

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION *FAYETTEVILLE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*



Submitted to:

GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

By:

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Introduction

The word community can be defined as a population of people living in a common location. There can be a wide variation when it comes to the basic social, professional, economic, and political values of the residents that make up a community. In preparing a Comprehensive Plan, it is important to work with citizens to identify the issues and challenges unique to their community. The comprehensive planning process begins with an evaluation of the current strengths and needs of the community followed by a vision for the future. This Community Participation Plan is designed to give citizens the opportunity to take part in the planning process in an effort to gain support for proposed programs from the public and to produce a document that best reflects the overall vision for the community. An innovative and comprehensive public involvement program will ensure that the public feels vested in results of the planning process.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) requires that a Community Participation Program be implemented as part of the comprehensive planning process as outlined in the Rules for Comprehensive Planning, Section 110-12-1-.04. The goal for the Program as outlined in Rules is as follows:

“The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to ensure that the local comprehensive plan reflects the full range of community values and desires, by involving a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in development of the Community Agenda. This broad-based participation in developing the Community Agenda will also help ensure that it will be implemented, because many in the community are involved in its development and thereby become committed to seeing it through.”

The DCA also requires that a Plan for the Community Participation Program be developed and submitted to DCA for approval prior to the start of the public involvement process. This document outlines the City’s strategy to develop and implement a public involvement program for the City of Fayetteville Comprehensive Plan and is hereby submitted to DCA for approval.

1. Scope

The mission of the Community Participation Program is to provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the development of the Comprehensive Plan. An effective community participation program should be designed to educate the public, as well as provide an opportunity for citizens to provide input and feedback as the Plan is developed. The participation strategies outlined in this report have been selected to ensure that citizens understand and participate in the planning process. Additionally, the City wanted to provide multiple levels of public involvement to the community so that people were able to contribute according to their desired level of participation.

To facilitate the development and submittal of the Community Assessment and this document, the Community Participation Plan, two public involvement strategies have already been implemented. A Technical Advisory Committee, the "Project Team," (PT) was established to provide feedback to the planners and shape the overall planning process. The Project Team included a small number of staff, consultants, appointed officials, and elected officials from the City of Fayetteville. A public meeting has also been held, in accordance with the DCA Rules for Comprehensive Planning, to introduce the Plan and increase public awareness before the Community Assessment and Community Participation Plan are submitted to the DCA.

Upon approval of the Community Participation Plan from the DCA, a Stakeholder Committee will be convened to review the draft development strategies, issues and opportunities presented in the Community Assessment. Educational material will be available online on the City's website and at City Hall to keep the public informed throughout the process. Finally, prior to submittal of the Community Agenda, at the conclusion of the planning process, a second public meeting will be held to present the Agenda to the City Council and the public.

The following public involvement strategies have been selected by the City as part of the public involvement strategy and are discussed in this report:

- Stakeholders Committee
- Community Survey
- Handouts
- Website

In most cases, informing and educating the public is not enough. The most successful strategy is one that also gets citizens involved in the decision making process that will shape the future of their community. The City intends to accomplish this goal by providing various levels of public involvement, which have the potential to reach all citizens. A web survey will be administered in order to provide an avenue for the general public to provide input. Citizens that want to take a greater role in the planning process will have the option to participate in community events such as public meetings. Lastly, the Stakeholders Committee will allow citizen representatives the opportunity to work directly with the PT.

Implementing the tasks outlined in this report will improve the overall quality of the Plan by defining the values of the community and working together to accomplish those goals. Additionally, involving the public during the planning stage will help to garner support for the Comprehensive Plan and its eventual implementation.

