

Glynn County Comprehensive Plan Update

Public Involvement Plan: A Guide for Community Involvement and Consensus

I. Introduction

The concept of citizens participating in government decision-making is fundamental to the system of governance. While it is true that our government officials are elected to represent citizens, it is also true that elected officials need to inform, be informed by, and interact with the public on an ongoing basis if their representation is to be meaningful. Regular and continuing involvement in government decision-making is the very basis for the idea of citizenship. Public participation produces better decisions by utilizing the knowledge of the populous and by allocating part of the responsibility for formulating and implementing decisions to the citizens. The preparation of the Public Involvement Plan is an important first step in obtaining citizens participation and involvement in the Comprehensive Plan.

Study Purpose

The Glynn County Comprehensive Planning process is committed to providing broad based and continuous opportunities for public involvement throughout the planning process. The process is designed to be responsive to citizen participants, is committed to utilizing the knowledge and understanding of citizens to address important issues, and offers multiple opportunities for engagement – at varying levels of involvement. The purpose of this Public Involvement Plan is to define how citizens and other stakeholders will be involved throughout the entire comprehensive planning effort and how communities are provided opportunities to comment on the local plan, element(s) or amendments, and have adequate access to the process of defining the community’s vision, values, goals, policies, priorities, and implementation strategies.

Glynn County government must implement a program to provide for and encourage public involvement and participation during the preparation of: (1) the Comprehensive Plan; (2) amendments to the Comprehensive Plan; and (3) updates to the Short-Term Work Program portion of the Plan. In addition, the Plan is intended to serve as a format to be followed in making future public planning related decisions.

II. Public Participation Program

The County 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 serve to create an open, inclusive, and interactive forum.

These meetings will be comprised of four (4) major study areas within Glynn County to include incorporated Brunswick and three (3) unincorporated areas: St. Simon’s Island, Jekyll Island, and Sea Island.

The purpose of these meetings will be to inform and educate the citizens of Glynn County about the project; solicit their input and comments about the project based on the eight (8) elements of the Comprehensive Plan to include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) Population | 5) Housing |
| 2) Economic Development | 6) Land Use |
| 3) Natural & Historic Resources | 7) Transportation |
| 4) Community Facilities and Services | 8) Intergovernmental Coordination |

The plan will involve input from groups within the County, including but not limited to, the Planning Commission, applicable County staff, development professionals, general public and Board of Commissioners.

A. Committee Membership

- I. Technical Advisory Committee – Shall consist of County staff and selected to work closely with consultants to provide techniques, tools and strategies needed to inform and educate the citizens regarding the plan. Each member of the Technical Advisory Committee role shall be defined by the Comprehensive Plan Management. (Exhibit A).
- II. Steering Committee Meetings – The County Planning Commission will serve as the Steering Committee and 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 public meetings. The County Planning Commission consists of representatives from the following entities:

Mainland Planning Commissioners	District
Wayne Stewart, Chairman	1
Bill Brunson	2
Gary R. Nevill, Vice Chairman	3
Jeff Counts, Jr.	4
Barbara Stephens	5
Leman L. “Buddy” Hutchinson	At Large 1
Thomas B. Clark	At Large 2

Island Planning Commissioners	District
Preston Kirkendall	1
Michael D. Aspinwall, Vice Chairman	2
Joan D. Wilson	3
Paul H. Sanders	4
William Lawrence	6
G. Millard Allen, Jr.	At Large 1
Robert C. Ussery, Chairman	At Large 2

B. Public Participation & Involvement Plan Tasks

The Citizen Participation and Involvement Plan tasks are derived from the essential need to educate the public and media regarding the Comprehensive Plan; to 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, minority, elderly and disabled populations identified in the planning process. The following tasks will aid the planning, assessment, evaluation and implementation of the public participation and involvement plan:

- I. **Kick-Off Public Meeting** – Glynn County will host a kick-off meeting to officially announce the planning process to the citizens and other stakeholders. County 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, comment and volunteer sign up forms will be available at this meeting.
- II. **Public Involvement Plan (PIP)** - In consultation with staff and the Steering Committee a public involvement plan will be developed and will focus on two-way communication and involvement with the community.
- III. **Stakeholder Interviews** - The Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission will identify stakeholders to be interviewed. These stakeholders will have knowledge of and a vested interest in the plan, and be affiliated with the specific geographic areas.

