

March 8, 2007

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM
CITY OF GRAYSON, GEORGIA
Population: 1,314 (Census, July 1, 2005)
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Defined

“Community Participation Program” means the portion of the comprehensive plan that describes the local government’s program for insuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

Objective

Meaningful involvement of stakeholders and the general public in preparation of the comprehensive plan. The community participation program describes the City of Grayson’s strategy for insuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the comprehensive plan.

Review Process

The community participation program is submitted along with the Community Assessment to the Atlanta Regional Commission (the Regional Development Center or RDC with jurisdiction) for review, after holding a first public hearing. Within seven (7) days of receipt, the RDC will determine whether the Community Participation Program meets or does not meet the standard of completeness as determined by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Upon determination of completeness, the RDC transmits the participation program to DCA. DCA will review the program for its adequacy in identifying specific mechanisms to ensure meaningful involvement of the community in the development of the Community Agenda. DCA will transmit a complete report of its findings and recommendations for addressing such findings to the RDC for inclusion in its Report of Findings and Recommendations.

Publication of the Approved Program and Community Assessment

Once reviewed, the Community Participation Program and Community Assessment must be publicized by the local government for public information. This requirement may be met by providing notice in a local newspaper of general circulation identifying where complete copies of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program may be reviewed.

List of Stakeholders

Defined broadly, a stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in an outcome of the comprehensive planning process. The public participation program contemplates interviewing certain identified stakeholders or involving them in an oversight committee. Primarily, the city is interested in providing “one-on-one” time with anyone who believes it would be advantageous for them to do so, or those who are not comfortable voicing their opinions or concerns in a more public forum.

The Mayor and City Council are stakeholders not only because they represent the citizens of Grayson, but because they have the authority to adopt (or not adopt) the comprehensive plan. For this reason, the city’s consultant anticipates providing one-on-one time with individual city

council members and the mayor if they would like independent input in the development of the community agenda.

In addition to the Mayor and City Council, owners of large properties and/or businesses in the city have an especially important stake in the outcomes of the comprehensive planning process. Owners of businesses and/or tracts of 10-15 acres and more are all potential stakeholders.

Identification of Participation Techniques

During the process of preparing a work scope, the consultants considered various community participation techniques. With input from the city staff and Mayor and City Council, the work scope was written to meet the city's specific needs for public involvement while also considering budget limitations and the small size of the City of Grayson. The following techniques were considered and as applicable included in the Community Participation Program.

Community Participation Techniques Considered

Participation Technique	Included in the Participation Program?	Explanation
Stakeholder interviews	Yes	Consultant will interview
Kiosk/Lobby displays	Maybe	City staff to arrange
Technical advisory committee	No	City staff serves function
Steering committee	Yes	To be scheduled
Visioning workshop*	Yes	Consultant will arrange
Intergovernmental partnerships	No	Address through planning
Kick-off information meeting	No	Not budgeted
Printed public information	Yes	As appropriate
Direct mail surveys	No	Poor response anticipated
Media press releases	Yes	As may be needed
Website – information only	Yes	City staff to arrange
Website – interactive	Maybe	Depends on interest
E-mail “blast” database	Maybe	Depends on interest
Speaker's bureau	No	Not needed (small town)

*Possible first public hearing

Grayson's City Manager and the Mayor and City Council, with consultant assistance and after considering budget limitations, have selected the following techniques to be used locally for involving stakeholders in the process of developing the Community Agenda.

1. **Stakeholder involvement.** Obtain list of identified stakeholders; assign stakeholders to a steering committee (see description below) or, if they cannot participate in the committee, interview by phone or in-person. This task has a limited budget and it should be limited to 6-8 persons plus the Mayor and City Council. Each stakeholder, if not participating on the steering committee, will be given a time period (20-30 minutes) to describe their concerns or suggestions as well as “one-on-one” time from other interested individuals which will be noted and made a part of the record, then considered during the development of the community agenda.
2. **Steering committee.** The City will appoint a steering committee (Committee members to be determined by the Mayor and City Council). The primary role of the steering

committee is to ensure that all viewpoints are systematically represented in the process and to debate and reconcile differences between proposed policies when they are in conflict with one another. City council members are not prevented from serving on the steering committee, and it is desirable to have some representation by city council on the steering committee.

3. Visioning workshop. The city has elected to hold a visioning workshop, which will be designed to gain meaningful participation and input from interested persons. The city has determined that sufficient interest in such a workshop, and a specific exercise will be designed to gain input, including interactive discussion, mapping exercises, or questionnaires, as may be appropriate given the participants involved. All members who serve on the steering committee should also plan to participate in the visioning workshop. The visioning workshop will probably coincide with the first required public hearing.
4. E-mail distribution of materials. Consultant can be assigned this task or project manager can disseminate. Everyone who has an interest in the process and provides their e-mail address will be kept informed of the progress on developing the plan, meeting dates, and opportunities to comment. All stakeholders/steering committee members, the media, and elected officials will be included on the e-mail distribution list.
5. Public displays. The City's project manager will arrange. It is envisioned that fact sheets, brochures, and/or graphic materials may be displayed at City Hall or in other public places where that can be arranged.