

**Athens-Clarke County and
The City of Winterville**

Community Participation Program

July 12, 2006

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM FOR ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY

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A.1 Introduction

The preparation of the Community Participation Program is an important first step in obtaining citizen participation and involvement in the Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of the Community Participation Program of the Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville Comprehensive Plan is to insure that citizens and other stakeholders are aware of the planning process and are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan, individual plan components, or plan amendments. More importantly, citizens should have the ability to participate actively in the process of defining the community's vision, values, goals, policies, priorities, and implementation strategies.

A.2 List of Suggested Stakeholders

The Mayor & Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County, Athens-Clarke County Planning Commission, Winterville City Council, Winterville Planning and Zoning Commission, Winterville Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee, and Athens-Clarke County staff will work together to identify those individuals and groups that have a special interest in the development of the community agenda for Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville. The stakeholders are comprised of representatives of the various organizations as listed in the table below. As the planning process moves forward, additional stakeholder organizations are likely to be identified and will be added as appropriate.

Stakeholder organizations will be contacted and notified of public meetings and opportunities to participate in the Comprehensive planning process. The stakeholder groups will be called upon to review and advise regarding the community assessment prepared by Athens-Clarke County staff. Most importantly the stakeholder groups will be called upon to assist in the development of the goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan as well as with the review and recommendation of strategies developed for the community agenda.

Table 1: Athens-Clarke County Stakeholder Listing

ACC Staff:
Environmental Coordinator
Human & Economic Development Department
Managers Office
Planning Department
Public Utilities Department
Transportation & Public Works Department
Countywide & Regional Agencies, Commissions, & Other Public Bodies:
ACC Planning Commission—Comprehensive Plan Sub-Committee
Athens Housing Authority
Athens Regional Library
Clarke County Board of Education, Superintendent and Key Staff
Clarke County Health Department
Greenway Commission
Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study / MACORTS (MPO)
Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center
Development Community:
Athens Area Chamber of Commerce
Athens Area Home Builders Association
Athens Board of Realtors
Athens Downtown Development Authority
Athens First Bank & Trust
Athens Grow Green
Athens Industrial Development Authority
Athens Land Trust
Athens Tree Council
East Athens Development Corporation
First American Bank & Trust Company
Georgia Power
Hancock Corridor Development Corporation
Local Civil Engineering Firms, Specializing in Land Development and Subdivisions
Local Land Planners
Local Surveyors
University of Georgia—Office of Campus Architect
Watershed Group

Other Groups:
Agricultural Groups, Representatives of Agriculture such as Extension Service, Farm Bureau, and Agricultural Council
Athens Area Homeless Coalition, Community Connection 211, Athens Food Bank, Partners for a Prosperous Athens initiative
Athens Clarke Heritage Foundation
Athens Community Council on Aging
Athens Regional Medical Center (ARMC) St. Mary's Hospital
Athens Rotary Club, Athens Junior League
Bike Athens
Catholic Social Services
ConAgra Poultry
Federation of Neighborhoods, Neighborhood Notification Initiative Identified Neighborhoods
Keep Athens-Clarke County Beautiful
Local Redevelopment Authority for the Navy School
Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Staff
Press: Athens Banner Herald, Flagpole Magazine, WNEG News Channel 32
University of Georgia Director of Community Relations
University of Georgia—Office of Minority Business Development

A.3 List of Participation Techniques

Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville will guide the citizen participation and coordination efforts associated with the plan. A series of meetings will be facilitated to build consensus through a collaborative planning process that serves to create an open, inclusive, and interactive forum.

The Community Participation Program tasks are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Comprehensive Plan and ensure a broad participatory base. A specific emphasis on the views of all segments of the community will also include representation from the low and moderate income and minority populations identified in the planning process. The following tasks will aid the planning, assessment, evaluation, and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan.

A.3.1 Steering Committees

The Athens-Clarke County Planning Department will coordinate the work of the two Steering Committees.

Athens-Clarke County

The Athens-Clarke County Mayor will appoint a Steering Committee composed of twelve (12) representatives from the community to direct, advise, and help shape the Community Agenda and overall Comprehensive Plan Process. Two (2) members of the Steering Committee will be persons currently serving on the Athens-Clarke County Planning Commission; one of those two members shall act as the Chair of the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee will be charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Assure that the Public Participation Program adopted by the Mayor and Commission is fulfilled
2. Assure that the Community Agenda is representative of the priorities and concerns of the Stakeholders
3. Assure that the Comprehensive Plans fulfill the requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

To this end, ten (10) of the twelve (12) members shall be charged with guiding the development of the agenda items associated with each of the following areas:

1. Business
2. Education
3. Health
4. Housing
5. University of Georgia
6. Social Services
7. Historic Preservation
8. Agriculture / Environment
9. Development and Transportation
10. Neighborhoods

The two remaining Steering Committee appointees serve “at large” and, in particular, will assigned to assure the synthesis of the work from these committees appears in the Future Development Map and in the identification of Character Areas.

City of Winterville

The Winterville City Council will appoint a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the following authorities, the business community, and citizens to direct, advise, and help shape the Community Agenda and overall Comprehensive Plan Process.

Representatives and Number

- Winterville Planning and Zoning Commission (1)
- Winterville Library Board (1)
- Winterville Civitan Club (1)
- Public Safety professional (1)
- WAG (1)
- Winterville Business Community (1)
- Winterville Elementary School (1)
- Agricultural Community or Large Lot Land Owner (1)
- Winterville area faith-based community representative (1)
- At-large citizen representatives (2)

A.3.2 Comprehensive Plan Educational Seminar

The Athens-Clarke County Planning Department will host an educational seminar about the new statewide guidelines for Comprehensive Planning, how these requirements relate to ongoing local planning processes, and what can be expected during the development of the Community Agenda.