The purpose of stakeholder interviews is to identify major issues and develop an understanding of the public opinions, comments, and concerns, including potential sources of conflict, and anticipated barriers impeding effective implementation. The stakeholders will include leaders from various segments of the community: Fire and Police Departments, Subdivision Homeowners Associations, Faith-Based Organizations, Civic Associations, Advocacy Groups, Realtors, Conservationists, Housing and Transportation Authorities and others. The team will use prepared survey questions. The results will be incorporated into the development of the Plan and used to illustrate the impact that the feedback has had on the progress of the Plan.

- IV. Public Outreach Program – A series of communication outlets will be used to inform citizens of the process and to solicit public participation. The following are tools to ensure communities are informed of the planning process:
- Stakeholder database development and maintenance – Consultants will work with staff and Steering Committee to compile and maintain a mailing list of stakeholders consisting of major employers, social service agencies, transportation-related industries, homeowners associations, developers, elected officials, media, churches serving Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, Environmental Justice (EJ) community representatives and interested individuals.
 - Advertisement Schedule – An advertisement schedule will be developed for community sessions, steering committee meetings, and public hearing with the County Commission.
 - Translation of Documents and Meeting Notices – Translation services will be used at meetings requiring services for the hearing impaired. Spanish speaking audiences as well as translation of written materials.
 - Public Outreach Plan – The consultant will coordinate with County staff to identify the best media outlets to publicize the meetings. The following tactics will be used to inform the citizens and media about the plan progress.

- Media Education – Media outlets (e.g., print, radio & public access television) will be educated about the plan through the use of briefings and will be asked to support publishing creative press releases, feature stories and columns in neighborhood and regional newspapers, and interviews to better inform the public. (See Attachment B for listing of media outlets)
 - Utilization of Minority Publications – A list of minority publications will be compiled to post meeting notices and additional information to ensure underrepresented groups are a part of the planning process.
 - 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 establish visible, continuous public feedback (for example: fact sheets, comment forms, newsletters, displays, flyers, press releases, notices, stakeholder database, signs, and other outreach methods).
- Maintain Project Website– Glynn County will have a special link on their home page website that will provide information on the progress of the planning process. Throughout the process, information will be updated and the public questionnaires will be revised to solicit well-focused comments. A dedicated email address will be assigned to the Comprehensive Plan project and will be managed by the Consultant team.
- V. Transmit Public Involvement Plan to the Regional Development Center and the Department of Community Affairs for review and approval. Consultant will respond to any comments from these entities.
- VI. Conduct Two (2) Community Workshops – The first workshop will be a visioning process that will be accomplished through a Character Preference Survey publicly announced through the use of various media (i.e. print, radio and television). These workshops will use a visual preference exercise to draw out citizens opinions based on the elements outlined in the plan and participants will complete a corresponding questionnaire. The results will be tabulated and issued as a summary report.

The second interactive workshop will be the Shared Agenda Community Session to present the vision, including the big ideas for addressing community challenges. During this workshop the preferred alternative will be modified based on public input to become a Shared Vision Statement. The Consultant will work with County staff to identify location and logistics in preparation for the both workshops. A schedule of activities to publicize the meeting will include public notices, media coverage, press releases, advertisements and invitations.

- VII. Open House – Final public meeting and open house presentation of the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update will be scheduled near the end of the planning process.
- VIII. Monthly Staff/Technical Advisory Committee Meeting - Monthly meetings will be scheduled to maintain the desired timelines, benchmarks and overall direction of the plan process.

C. Schedule Public Involvement Plan

Prior to commencing plan preparation, the County 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. (See Exhibit A: “Anticipated Schedule and Deliverables” which includes the anticipated planning process timeline.)

D. Required Public Hearings

Glynn County will advertise all public hearings in compliance with adopted guidelines for public notification for initiation of the Planning Process, review and adoption of the Public Participation and Involvement Plan, and review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan.

E. Traditionally Underserved Communities

Although equity considerations are important for all Glynn County planning decisions, they become especially critical when considering planning strategies for underserved communities. Special attention and effort will be made to reach out to people to ensure they are a part of the planning process and their voices are being heard. The Glynn County public involvement program will aggressively seek input from minority, low-income, elderly, and disabled communities throughout the County. A map of identified environmental justice communities will be developed once the identification criteria have been determined in cooperation with stakeholders. A placeholder has been included in this document for the map once it is developed.

