



# *Community Participation Program*

## Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan



# Community Participation Program

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	PURPOSE	PAGE 3
II.	STATE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	PAGE 3
III.	GUIDING PRINCIPLES	PAGE 3
IV.	IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS	PAGE 4—5
V.	COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES	PAGE 6—8
VI.	PREVIOUS COMMUNITY INPUT OPPORTUNITIES	PAGE 9
VII.	<i>COMMUNITY AGENDA</i> COMPLETION SCHEDULE	PAGE 10
VIII.	REVIEW OF DRAFT <i>COMMUNITY AGENDA</i>	PAGE 11
IX.	PUBLICIZING THE <i>COMMUNITY AGENDA</i>	PAGE 11

# Community Participation Program

## **I. PURPOSE**

Recognizing the need for, and benefit of, extensive community involvement in the Comprehensive Planning process, the following *Community Participation Program* has been established for the Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Planning process.

The purpose of the *Community Participation Program* is to ensure that the *Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan* reflects the full range of community values and desires, by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the *Community Agenda*. Meaningful participation by a broad range of stakeholders will help ensure implementation of the *Community Agenda*. As the community is involved in the *Agenda's* development, it becomes invested and committed to seeing the established goals and policies realized through the achievement of scheduled projects.

## **II. STATE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

The Georgia Department of Community Affairs sets forward specific minimum standards each community must meet in order to maintain Qualified Local Government (QLG) status and thus remain eligible for certain state funding and permitting programs. These planning requirements emphasize the meaningful involvement of stakeholders and the general public in preparation of plans that include an exciting, well-conceived and achievable vision for the future of the community. Within these standards is the requirement of a *Community Participation Program*.

## **III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The following principles will guide the implementation of this *Community Participation Program* and the development of the *Community Agenda*:

- 1) The public has a say in decisions about actions that affect their lives;
- 2) The public is involved as early as possible in the community participation and decision-making process in order to build trust;
- 3) The involvement of those potentially affected is sought and participants are encouraged to assist in defining how they participate;
- 4) Participants are provided with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way;
- 5) Education and participation are directly combined whenever possible;
- 6) The needs and concerns of the public are listened to and their input is integrated into the outcome.

# Community Participation Program

## **IV. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS**

Stakeholders are those who effect and/or are affected by the development and implementation of the *Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan*. The following is a list of stakeholders whose involvement would be beneficial to the development of the *Community Agenda*. By no means should this list be considered all-inclusive and all interested parties are encouraged to actively participate in the development the *Community Agenda*.

100 Black Men	Health Care Agencies and Hospitals
211 of South Georgia	Historical Societies
Agricultural Community	Keep Lowndes-Valdosta Beautiful Board
Airport Authority	Lowndes County Sheriff's Department
Azalea City Cyclists	Lake Park Area Chamber of Commerce
Board of Realtors	Lake Park Fire Department
Business Community	Lake Park Mayor and Council
Central Valdosta Development Authority	Lake Park Police Department
Churches	Libraries
Community Service Organizations	Local Service Organizations
Dasher Mayor and Council	Local trade organizations
Department of Family & Children Services	Lowndes and Valdosta Partnership for Health
Development Community	Lowndes Association Ministries to People (LAMP)
Georgia Department of Labor	Lowndes County Board of Commissioners
Georgia Environmental Protection Division (Regional Office)	Lowndes County Board of Education
Georgia Forestry Commission	Lowndes County Board of Elections
Greater Lowndes Planning Commission	Lowndes County Board of Health
Georgia Military College	Lowndes County Board of Tax Assessors
Hahira Mayor and Council	Lowndes County Department of Human Resources
Hahira Police Department	Lowndes County Farm Bureau

