

***Joint County/Cities
Comprehensive Plan
2006-2026***



Community Participation Program

***for
Heard County***

&

***the cities of
Centralhatchee, Ephesus & Franklin***

***Prepared by
Community Development Concepts, Inc.
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Purpose

In an effort to strengthen Heard County and the Cities of Centralhatchee, Ephesus and Franklin, the Community Participation Program creates opportunities for citizens to work collaboratively on addressing the challenges that shape their community. This requires strong political leadership, citizen education, and active involvement by all stakeholders. A successful comprehensive plan begins with a process of thinking about and visualizing the future and discussing how the community prepares itself for evolving and growing. All this effort culminates into better decision-making with a full consensus of the public.

Scope

Heard County and the cities of Centralhatchee, Ephesus and Franklin are required by state law to complete their Comprehensive Plan Update by October 31, 2006. The plan will be prepared in accordance with the "Basic Planning Level" Local Planning Requirements from the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA), effective May 1, 2005.

Measure of 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
- ❖ To mobilize support and acceptance of the plan

The measure of effectiveness of a community participation 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. It is essential to know the community's perspectives and values to facilitate positive impacts, as well as to narrow the field of alternative solutions. This process is designed to improve the quality of decisions, increase ease of implementation, provide greater public understanding of community goals and objectives, and 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. In addition, a network of community organizations and local companies has been identified for stakeholder involvement, process participation and for the distribution of meeting notification as part of a broad public outreach effort.

Heard County Board of Commissioners

Chairperson June Jackson
Lee Boone
Gwen Caldwell
Larry Hooks
Joe Adams
Frank Crook

City of Ephesus Mayor & Council

Mayor Denney Rogers
Wayne Prince
Ronnie Holloway
Tony Rogers
Hershel Parmer
Ralph Cates

Town of Centralhatchee Mayor & Council

Mayor Barbie Crockett
Jimmy Adams
Tonnie Adams
Eley Loftin
Barbara Norwood
Walt Wiggins

City of Franklin Mayor & Council

Mayor Brad Yates
Willie Almond, Jr.
Joel Rogers
Donald Holcomb
Jimmy Hamil
Ray Hand

Heard County Chamber of Commerce
Heard County Planning Commission
Heard County Zoning/Codes Dept.
Heard County Engineer
Heard County Sheriff's Office
Heard County DFCS
Heard County Emergency Services
Heard County Magistrate Judge
Heard County Recreation Board
Heard County School System
Heard County Tax Commissioner
Heard County Tax Assessors
Heard County Community Partnership
Heard County Youth Advisory Council
Heard County Historical Commission
Heard County Historical Society
Heard County Lions Club
Heard County Optimist Club
Franklin/Heard County Pilot Club
Franklin Police Department
Franklin Planning Commission
Franklin Housing Authority

Heard County Probate Judge
Heard County Transit
Centralhatchee Planning Commission
Heard County Extension Office
Development Authority of Heard County
Heard County NAACP
Heard County Cattleman's Association
Poultry Producers
Horse Ranchers
Heard County Faith Community
Georgia Power Co.
Carroll EMC
Available Realty
Harper Realty
Regions Bank
First Georgia Banking Co.
Jaxon Filtration
Franklin Aluminum
State Farm Insurance
Tenaska Georgia Partners
West Georgia Technical College

Identification of Participation Techniques

Initial Planning Kick-off Meeting

An initial kick-off meeting was held on August 17, 2005 with elected officials and staff of the county and each city government. The purpose of this meeting was to educate these stakeholders on the planning process and to discuss scheduling. The attendees were encouraged to promote the process to the public and to encourage their employees and citizens to participate.

Interviews

A series of one-on-one interviews have been and will continue to be conducted with identified stakeholders and other interested parties in an effort to gain the most up-to-date information and to get personal perspectives of citizens relative to the comprehensive plan and the future of the county and its cities.

Community Advisory Committee Meeting

A meeting of the Heard County Chamber of Commerce's Unity of Community Forum was held on October 20, 2005. This group represents approximately 60 local government, business and civic leaders, and regional service providers. They meet on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting Heard County and have participated in a SWOT process over the past two years which was provided for use in this planning process. This group was asked to serve as a Community Advisory Committee throughout the planning process to participate in the visioning process, stimulate public participation and to monitor the planning process.

First Public Hearing

An initial public hearing was held on January 19, 2006 at the Heard County Courthouse. The purpose of this hearing was to present the draft Community Participation Program and draft Community Assessment to the public. Attendees were asked to offer comment verbally or in writing as to additional issues and needs to be addressed and to give thoughts on their vision for the county. Attendees were encouraged to sign up for participation in the community visioning sessions. Following this public hearing and incorporation of public input during the hearing, a draft Community Assessment and Participation Program will be forwarded by transmittal resolution of each local government to the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center and subsequently, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review and comment.

Community Visioning Sessions

Community Visioning Sessions will be held during the months of February, March and April to discuss the identified issues and opportunities facing the County in the areas of economic development, housing, land use & transportation, natural & cultural resources and community facilities, and to define goals and objectives for each. The product of the Community Visioning Sessions will be a narrative description for each plan area including 1) a community vision, 2) character area development trends, 3) final issues & opportunities, 4) implementation program, and 5) policies.

Outreach

Available media, including the local newspapers, radio and a community website, will be used to notify the public of meetings, share periodic overview of progress and encourage citizen and stakeholder input in the planning process.

Final Public Hearing

A final public hearing will be held in June, 2006 to present the Community Agenda. Following this public hearing the draft Community Agenda will be forwarded to Chattahoochee Flint RDC and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for review and comment. Upon final approval by the RDC and DCA, each local government will formally adopt the Joint Comprehensive Plan.

Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

TASK	2005					2006									
	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
Initial Kick-off Meeting	17-Aug														
Community Interviews															
Community Advisory Committee Meeting			20-Oct												
Community Assessment															
Community Participation Program															
Initial Public Hearing						19-Jan									
Community Visioning Sessions															
Community Agenda															
Final Public Hearing															
Transmit/Review/Adoption Process															