These maps and other data will be used to target specific areas for outreach to local leaders and groups representing low income, elderly, disabled and minority populations, in addition to determining the most appropriate strategies or techniques to be used. While determining locates and times to hold workshops, public meetings, or other community outreach activities, special attention will be given to ensure that these venues are convenient and provide ample access to underserved communities. This will include targeting minority media outlets and producing printed materials in other languages. The Consultant will invite active participation from these communities through personal consultation, phone and written contacts. The following groups in the study area will be contacted:

- Community action groups
- Advocacy groups
- Educational institutions
- Churches
- Neighborhood groups
- Community service organizations
- Religious organizations
- Minority businesses

A database of contact names and information from these organizations and agencies will be developed and updated throughout the study. The database will be used for mailing information and maintaining an ongoing record of communication with these groups. This will support the documentation of the public involvement and underrepresented outreach efforts for the final report.

Exhibit A

Anticipated Schedule and Deliverables - 2006

Phase I & II

- April 28 Summary of Kick-off Session
- Week of May 15 Steering Committee Session
Stakeholder Interviews
- May 19 Planning Commission (steering committee) Packets
Establish website with content and photo's
- Week of May 25 Submit Public Involvement Plan Draft to County
- June 12 Community Outreach for Kick-off meeting
- Week of July 3 Legal Advertisement – public session #1
- July 7 Website Update
- Mid July Community Kick-off Meeting – Public Involvement Plan
and Solid Waste Management Plan

Phase III

- August 7 Website Update
Legal Advertisement – public session # 2
- September Steering Committee Session - Public Workshop #2
Community Visioning
- October Draft Community Objectives
- October/Nov Draft Character Areas Developed
- November Draft Implementation Measures

2007

- January 24th Review Session with County Staff
- February 8th Shared Agenda Workshop with Planning Commission
- Week of Feb. 19 Legal Advertisement – Open House
- February/March Outreach for Open House
- Week of March 5 Open House
- March 12th Website Update
- March 19th Legal Ad to Transmit Community Agenda
- 2nd Week of April Commission Transmittal
- April Final Adoption and Legal Notice



Glynn County, Georgia

Glynn County Media Outlets

Publications

- The Brunswick News
- Harbor Sound
- The Island Newspaper
- Golden Isles Weekend
- Georgia Coastal Illustrative
- Chamber Clipper

Radio Stations

- WSNF 790 AM – Brunswick
- WBGK 92.7 FM – St. Simons Island
- WGGC 98.3 FM – Midway
- WRJY 104.1 FM – Brunswick
- WXMK 105.9 FM – Dock Junction
- WHFX 107.7 FM – Darien

Public Radio Stations

- WW10 88.9 FM - Brunswick
- WECC 89.3 FM - Folkston
- WAYR 90.7 FM – Brunswick
- WEW 91.5 FM – Brunswick

Television Stations

- WPCX-TV 21 - Brunswick
- W33AL – Brunswick

III. Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Requirements

The Glynn County PIP is developed to meet the public involvement requirements set forth by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) as outlined in 110-12-1-08 of the DCA procedural requirements. The Public Involvement Plan will be adopted by the Glynn County Board of Commissioners and made available to the public for review and comments. Final review and approval of the Public Involvement Plan will be made by the Regional Development Center (RDC) and the Department of Community Affairs.

State laws providing the legal framework for public involvement are described below:

DCA 110-12-1-08 General Elements

(1) Transmittal and Review of Community Assessment and Community Participation Program. Upon completion, the local government must submit its Community Assessment and Community Participation Program concurrently to the regional development center for review. Both of these plan components must be completed well in advance of the local government's recertification date, in order to allow adequate time for their review prior to initiation of the Community Agenda.

(i) First Required Public Hearing. The first required public hearing must be held once the draft Community Assessment and Community Participation Program have been drafted and made available for public review, but prior to their transmittal to the regional development center.

The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the potential issues and opportunities identified through the Community Assessment, obtain input on the proposed Community Participation Program, and notify the community of when these plan components will be transmitted to the regional development center. Once public comments have been addressed, the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program must be transmitted to the regional development center by resolution of the governing body.