2. Project Team (PT)

A technical advisory committee has been established to coordinate project staff, provide feedback to the project managers, and to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan accurately represents the City's vision for the future. The team includes representatives of the various members/departments/groups:

Project Team (9 members)

- Mayor
- City Manager
- Fayetteville Planning Commission
- Main Street Committee
- Public Services
- Planning Consultants

The PT has met on a regular schedule to oversee the development of the Community Agenda and Community Participation Plan. Please see Appendix A for a copy of meeting summaries. The following list details the early efforts of the PT:

- *Existing Land Use Map*: Field work was conducted to verify the existing land uses. The PT then reviewed the Existing Land Use map and made the appropriate updates.
- *Community Character Map*: The PT analyzed the current land use distribution and development patterns and established a vision for the future that is illustrated in the Community Character map.
- *Areas Requiring Special Attention (ARSA)*: The PT used the Existing Land Use and Community Character maps to develop the ARSA map. Areas were identified based on the consistency between current trends in a given area and the future vision for the community.
- *Issues and Opportunities*: The PT reviewed the State Planning Recommendations and created a comprehensive list of issues, specific to Fayetteville, that need to be addressed in order to meet the goals outlined in the Plan. A list of opportunities was developed based on the identified issues.
- *Data Assessment*: The data assessment evaluated a variety of demographic trends that need to be considered in the scope of long-term planning. Downtown revitalization and a growing elderly population are just two issues gathered from this assessment. Other factors analyzed by the PT were income, employment, housing, economic trends, utilities, education, natural resources, and coordination between governments.

The PT will continue to meet throughout the planning process. The initial findings of the PT will be updated and revised based on feedback generated during the public involvement process.

3. Public Hearing

The state minimum standards require that a Public Hearing be held before City Council to inform the public that the planning process for updating the Comprehensive Plan is in progress. The PT presented the Comprehensive Plan to the City Council Meeting on November 17, 2005 to inform the Board and the public about the scope of the Plan. Please see Appendix B for an Agenda for that meeting. The meeting was open to the public and advertised in accordance with City procedures. Schedules were posted on the City's website and agendas were made publicly available at City Hall before the meetings. The following items were presented at the Public Hearings.

- Existing Land Use Map
- Community Character Map
- Areas that Require Special Attention Map
- Issues and Opportunities
- Data Assessment
- Quality Community Objectives Assessment
- Public Involvement Strategy
- Project Schedule

The initial public meeting provided citizens with an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns about the proposed strategy for public involvement and plan development. A second Public Hearing will be held prior to final adoption of the Community Agenda.

4. Identification of Public Participation Techniques

4.1 Stakeholder Committee

A great part of the success of the Comprehensive Plan will be dependent on Stakeholder involvement. Effective involvement from key individuals/groups from the community will ensure that the Plan gains community wide support, addresses the issues and concerns of the general population, and is ultimately implemented. The benefits of Stakeholder involvement include:

- Citizens increasingly want to be involved in decisions that affect their community
- People with different areas of expertise contribute ideas, resulting in a well thought out Plan with better solutions
- Fellow citizens tend to support programs that have Stakeholder involvement
- By allowing residents, special interest groups, and business leaders to be involved, planners and decision makers have the chance to think “outside the box”
- Involving “citizen experts” helps facilitate communication
- Working together provides the opportunity to understand other people’s concerns and issues
- Stakeholder involvement allows for a more interconnected community in the end
- Stakeholder support builds program momentum and keeps the project moving forward
- Stakeholder comments are heard and responded to early in the process, which leads to more effective program implementation and future acceptance

The Stakeholder process allows individuals to make significant contributions to the planning process; therefore it is important that a free flow of information be maintained between the City and the Stakeholders, as well as within the Stakeholder Committee. Coordination is essential because the people that comprise the Stakeholder Committee live and work within the community, and they will be the best resource to generate support for the Plan. The City should consider that in order to effectively implement the future Comprehensive Plan, the Public Educational and Involvement Program must create an awareness of land use, development, and community related issues and opportunities.

4.1.1 Selecting the Stakeholders Committee

The key Stakeholders are typically comprised of representatives from the general public, residents, professionals, business and industry leaders, civic leaders, media representatives, special interest groups, City staff and elected officials. It is important that the Stakeholder group consist of a diverse assortment of local representatives with different perspectives on the issue. The initial focus of the public involvement strategy will include the identification of the key Stakeholders in the community that possess a high degree of trust and credibility

with their fellow citizens. These Stakeholders will represent a broad range of backgrounds from business leaders to neighborhood groups to developers.

