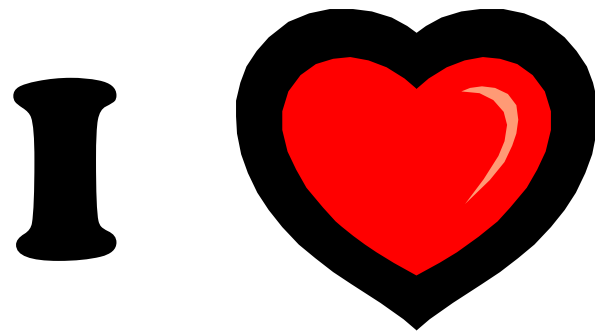




Decatur County

**Community
Participation Program**

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Potential Stakeholders	3
Participation Techniques.....	4
Meetings & Hearings	4
Interactive Activities	4
Committees.....	5
Special Events & Activities	5
Others Activities	6

List of Tables

Community Agenda Timeline	7
--	----------

Introduction

I  Decatur County is the slogan that will be used within the community in reference to any community activities having to do with the Comprehensive Plan.

Those who choose to get involved in the comprehensive plan do so because they care. For the most part it is because they care about the future of the community and what will be left for their children or grandchildren. It is also important to some because they value their Qualified Local Government status and do not want to miss out on State funding. Regardless of motive, those involved in the plan's development have some sort of vested interest in the community and its survival. And while the process to develop the plan may be an arduous one, the most uncomplicated part of it is the concern and affection people have for their home. So why make the motto any more complicated than that? And so the slogan was born.

The approach to community participation for Decatur County's Comprehensive Plan is an extensive one. Including people from a variety of backgrounds, locations, socio-economic groups, ages and interests is key if this plan is to become more than mere pages on a shelf. If the community aids in the plan's preparation, they'll be more likely to participate in its implementation. Citizens will be apt to hold their local officials accountable when situations and circumstances arise that are contrary to the plan and its vision. The community will also be more likely to support new methods of financing desired projects. It is every citizen's right to participate and have a say in their future to the furthest extent possible. This participation plan will give the community an opportunity to do just that.

Potential Stakeholders

The following list of stakeholders is a preliminary listing of individuals, groups or organizations that have a special interest in the Comprehensive Plan and its development. The Steering Committee will help to further define the groups included in this list as the governments move through the planning process.

These organizations will be notified about public hearings and sub-committee meetings and their attendance will be encouraged. In-person interviews will be conducted with these organizations as needed to help identify the needs and desires specific to their area(s) of expertise.

Development related organizations
- Bainbridge-Decatur County Development Authority - Local Engineering Consultants involved in development activities
Bainbridge-Decatur County Chamber of Commerce
Decatur County Historical Society
Family Connections-Decatur County
Local & County Government
Elected and Appointed Boards
Department of Labor
Major Employers
- American Fibers and Yarns Company - ATG Holding Company Inc. - Propex Fibers Inc. - Wal-Mart Associates
Community Health Organizations
- Memorial Hospital and Manor - Decatur County Department of Health
Non-profit groups
L. I. F.E. B. A. I. N. - Phase Inc.
Education Community
- Decatur County School Board - Bainbridge College - University System of Georgia
Community Groups & Civic Organizations
- Decatur County Friends of the Library - YMCA - Civic Organizations - KIRBO Foundation - Decatur County Service Center - Attapulgus Community Club - Climax Community Group - Decatur County Seniors Center - Keep America Beautiful – Decatur County Chapter
Religious Organizations

Participation Techniques

Meetings and Hearings

Kick-Off Public Information Meeting

A meeting was held in January 2007 for the community to kick-off the start of the Comprehensive Planning Process for Decatur County. During this meeting the purpose of the plan was discussed with the community including its components and the timetable for completion. In order to stress the importance of the plan and the need for the community to play a role in its development and implementation, goals and objectives of the previous plan were reviewed and evaluated to determine each element's success or failure in the community.

Visioning/Community Preference Meetings

There will be four Visioning sessions held in each of the incorporated communities and one for Decatur County. These meetings will all be held in March 2007. In these meetings we will discuss the issue and opportunities of each community from the citizen perspective. A vision for each community will be formulated. The information from this meeting will be used to help guide future discussions regarding physical development features, requirements and regulations.

