

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN **CITY OF DULUTH, GEORGIA**



COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

As set forth in the Rules of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Chapter 110-12-1 under the Rules and Regulations of the State of Georgia, the City of Duluth must complete a Comprehensive Plan update by February 2009 in order to maintain its status as a Qualified Local Government (QLG) eligible to receive funding from certain state and federal programs. The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of three components: 1) a Community Assessment, 2) a Community Participation Program, and 3) a Community Agenda. This document serves to fulfill the Community Participation Program requirement of the City of Duluth's Comprehensive Plan.

DEFINITIONS

The Community Assessment is the informational foundation upon which the comprehensive planning process takes place. It acts as a sort of "state of the community," and provides the basis for the development of a community's vision for the future by evaluating its people, needs and resources.

A Community Participation Program is defined as that portion of the Comprehensive Plan that outlines a local government's program for ensuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda.

The Community Agenda is the most important part of the Comprehensive Plan, for it includes the community's vision for the future, key issues that need to be addressed, and the implementation program for achieving this vision and addressing identified issues and opportunities. It is intended to generate local pride and enthusiasm about the future of the community.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to set forth the City of Duluth's strategy for public engagement and stakeholder involvement in the planning process, and ensure that a range of values and interests are represented in its' Community Agenda.

STAKEHOLDERS

A stakeholder is anyone who has a vested interest in an outcome of the comprehensive planning process. Stakeholders are elected officials, governmental agencies, local developers, employers, property owners, schools, and community organizations. Stakeholder involvement in the planning process provides local governments with the opportunity to receive input from a cross-section of the community and ensures that the comprehensive plan reflects a full range of community values and desires.

The City has identified the following individuals, organizations and groups as potential stakeholders:

- Banks
- Business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs
- Duluth Merchants Association
- Churches, ecumenical councils
- Community service organizations (Kiwans Club, Duluth Civitan Club, Lion's Club, etc.)
- City Council members
- Developer Representatives (Towncenter Redevelopment, etc.)
- Gwinnett County Public Schools
- Downtown Development Authority (Redevelopment Authority)
- Duluth Fall Festival Committee, Inc.
- Chattahoochee Riverkeeper, National Park Service
- Community representatives
- Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- Homeowners associations and neighborhood organizations



- Gwinnett County Library Board (Duluth Branch)
- Major employers (AGCO, Gwinnett Medical Center – Duluth)
- Planning commission and historic preservation commissions (Core Preservation District- Residential and Core Preservation District – Commercial)
- Historical societies (Junior League)
- Property owners
- Real estate professionals
- Council for Quality Growth
- Zoning Board of Appeals

PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES

The City of Duluth considered the following participatory techniques for stakeholder involvement, and as applicable, included them into its Community Participation Program.

Community Participation Techniques

Participation Technique	Included in the Participation Program?	Explanation
Stakeholder interviews	Yes	City/Consultant will interview
Kiosk/Lobby displays	Yes	City staff to arrange
Technical Advisory Committee	Yes	Gwinnett County Unified Plan City/County Coordination Group
Steering committee	Yes	Planning Commission to serve this function (3 meetings)
Visioning workshops	Yes	One or more meetings
Intergovernmental partnerships	Yes	See Technical Advisory Committee
Kick-off information meeting	Yes	See Steering Committee Meeting
Printed public information	Yes	As appropriate
Direct mail surveys	No	
Media press releases	Yes	City/Consultant will prepare
Website – information only	Yes	City staff to arrange
Website – interactive	Yes	City staff to arrange
E-mail “blast” database	Yes	City staff to arrange
City newsletter	Yes	June 2007 Edition
Speaker’s bureau**	Yes	Consultant to arrange

1. Stakeholder interviews. City-identified stakeholders will be interviewed via telephone or in-person. It is anticipated that this process will be limited to 10-12 people. Consultant/City staff will interview Mayor and City Council as interested. Each stakeholder will be asked to put forth their concerns or suggestions, which will then be noted and made a part of the record for consideration during the development of the Community Agenda.
2. Kiosk/Lobby Displays. Basic factual information will be made available in handout form at appropriate locations.
3. Technical advisory committee. The Gwinnett County Unified Plan 2030 City/County Coordination Group will serve this function. In addition, all City departments (Shelley Stiebling, Interim Director, Planning & Development) will be advised of the effort and consulted where appropriate.