*(Continued on next page)*

# Community Participation Program

## **IV. IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS (cont.)**

Lowndes County Fire Department	Valdosta Board of Education
MLK Commemorative Association	Valdosta Fire Department
Media (Local and Regional)	Valdosta Historic Preservation Commission
Metropolitan Planning Organization	Valdosta Housing Authority
Minority Business Council	Valdosta Housing Board of Adjustments and Appeals
Moody Air Force Base	Valdosta Mayor and Council
Property Owners	Valdosta Police Department
Remerton Fire Department	Valdosta State University
Remerton Mayor and Council	Valdosta Technical College
Remerton Police Department	Valdosta Tree Commission
Residents	Valdosta-Lowndes County Airport Authority
Schools (Public and Private)	Valdosta-Lowndes County Chamber of Commerce
Sierra Club	Valdosta-Lowndes County Conference and Tourism Authority
South Georgia Coalition to End Homelessness	Valdosta-Lowndes County Construction Board of Adjustments and Appeals
South Georgia Homebuilders Association	Valdosta-Lowndes County Hospital Authority
South Georgia Medical Center	Valdosta-Lowndes County Industrial Authority
State Delegates	Valdosta-Lowndes County Land Bank Authority
Students	Valdosta-Lowndes County Library Board of Trustees
UGA Cooperative Extension Office	Valdosta-Lowndes County Recreation Advisory Board
United Way	Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals

# Community Participation Program

## V. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The information below details how the public will be educated on the purpose and role of the Comprehensive Plan, how the public can provide input on the plan's development, opportunities for public interaction, and methods of public partnership on plan implementation.

**PUBLIC EDUCATION** - Training, instruction or informative experiences communicating knowledge to the community

### ***Kick-Off/ Public Information Meetings***

An initial meeting will be held to announce the planning process to all citizens and other stakeholders and to view a presentation covering the plan's purpose and general approach for completion. Community Preference Surveys will also be available at this meeting. This meeting is scheduled for:

**September 20, 2005**  
**5:30 pm**  
**Lowndes County**  
**Board of Commissioners Building**  
**325 W. Savannah Avenue**

Subsequent meetings will be held with smaller groups in various locations. For more information, see the schedule further below.

### ***Project Website***

**<http://www.sgrdc.com/glpc/glpc.htm>**

In addition to the existing Greater Lowndes Planning Commission website, a separate site will be maintained during the Greater Lowndes 2030 update. This site will provide information on the Plan's three components including status and drafts for review. The site will also announce meeting opportunities for citizen involvement, provide contact information for staff, and publish the Update Newsletter.

### ***Update Newsletter***

Every other month, an Update Newsletter will be published by the SGRDC. This newsletter will be available on the Greater Lowndes 2030 website (see above) and

will also be distributed via email. Any interested party may have their email address added to this distribution list by sending an email to Anne-Marie Wolff, Comprehensive Planner at [awolff@sgrdc.com](mailto:awolff@sgrdc.com).

### ***Channel 96***

The City of Valdosta sponsored television program will host a series of reports on Greater Lowndes 2030. Additionally, Channel 96 will announce upcoming meetings and provide wrap-ups for each meeting held in the City of Valdosta.

### ***Valdosta City Beat***

A series of informational articles will run in the City of Valdosta's bimonthly publication. Articles will include upcoming meetings and plan progress reports.

### ***Valdosta Daily Times***

Staff will work closely with VDT reporters to ensure adequate coverage of all Comprehensive Planning activities. Prior to any community meeting, an announcement will be published in the 'Goings On' section of the Valdosta Daily Times. The two official public hearings will also be advertised at least two weeks prior to the meeting date.

### ***Media Coverage***

Staff will ensure area media are well informed of the Plan's progress and also of all community meetings.

# Community Participation Program

## **V. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES (cont.)**

**PUBLIC EDUCATION** - Training, instruction or informative experiences communicating knowledge to the community

### ***Presentations at Professional and Service Organization Meetings***

SGRDC Community and Economic Development staff is available to speak to any interested parties, organizations, or agencies regarding the Comprehensive Plan update. For scheduling information please contact Anne-Marie Wolff, Comprehensive Planner at 229.333.5277.