A.3.3 Kick-Off Public Meeting

Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville will host independent kick-off meetings to announce officially the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders. Government officials will be invited to introduce the process and the community will participate in the viewing of presentations covering the project purpose and general plan approach. Initial opinion surveys and volunteer sign up forms will be available at this meeting.

A.3.4 Steering Committees Meetings

The Steering Committees and any subcommittees will provide guidance and feedback throughout the planning process. Meetings will be scheduled at appropriate benchmarks to coincide with project deliverables and in advance of all public meetings.

A.3.5 Community Agenda Survey

The visioning process will be accomplished through preference web-based surveys conducted over the internet. The Athens Regional Library has internet access available for the Community. Results will be announced through the use of print media and the Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville website.

A.3.6 Community Workshops

As directed by the Steering Committee, a series of community workshops or charrettes will be conducted in order to explore commonly held goals and to articulate a vision for the future of Athens-Clarke County. The Steering Committee may direct topic-specific workshops, geographically-focussed charrettes, or both.

A.3.7 Public Hearing

A public hearing will present the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update and will be held near the end of the planning process. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the public of the finding and information contained within the Draft Comprehensive Plan.

A.3.8 Maintain Project Website

Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville will have a special link on the home page of the Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville website that will provide information on the progress of the planning process. Throughout the process, information will be updated and questionnaires will be continually revised to solicit well-focused comments. A dedicated e-mail address will be assigned to the Comprehensive Plan project and will be managed by Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville staff.

A.4 Public Information Outreach Plan

The Athens-Clarke County Public Information Office and the Athens-Clarke County Planning Department staff will coordinate the development of an effective media plan to publicize information on the planning process to its citizens and other stakeholders. The following tactics will be used to inform the citizens and media about the plan progress.

A.4.1 Media Education

– Media outlets (e.g. print, radio, or television) will be educated about the plan. The development of creative press releases, feature stories, columns, and interviews will be used to better inform the public.

A.4.2 Public Information Materials

Outreach materials will be created and used to help the public understand the Comprehensive Plan. These materials will be distributed at public meetings and other geographical locations to educate and establish visible, continuous public feedback (for example: fact sheets, comment forms, notices, and stakeholder database for mass mailing or mass e-mailing).

A.5 Required Public Hearings

Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville will advertise all public hearings in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification for initiation of the Planning Process, review and adoption of the Community Participation Plan, and review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan will involve input from groups within

the City of Winterville and Athens-Clarke County, including but not limited to, the Planning Commission, applicable staff, development professionals, general public, Planning Commission, the Winterville City Council, and the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission. The Community Participation Program will address the eight (8) community issues of the Comprehensive Plan: population, economic development, natural and historic resources, community facilities and services, housing, land use, transportation, and intergovernmental coordination

A.6 Plan Development Timeline

Prior to commencing plan preparation, Athens-Clarke County and the City of Winterville shall develop and publish a schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan, identifying time frames for completion of the various steps of the local planning process, and describing procedures for actively involving residents, businesses, private sector groups, other special interest groups, and the general public throughout the community in all phases of the planning process.

Table 2: Community Assessment Timeline

TASK	Duration	Completion Date
<i>Presentation of the Schedule to the Planning Commission</i>		December 1, 2005
<i>Presentation of the Schedule to the Mayor and Commission via Memorandum and to the Winterville City Council</i>		December 6, 2005
<i>Public Announcement of the Comprehensive Plan Update and Kick-Off Meetings. Emphasis on the Community Assessment and Inventory and on the Public Participation Program</i>		April 2006
Preparation of Draft “Community Assessments and Executive Summaries” by Staff	4 months	November 2005- March 2006
Preparation of Draft “Community Participation Strategy: by Staff	4 months	November 2005 - March 2006
<i>Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission Worksession on Community Participation Strategy</i>		April 2006
Public Hearing		July 2006
Transmit <i>Community Assessments</i> and the <i>Community Participation Strategy</i> to the Regional Development Center (RDC) by Resolution of the ACC Mayor and Commission and the Winterville City Council	Mayor and Commission Meeting – tentatively: Agenda setting June 2006 / Voting July 2006	
Appointment of the Steering Committees for Athens-Clarke County and for the City of Winterville.		September 2006
Publicize the Final Report of the Department of Community Affairs and our Community Assessment and Community Participation Program.		September 2006

Table 3: Community Agenda Timeline

TASK	Duration	Completion Date
<i>Prepare the Community Agenda. The Public Meetings are determined by the Community Participation Program. This includes the Short Term Workplan Updates, Future Land Use Map, Character Areas, etc..</i>	1 Year	September 2006 – September 2007
Steering Committee meetings to be held on a regular basis as determined by the Committees and the elected bodies appointing them.		September 2006 – September 2007
• Launch and Maintain Comprehensive Plan Website • Public Information Outreach Program		September 2006 – September 2007
Community Agenda Survey		January – February 2007
Public Hearing		September 2007
Resolution from the ACC Mayor and Commission and the City of Winterville forwarding the Community Agenda to the RDC and DCA		October 2007
120 Prior to our deadline June 30, 2008 submit Community Agenda to RDC. Note: 120 Days prior to June 30, 2008 is March 1, 2008.		October 2007
Review by RDC and DCA		December 2007
Certification of Completeness by DCA and RDC		March 2008
Adoption of the Community Agenda by ACC Mayor and Commission and the City of Winterville.		April / May 2008
Public Notice of the Approval of the Community Agenda		Deadline: June 30, 2008