Public Hearings

Two separate Public Hearings will be held, one in March 2007 for the Community Assessment and one in July 2007 to review the Community Agenda. These meetings will give the community an opportunity to review and comment on the findings and decisions made by the Steering Committee before each document is transmitted.

Interactive Activities

Community Assessment Survey

A survey was distributed throughout the community to help assess the community's satisfaction with local services and the priorities being pursued by local government. This was used to help determine the needs that need to be addressed in this plan. Citizens could fill out surveys at their local City Hall, County Courthouse and County Library. They were also able to access it on-line through a local news website (bainbridgega.com) and send it directly to RDC staff with additional comments.

Internet discussion room

A discussion board has been started on bainbridgega.com, allowing members of the community to post their thoughts about any aspect of the plan and/or its process. The postings are checked on a daily basis by RDC staff, and they respond to postings when necessary.

Youth Focus Groups

Focus Groups will be held with local youth groups, high school and college students. In each discussion group we will discuss what the younger generation feels the future of Decatur County will be and what they would like to see happen within their community.

Local Access Television

Periodically, RDC staff members will appear on the local access television station to update the community on the discussions had during sub-committee meetings and the overall progress of the plan. In conjunction with the public hearing, the completed plan will be presented on television as well.

Committees

Steering Committee/Sub-Committees

A Steering Committee of County appointed and volunteer members representing City and County government, Chamber of Commerce, Development Authorities, Board of Education and citizens will help shape and direct the development of the plan. They will make the final decision on recommendations made by the Sub-Committees. The Steering Committee will meet on a monthly basis from February 2007 until June 2007.

Representatives

- County Officials (2)
- City Officials from Attapulugus, Brinson and Climax (4)
- Board of Education (1)
- Citizens (8)
- Solid Waste Advisory Committee (1)
- Chamber of Commerce (1)
- Development Authority (1)
- Non-Profits and Community Organizations (3)
- Bainbridge Memorial Hospital (1)
- Seniors Center (1)
- Real Estate (1)

There will be sub-committees for each of the four communities; Attapulugus, Brinson, Climax and Decatur County. These committees will be used to develop recommendations for policies and the Short Term Work Program. The Sub-Committees will be made up of Steering Committee members and other community members who are not on the Steering Committee. By participating, citizens can ensure their concerns are heard at the sub-committee level. An RDC Staff member will chair the meetings of all Sub-Committees. The Sub-Committees will begin meeting in April 2007 until June 2007.

Special Events & Activities

I Decatur County Art contest

An Art contest will be held for local professional and amateur artists of all ages. The winner will have their composition featured on the front page of the Comprehensive

Plan. Other noteworthy submissions will be included elsewhere in the plan where possible and also used at the various lobby displays throughout the County. This will help to personalize the plan and will raise awareness of its existence. All submissions will be received by April 1st 2007.

Decal/Button Campaign

Decals and buttons will be distributed at every community meeting and public hearing. The stickers and buttons will also help to keep the Comprehensive plan at the forefront of the communities' minds and maintain the momentum of the plan. By doing so, not only will awareness be raised, but it may also peak peoples' interest enough that they consider participating in one of the Visioning sessions, sub-committees or attending the public hearings.

Other Activities

Lobby Exhibits

Small exhibits will be put up in the City Hall of each community as well as the County Courthouse and Library for citizens to review and examine at their leisure. Displays will include information on proposed issues and opportunities, maps of character areas and future development, and community goals, objectives and action plans. The displays for the Community Assessment will go up in April 2007. The displays for the Community Agenda will go up before the public hearing regarding this portion of the plan, in June 2007.

Decatur County Comprehensive Plan 2027 Timeline											
Event/Activity	Month										
	Dec-06	Jan-07	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Appoint Steering Committee members	X										
Announce Comprehensive Plan Kick-off Meeting	X										
Identify Stakeholders	X										
Distribute Assessment surveys	X										
Kick-off Meeting		X									
Interview Stakeholders		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Develop Community Assessment & Participation Program		X	X								
Meet with Steering Committee			X	X				X			
Lobby Exhibits					X	X	X	X	X	X	
Meet with Sub-Committee					X	X	X				
Button Campaign				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Public Hearings				X				X			
Visioning Sessions for the community				X							
Submit drafts to Local governments for review				X				X			
Get resolutions from local governments				X					X		X
Submit to DCA				X					X		X
Develop Community Agenda				X	X	X	X	X			
Respond to DCA Comments on drafts						X	X			X	

DRAFT