### ***Press Releases***

Throughout the Plan update process, information will continuously be provided to the media through the Public Information Officers (PIO) of Lowndes County and the City of Valdosta. In turn, the PIOs will submit the information to the relevant media outlets and post it on their respective websites.

**PUBLIC INPUT** - Contribution, comments, and suggestions solicited from the public to help make decisions

### ***Email address***

A general email address is available for interested parties to ask questions or provide comments. This email address is: [GreaterLowndes2030@sgrdc.com](mailto:GreaterLowndes2030@sgrdc.com) Staff will respond to emails in a timely manner.

### ***Community Meetings***

Community meetings will be held within each of the 5 municipalities and the unincorporated area of Lowndes County. These meetings will be informal opportunities led by staff for citizens to express their opinions, thoughts, and ideas regarding their community's growth and development. Participation techniques will include open discussion, participant surveys, and interactive revisions of future development maps. Please see further below for the proposed schedule.



# Community Participation Program

## **V. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES (cont.)**

**PUBLIC INTERACTION** - Communicating and working with the public to make decisions

### ***Student Focus Groups –***

Staff will meet with groups of students at area schools such as Lowndes County High School, Valdosta High School, Valwood School, Georgia Christian School, Valdosta State University, Valdosta Technical College, and Georgia Military College. Any other school, which would like its students to participate in discussions, may contact Anne-Marie Wolff, Comprehensive Planner at 229.333.5277

### ***Community Preference Surveys***

Community Preference Surveys regarding land use and development may be distributed at community meeting and posted on the Greater Lowndes 2030 website. Survey results will be used to gather stakeholders' preferences for a variety of development styles and community features.

### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

SGRDC Community and Economic Development staff will meet with various stakeholder groups to determine what decisions should be made to improve and maintain communities. These meetings will be focused on the specific audience. For scheduling information please contact Anne-Marie Wolff, Comprehensive Planner at 229.333.5277.

**PUBLIC PARTNERSHIP** - Mutual cooperation and responsibility for the purpose of achieving a specific goal.

### ***Advisory Committee***

A countywide advisory committee will assist in development of the *Community Agenda* portion of the Comprehensive Plan. This varied group represents all sectors of our community and will provide guidance and insight on developing the necessary goals, policies, and implementation program.

### ***Jurisdictional Sub-Committee***

Each of the 6 jurisdictions within Lowndes County may establish its own sub-committee, which may include citizens, staff, and elected officials. This body will be charged with providing guidance and feedback on unique, local issues.

### ***Greater Lowndes Planning Commission***

The Greater Lowndes Planning Commission (GLPC) is the host organization for the update to the Comprehensive Plan. The GLPC is made up of 10 individuals each appointed by their respective governing body. Planning Commissioners serve 5-year terms and have a number of responsibilities. In addition to their role in the Comprehensive Plan Update, Planning Commissioners meet on a monthly basis to review land use requests including rezoning and special exceptions requests. The GLPC provides recommendations to the governing bodies regarding these requests.



# Community Participation Program

## **VI. PREVIOUS COMMUNITY INPUT OPPORTUNITIES**

Three major planning activities have occurred in the Greater Lowndes community since 2002, each of which included opportunities for citizen input. In an effort to ensure the Comprehensive Plan addresses previously mentioned concerns and issues, staff will review the results of the citizen input received during the following planning activities.

### ***Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)***

The MPO recently completed the Long Range Transportation Plan for the year 2030. Preparation of this plan included several community involvement opportunities. A Citizens Advisory Committee was established to guide the plan's development and community meetings were held. Additionally, the MPO Director attended several stakeholders meetings to educate citizens about the importance of long range transportation planning.

