

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

Introduction

Purpose

The Community Participation Program describes the local government's strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan. 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.

Scope

The City of Grantville is required by state law to complete its Comprehensive Plan Update by October 31, 2006. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the Advanced Planning Level Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), 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; and
- 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

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 Grantville City Council, City of Grantville Staff, and City of Grantville Committees. In addition, a network of community organizations and local companies will be identified early in the process for distribution of meeting notices and posters as part of a broad public outreach effort.

City of Grantville comprehensive Planning Steering Committee Composition will include the following individuals and/or groups:

Mayor & Grantville City Council

City of Grantville Staff

City of Grantville Commissions/Committees/Authoritys

Local Business Owners

Local Real Estate Agents

Non-Profit Group Leader(s)

Representative of the Board of Educations

Developers

Identification of Participation Techniques

Initial Public Hearing

As required under the state Standards and Procedures for Local Comprehensive Planning, an initial public hearing before the Grantville City Council will be held to announce to the public that the planning process for updating the comprehensive plan is underway and to present the draft Community Participation Program and draft Community Assessment to the public. The public also will be given an opportunity to comment on the process, the two draft documents, and their vision for the future of the City.

Community Visioning Meeting

The participants will be led through a series of exercises that will help them create a vision for the City of Grantville using the Nominal Group Technique. Participants also will discuss the issues and opportunities facing the City. The workshop will have three goals for the City:

1. Identify what the community wants to Preserve, Change, Create, or Connect,
2. Establish a Vision, and
3. Complete a Community Preference Survey.

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

- Strengths and weakness of the quality of life for the City;
- The opportunities and threats that confront the quality of life in the City over the next 20 years;
- The quality of life that the stakeholders and participants in the workshop envision for the City 20 years from now;
- The factors of change and big decisions that will be required to move the City from where it is today to where participants want it to go;
- Benchmarks, or measurable indicators, of quality of life that will be used to indicate success in the future.

The meeting is anticipated to be held at the City Hall.

Adoption Process

The consultant will present the draft Community Agenda during a regular City Council meeting before transmittal to the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center (RDC) for regional and state review. After the RDC and DCA review the

Community Agenda, the final draft will be presented to the City Council and the public for adoption at a regular City Council meeting. Public comment will be received at both City Council hearings.

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 then will be given to City staff for follow up.

Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

The graphic below shows the schedule for completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Major milestones in this schedule include:

Initial Public Hearing City Council	May 15, 2006
Community Visioning Meeting.....	June 19, 2006
Stakeholders Meeting.....	August 8, 2006
Public Hearing for Transmittal of the Community Agenda to RDC.....	October 23, 2006
Adoption of the Community Agenda.....	T.B.A.

OVERVIEW OF THE COMMUNITY AGENDA

The third part of the comprehensive plan is the community agenda; it incorporates the community's vision for the future as well as its strategy for achieving this vision. Because the Community Agenda provides guidance for future decision-making about the community, it must be prepared with adequate input from stakeholders and the general public—this has yet to take place. The Community Agenda will include three major components:

- 1) **The Community Vision for the future physical development of the community**, expressed in the form of a map indicating unique character areas, each with its own strategy for guiding future development patterns;
- 2) **The list of Issues and Opportunities identified by the community** for further action which is the final, locally agreed upon, list of issues and opportunities the City intends to address. Each of these issues or opportunities must be followed-up with a corresponding implementation measures in the Implementation Program.
- 3) **The Implementation Program** is the overall strategy for achieving the Community Vision and for addressing each of the Community Issues and Opportunities. It identifies specific measures to be undertaken by the community to implement the plan.