As the Stakeholders are selected, the City will make an effort to recognize and be cognizant of what the general public's perception typically entails. The selected group of Stakeholders should be chosen such that their diversity ensures that the final Comprehensive Plan reflects the goals and objectives of the various communities within the City. The key to success will be achieving a consensus among the group on the future vision for the City of Fayetteville. Once this is accomplished, this diverse group of Stakeholders should be able to "get the word out" to their fellow citizens and business associates that the Comprehensive Plan will be beneficial to the citizens of Fayetteville and the future of their community.

4.1.2 Stakeholder Meeting Strategy

The Stakeholder Committee will be scheduled to meet four times throughout the planning process to review progress and provide feedback to the PT. The following is a proposed list of topics to be discussed at each Stakeholder meeting.

- Meeting 1 – Visioning
- Meeting 2 – Development Patterns and Strategies
- Meeting 3 – Issues and Opportunities and Quality Community Objectives
- Meeting 4 – Review and Consensus

The PT will provide "read ahead" material to the Stakeholder Committee prior to each meeting. Experience has shown that supplying "read ahead" material leads to more productive meetings by allowing the Stakeholders to review the information in advance. Stakeholder meetings will be held in an informal but professional manner to create an environment that will facilitate participation and to show due respect to the participants who are donating their time. Meetings will be held after work hours and will be limited to a maximum of two hours per meeting. If more meetings are required to meet the goals set above, the Stakeholder Committee will be asked for an additional commitment.

4.2 Community Survey

In an effort to increase public involvement, the PT will develop a community survey to gain feedback from citizens. The community survey is an effective tool as it is available to a large population at a minimal cost. The survey will be posted on the City website and will contain questions on a wide range of community related topics. The survey will build upon the results of the photo survey conducted as part of the LCI Plan to gauge the public's reaction to various types of development patterns.

The results of the surveys will be tabulated and examined by the PT and Stakeholder Committee. Based on the results, the PT will incorporate the main issues and concerns of the citizens into the development of the Community Agenda.

4.3 Public Information

In addition to the strategies identified above, the City will produce handouts to update citizens about the content and progress of the comprehensive planning process. The City will utilize the following Public Information techniques:

- *Media Kit (Press Package).* A packet of information will be provided to the press containing all of the information/facts to write an article (or a series of several articles) on the Comprehensive Plan. A City contact name and phone number will also be included.
- *Informational Brochure(s).* These brochures and/or fact sheets will be simple and straightforward in order to explain the comprehensive planning process and what it is designed to accomplish. The brochures will provide common questions and answers and will be written using language that is not overly technical. There may be more than one brochure to explain various aspects of the Comprehensive Plan. The brochures will be made available at City Hall and will be distributed at public meetings.
- *Websites.* Websites are a great method of getting information out to a large group of people. A section or link added to the City’s website for the Comprehensive Program will allow for quick immediate information for the general public. The webpage may include information on the program, a question and answer portion, contact information, and a link to e-mail any questions or concerns. This website address will be listed in all materials designed for the program. The website also provides an opportunity to catalog appropriate public documents and make them available to the public through use of downloadable PDF files.

4.4 Public Involvement Schedule

Public Involvement Tasks	2006											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
APPROVAL OF STRATEGY FROM DCA	*											
STAKEHOLDER COMMITTEE	[Timeline bar from Jan to Jun]											
Select Stakeholders and Read Ahead Packet	[Timeline bar from Jan to Feb]											
Meeting 1: Visioning		*										
Meeting 2: Development Patterns			*									
Meeting 3: Issues, Opportunities, and QCOs				*								
Meeting 4: Consensus					*							
SURVEY	[Timeline bar from Feb to Jun]											
PUBLIC INFORMATION	[Timeline bar from Jan to Oct]											
Media Press Kit		*										
Informational Brochures			[Timeline bar from Mar to Oct]									
Website			[Timeline bar from Mar to Oct]									
FINAL PUBLIC MEETING											*	

Appendix A
Project Team Meeting Summaries

Appendix B
Public Meeting Agendas