(ii) Review of Community Assessment. The regional development center shall review the Community Assessment for its adequacy in identifying potential issues and opportunities to be dealt with in the subsequent portions of the plan. The regional development center shall also review the Community Assessment to identify potential opportunities for inter-jurisdictional/regional solutions to common issues.

Glynn County Comprehensive Plan Update
April 2006 - May 2007
Community Agenda Schedule

	06	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	07	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May
	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12	Month 13	Month 14		
Event / Activity																
Phase I & II Community Participation & Assessment																
Summary of Kick-Off Session		■														
GIS Protocol in place		■														
Submit Draft Population/Housing/Economic Development to client			■													
Submit Draft Historical/Natural Resources/Comm.. Facilities			■													
Public Involvement Plan - draft to client			■													
Submit Draft Land Use and State Objectives to client			■													
Establish Project Website (to include contents)				■												
Steering Committee Session Kick-Off Workshop (Introduce Program)				■												
Conduct Stakeholder Interviews				■												
Outreach for Steering Committee Kick-Off (press release, public notice, advertisement, media)				■												
Summary Report for Steering Committee Kick-Off Meeting				■												
100% Community Assessment submitted to client					■											
Review Meeting/Conf. call with DCA					■											
Legal Advertisement - public session #1					■											
Community Kick-Off Meeting - Public Meeting #1					■											
Outreach for Public Meeting #1 (press release, public notice, advertisement, media)					■											
Summary Report for Public Meeting #1					■											
Website Update					■											
Review Comments with Planning Staff					■											
County Department Comments Due							■									
Community Assessment Final Review - conf. with staff							■									
Community Assessment Complete							■									
Advertise the Board of Commissioner Hearing/Transmittal							■									
BOC Transmittal or PIP and Assessment to RDC/DCA								■								
Phase III COMMUNITY AGENDA																
Legal Advertisement - public session #2							■									
Website Update							■									
Steering Committee Community Visioning Workshop Session								■								
Public Workshop #2 Community Visioning								■								
Outreach For Public Workshop #2 Community Visioning (press release, public notice, advertisement, media)								■								
2 Summary Reports for Steering Committee and Public Workshop #2 Meetings								■								
Website Update								■								
Draft Community Objectives submitted to client								■								
Final Character Areas developed									■							
Draft Implementation Measures									■							
Review Sessions with RDC										■						
Shared Agenda Workshop with Steering Committee											■					
Summary Report for Shared Agenda Workshop												■				
Legal Advertisement - Final Public Open House #3													■			
Final Public Open House #3														■		
Summary Report for Final Public Open House #3															■	
Public Involvement Activities - Final Report																■
Legal Advertisement to transmit Community Agenda																■
Website Update																■
Commission transmittal																■
Final Adoption & Legal Notice																■

Revised dates

(iii) **Review of Community Participation Program.** The Department shall review the Community Participation Program for its adequacy in identifying specific mechanisms to ensure adequate involvement of the community in the development of the Community Agenda. The Department shall transmit a complete report of its findings and recommendations for addressing such findings to the regional development center for inclusion in the Report of Findings and Recommendations.

(iv) **Report of Findings and Recommendations.** Within 30 days after certification of the completeness of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program, the regional development center must transmit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the local government and to the Department. The report must include:

- Comments submitted by interested parties that reviewed the Community Assessment;
- The regional development center's findings and recommendations from its review of the Community Assessment; and
- A copy of the Department's findings and recommendations resulting from its review of the Community Participation Program.

(v) **Publicizing the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program.** Once reviewed by the regional development center and the Department, the availability of the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program 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.

(2) **Transmittal and Review of Community Agenda.** Upon completion, the local government must submit its Community Agenda to the regional development center for review. The mandatory review period for the Community Agenda is 60 days. However, in order to ensure adequate time for review, revision, and adoption, the Department recommends that the local government submit the Community Agenda for review no less than 120 days prior to the recertification date.

