citizens.

### ***Open House***

An Open House, tentatively scheduled for March 2007, will be an opportunity for participants to review and comment on the draft Community Agenda. It will allow high-level interaction and participation to engage participants in comfortable two-way dialogue. 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, held in Douglas, will be up to 2 hours in length and will take place after the local governments and staff have had an opportunity to review and comment on the draft Community Agenda.

### ***Public Hearing for Plan Transmittal***

The consultant will present the 2027 Comprehensive Plan at a public hearing before the Board of Commissioners and the City Council of each of the four cities in Coffee County. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the plan before the plan is transmitted to the SGRDC for review. The tentative date for these transmittal hearings is May 2007.

### ***Standard Procedures***

#### **Media Relations**

If the media approaches a member of the consultant team and requests an interview or has questions, the consultant will take the name of the media representative, publication they represent, when the article or TV spot will run, and what was talked about. The information will then be passed along to Dale Batten, Community Development Director for the City of Douglas.

## **4 Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda**

On the following page is a graphic that shows the schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Major upcoming milestones in this schedule include:

Initial Public Hearings ..... September 2006





Five Visioning Workshops ..... January 2007

- Visioning Workshop #1 in Douglas
- Visioning Workshop #2 in Nicholls
- Visioning Workshop #3 in Broxton
- Visioning Workshop #4 in Ambrose
- Visioning Workshop #5 in Douglas

Open House ..... March 2007

Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community Agenda ..... May 2007

Adoption of the Community Agenda ..... July 2007

Task	2006												2007			
	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	
<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>																
Project Kick-off																
Community Assessment																
Community Participation Program																
Community Agenda																
Transmittal, Review, Adoption Processes																
<b>Service Delivery Strategy</b>																
<b>Solid Waste Management Plan</b>																
<b>Public Meetings</b>																
Public Hearing/Presentation 																
Community Visioning Meeting 																
Open House 