** Steve Logan



4. Steering Committee. The City of Duluth's Planning Commission shall serve as Steering Committee for the comprehensive planning process. The primary role of the Steering Committee will be to advise and direct the planning process, as well as ensure that the viewpoints of all stakeholders are systematically represented, and when necessary, debate and reconcile differences between proposed policies when they conflict with one another. Three Steering Committee meetings will be scheduled during the planning process. The first meeting shall serve to educate Steering Committee members on the significance of the tasks to be accomplished during the comprehensive planning process, and to prepare them for visioning workshops and discussions with residents and stakeholders. The second Steering Committee meeting will be held following completion of the visioning workshops. At this time, the Consultant/City staff will present its results and recommendations, and the Steering Committee will discuss outcomes, debate policy, and reconcile any conflicts. The third and final meeting of the Steering Committee will be to make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council on the Community Agenda.
5. Visioning workshops. Consultant/City staff will conduct one or more visioning workshops. These workshops will be designed to gain meaningful participation from interested persons by educating them about the planning process and facilitating an environment where diverse interests come together to develop a shared vision for the City of Duluth. Specific visioning exercises will be designed to obtain input from workshop participants. These exercises include, but may not be limited to, interactive discussion, mapping exercises, and questionnaires (as may be appropriate given the participants involved). Members of both the Steering Committee and identified stakeholders should plan to participate in the visioning workshops.
6. Intergovernmental coordination. Primary means for intergovernmental coordination will be the Technical Advisory Committee, as described above.
7. Kickoff Information Meeting. The Consultant/City staff will make arrangements for the display of fact sheets, brochures, and other graphic materials at City Hall or in other public places.
8. Printed Public Information. Printed public information will be made available at City Hall or in other public places (as arranged by Consultant/City staff).
9. Media press releases. Press releases will be issued at strategic intervals in the planning process for distribution to local media.
10. Website. The City will maintain current information on its website about the planning process and make available major products for public review, as well as, provide an online form for public feedback and suggestions.
11. E-mail "Blast" Database. All interested parties who have provided their e-mail address will be kept informed of the planning process, meeting dates, and have opportunities to comment via survey. All stakeholders, Steering Committee members, the media, and elected officials will be included on the e-mail distribution list.
12. Newsletter. The public will be updated about the planning process in quarterly editions of the City's Newsletter.
13. Speaker's Bureau. Speakers or groups of speakers will be invited to steering committee meetings to discuss various planning topics as they relate to the City of Duluth's comprehensive planning process.



SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Date	Task
March-June 2007	Regional and State review of the Community Assessment and Community Participation Program
May-June 2007	Develop Community Participation program
June 14, 2007	Briefing of Homeowner Associations
June 2007	Kickoff Meeting of Steering Committee (Planning Commission)
June-July 2007	Stakeholder Interviews
August 2007	Visioning Workshop(s)
August 20, 2007	1 st Steering Committee Meeting
June- October 2007	Prepare Community Agenda (plan portion)
September 2007	2 nd Steering Committee Meeting
October 2007	3 rd Steering Committee Meeting
November 2007	Public Hearing by Steering Committee (Planning Commission)
January 2008	Public Hearing by Mayor and City Council and Transmittal of Draft Community Agenda for Regional and State Review *

REFERENCE

Georgia Department of Community Affairs. *Community-Based Planning: Guidebook for Citizens and Local Planners.*

* Subject to change, based on Gwinnett County's submission of its' Draft Community Agenda