(i) **Second Public Hearing.** The second required public hearing must be held once the Community Agenda has been drafted and made available for public review, but prior to its transmittal to the regional development center for review. The purpose of this hearing is to brief the community on the contents of the Community Agenda, provide an opportunity for residents to make final suggestions, additions or revisions, and notify the community of when the Community Agenda will be submitted to the regional development center for review. Once public comments have been addressed, the Community Agenda must be transmitted to the regional development center by resolution of the governing body.

(ii) **Completeness Check.** The regional development center shall determine whether the Community Agenda is complete, within seven days of its receipt. A Community Agenda that does not meet the standard for completeness (as determined by the Department) shall be deemed incomplete and shall not be accepted for further review by the regional development center or be forwarded to the Department for review. The regional development center shall notify the local government of its findings regarding the completeness of the submittal and identify items that must be submitted, if any, prior to further processing. The regional development center shall forward a complete submittal to the Department immediately upon making the completeness finding.

(iii) **Notification of Interested Parties.** Once the regional development center has determined that the Community Agenda is complete, it shall immediately notify any interested parties of the availability of the Community Agenda for review and comment, providing the name of the local government, the general nature of the Community Agenda, and a deadline by which comments must be received. At a minimum, interested parties shall include:

- Local government are contiguous to the submitting local government, and other local governments that are likely to be affected by the Community Agenda;
- Any local authorities, special districts, or other entities identified in evaluating intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and processes (if applicable);
- Regional development centers that are contiguous to the local government or that are likely to be affected by the Community Agenda; and
- Affected state agencies (including the Department of Transportation, the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority, etc.) and the Departments.

(iv) **Regional Hearing.** Within 25 days after certification of the completeness of the Community Agenda, the regional development center may (at its sole discretion) conduct a hearing at which any local government, regional development center or other local, regional, or state agency may present its views on the Community Agenda. The rules for conducting such hearings must be adopted by the board of directors of the regional development center and approved by the Department.

(v) **Regional Development Center Review.** The regional development center shall review the Community Agenda for potential conflicts with plans of neighboring jurisdictions, opportunities for inter-jurisdictional/regional solutions to common issues, and consistency with the adopted Regional Agenda for the regional development center's region.

(vi) **Department Review.** The Department shall review the Community Agenda for compliance with the planning requirements. This review may result in identification of deficiencies that must be satisfactorily resolved by the community in order for the Community Agenda to be found "in compliance" with the planning requirements. The Department may also offer advisory comments for improving the Community Agenda for consideration by the local government. The Department's findings and recommendations resulting from its review, including advisory comments, shall be transmitted to the regional development center for inclusion in the final report within 35 days after certification of the completeness of the Community Agenda.

(vii) **Final Report of Findings and Recommendations.** Within 40 days after certification of the completeness of the Community Agenda, the regional development center must transmit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the local government and to the Department. The report must include:

- Comments submitted by interested parties that reviewed the Community Agenda and (if applicable) a summary of the regional review hearing, detailing any significant issues raised at the hearing;
- The regional development center's findings from its Intergovernmental and Consistency review of the Community Agenda and its recommendations for addressing such findings; and
- A copy of the Department's findings and recommendations resulting from its review of the Community Agenda.

(viii) Adoption of Community Agenda. Once the Community Agenda has been found by the Department to be in compliance with the planning requirements, the governing body may adopt the Community Agenda with or without any recommendations for improvement included in the Final Report of Findings and Recommendations. However, in no event shall a local government take any official action to adopt a Community Agenda prepared in accordance with the planning requirements until 60 days after the Community Agenda has been certified by the regional development center as complete. If the local government has petitioned for reconsideration, this mandatory review period shall be 90 days. In order to maintain Qualified Local Government certification, the local government must adopt the approved Community Agenda prior to its recertification date, but in no case later than one year after completion of the mandatory review period for the Community Agenda.

(ix) Qualified Local Government Certification. Once the Department has been notified by the regional development center that a local government has adopted a Community Agenda that complies with the planning requirements, the Department may issue a letter certifying this local government as a Qualified Local Government. Qualified Local Government certification shall automatically expire approximately five years from the previous recertification date, unless otherwise specified. To retain Qualified Local Government certification, a local government must remain in compliance with the requirements outlined in these planning requirements and O.C.G.A. 50-8-2(a) (18).

(x) Publicizing the Community Agenda. Once adopted by the local government, the availability of the Community Agenda 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 a complete copy of the Community Agenda may be reviewed.