### ***City of Valdosta Consolidated Housing Plan***

During the development of its Consolidated Housing Plan, the City of Valdosta, organized 9 community meetings throughout the HUD designated revitalization areas. Results of these community meetings will be considered in preparation of the *Community Agenda*. Specifically, the results will guide development of Character Area descriptions for the 13 designated neighborhoods.

### ***Lowndes County Unified Land Development Code***

Lowndes County is in the process of adopting a Unified Land Development Code (ULDC). Meetings were held with targeted stakeholder groups (developers, real estate agents, and homebuilders) throughout the preparation of the ULDC. Additionally, public forums were held to receive public feedback and input on the ULDC and its impact on development in Lowndes County.

# Community Participation Program

## **VII. COMMUNITY AGENDA COMPLETION SCHEDULE**

The following is a schedule for the completion of the *Community Agenda* portion of the 2030 Greater Lowndes Comprehensive Plan. This schedule will be followed throughout the update process however there may be some minor adjustments dependent on the Plan's progress. For the most up-to-date completion schedule visit the Greater Lowndes 2030 webpage on the Greater Lowndes Planning Commission website: [www.sgrdc.com/glpc/glpc.htm](http://www.sgrdc.com/glpc/glpc.htm) or call the SGRDC at 229.333.5277.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>
September 20, 2005	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Public Hearing</b> (Kick-off Event) to explain planning process to the community
October 2005 – November 2005	<b>Community-wide events*</b> to discuss and prioritize the <i>Preliminary Issues and Opportunities</i> list
December 2005	Processing of community input by steering committee (PMD) and Planning Commission
December 2005 – January 2006	<b>Community-wide events*</b> to produce/refine the <i>Future Development Map</i>
January 2006	Processing of community input by steering committee (PMD) and Planning Commission
January, 2006 – February, 2006	Development of draft <i>Implementation Program</i> by staff, steering-committee, and Planning Commission
February, 2006 – March, 2006	<b>Community-wide events*</b> to react to draft <i>Implementation Program</i>
April, 2006 – May, 2006	Assembly of draft <i>Community Agenda</i> by staff, steering committee, and Planning Commission
May 30, 2006	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing</b> to react to draft <i>Community Agenda</i> . Receive final suggestions, additions, and revisions
June, 2006	Processing of community input by steering committee (PMD) and Planning Commission
July 1, 2006 – August 31, 2006	Adoption of transmittal resolution by local government and submittal of <i>Community Agenda</i> to DCA for review (60-day Review Period)
<b>September – October, 2006</b>	<b>Local Governments adopt Comprehensive Plan</b>
November, 2006 and on	<i>Community Agenda</i> distributed and publicized as stated in <i>Community Participation Program</i>

\*Community-wide events will include but not be limited to public meetings, stakeholder interviews, community organization presentations, newsletters, email correspondence, and community preference surveys.

# *Community Participation Program*

## **VIII. REVIEW OF DRAFT COMMUNITY AGENDA**

Upon completion of a draft version of the *Community Agenda*, the document will enter a 60-day review period during which citizen comments will be formally collected. This review period is tentatively scheduled to begin July 1, 2006.

## **IX. PUBLICIZING THE COMMUNITY AGENDA**

Following final adoption of the complete *Greater Lowndes 2030 Comprehensive Plan* a variety of methods will be utilized to publicize the document. An advertisement in the newspaper will identify all locations where the complete Comprehensive Plan will be available along with locations where the *Community Assessment Executive Summary* and the *Community Agenda* will be available. These locations will include local libraries, civic and governmental buildings, and area non-profit organizations. Additionally, the document will be available on the Greater Lowndes 2030 website (<http://www.sgrdc.com/glpc/glpc.htm>) and through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs at [www.georgiaplanning.com](http://www.georgiaplanning.com). Local community organizations will be encouraged to provide a direct link to the document from their website. Copies will also be available at the South Georgia Regional Development Center.



DOCUMENT PREPARED BY:  
South Georgia Regional Development Center  
327 W. Savannah Avenue  
Valdosta, GA 31601

September 2005

