

# *Forsyth County* Comprehensive Plan



*Community Participation Program*

## Introduction

### Purpose

Public participation is essential for all community based planning efforts. Those who are directly impacted by local government decisions must have opportunities to voice opinions and concerns regarding county policies, strategies and implementation measures as they move forward in the public realm. A vision for the county's future involves dialogue between citizens and landowners, local government staff and officials, the business community and a host of special interest groups. It is through a diversity of perspectives that a concise and inclusive plan may be developed that reflects the values and interests of the community as a whole. Ultimately, it is through a joint commitment to an agreed upon vision and strategic implementation process that community success can be achieved. The purpose of the Community Participation Program is to outline the steps that Forsyth County will take to ensure community members have defined methods for public participation throughout the Comprehensive Plan update process necessary to fulfill state planning requirements.

### Objectives

The objectives for the participation program include the following:

- The program must offer and encourage opportunities for the public to become actively involved during the update process
- The program must provide information throughout the update process to any interested party regardless of their level of participation
- The program should promote consensus through active dialogue and incorporation of community concerns as components of the Comprehensive Plan are developed and move through public processes

### Participation Elements

Forsyth County will include the following components as part of the participation plan:

- First state-required public hearing
- Kick-off Community Agenda public information meeting
- Steering Committee
- Stakeholder interviews
- Community workshops
- Planning Commission public hearing
- Second state-required public hearing
- Public outreach

## Identification of Stakeholders

Stakeholders are individuals, groups or institutions that are vested in the future of the county. Stakeholders are indispensable to the public planning process since they will be

affected by the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations and represent a fundamental aspect of the coordination and management required to complete the update. The following list is representative as additional stakeholders may be identified and incorporated into the participation process as the update progresses.

### **Forsyth County Board of Commissioners**

District 1, Charles Laughinghouse  
 District 2, Brian Tam  
 District 3, Jim Harrell  
 District 4, Patrick Bell  
 District 5, Jim Boff

### **Forsyth County Planning Commission**

District 1, Brant Meadows  
 District 2, Pam Livesay  
 District 3, Barry Russell  
 District 4, Matt Murphy  
 District 5, Jim Quinn

### **Project Management Team**

Director of Planning and Development, Tom Brown, Interim  
 Principal Planner, Matt Bucchin  
 Senior Long Range Planner, Vanessa Bernstein  
 Planner, Mandy Edmondson  
 County Arborist, Greg Wallace  
 GIS Specialist, Mary Jo Enderby  
 GIS Technician, Ronald Reagan

### **Forsyth County Staff**

County Manager, Doug Derrer  
 Deputy County Manager, Tim Merritt  
 Director of Communications, Jodi Gardner  
 Director of Emergency Management Agency, Danny Bowman  
 Director of Engineering, John Cunard  
 Director of Geographic Information Services, John Kilgore  
 Director of Information Technology, Brian Converse, Interim  
 Director of Parks and Recreation, Jerry Kinsey  
 Director of Public Facilities, David Thornton  
 Director of Senior Services, Shelley Johnson  
 Director of Water and Sewer, Tim Perkins  
 Sheriff, Ted Paxton  
 Environmental Program Manager, Tammy Wright

### **Local, State and Federal Agency Related Staff**

Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area – Chief of Science & Resource Management, Rick Slade

Etowah HCP - USFWS, Eric Prowell  
 Extension Service Coordinator, Carol Propes  
 NRCS District Conservationist, G. B. Belflower  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lake Sidney Lanier – Natural Resource Manager, Chris Love-  
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**Forsyth County Organizations & Boards**

Forsyth County Board of Education  
 Forsyth County Board of Health  
 Forsyth County Board of Tax Assessors  
 Forsyth County Board of Zoning Appeals  
 Forsyth County Development Authority  
 Forsyth County Library Board of Trustees  
 Forsyth County Parks and Recreation Board  
 Forsyth County Tree Protection Commission  
 Forsyth County Water and Sewer Authority  
 Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce

**Adjacent Jurisdictions**

City of Cumming Planning and Zoning Director – Scott Morgan  
 City of Alpharetta Director of Community Development – Diana Wheeler  
 City of Gainesville Planning Director – Rusty Lignon  
 City of Johns Creek Planning and Zoning Administrator – Justin Kirouac  
 City of Milton Community Development Director – Lynn Tully  
 City of Roswell Planning and Zoning Director – Bradford Townsend  
 City of Suwanee Planning Director – Josh Campbell  
 Cherokee County Director of Planning and Zoning – Jeff Watkins  
 Dawson County Planning and Development Services Director – David McKee  
 Gwinnett County Planning and Development Director – Bryan Lackey  
 Hall County Planning and Zoning Director – Randy Knighton

**Regional Organizations & Institutions**

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission  
 Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District  
 Atlanta Regional Commission  
 Georgia Regional Transportation Authority  
 Northside Hospital-Forsyth  
 Lanier Technical College  
 North Georgia College and State University  
 Buford Trout Hatchery  
 Georgia Poultry Federation  
 Major Employers within the county, otherwise not listed  
 American Proteins, Inc.  
 Hansgrohe, Inc.  
 Koch Foods, Inc.  
 L-3 Communications Display Systems

Scientific Games International, Inc.  
 Siemens Energy & Automation, Inc.  
 Tyson Foods, Inc.

**Utilities**

Advanced Disposal Services, Inc. (Eagle Point Landfill)  
 Atlanta Gas Light  
 AT&T Telephone  
 Georgia Power  
 Olde Atlanta Recycling, LLC  
 Sawnee EMC  
 Waste Management, Inc.

**Local Builders and Developers**

400 North Board of Realtors  
 Bryan Properties  
 Carson Developments, Inc.  
 Council for Quality Growth  
 Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association  
 John Thomas Homes  
 Newland Communities  
 Northeast Atlanta Metro Association of Realtors

**Community Groups & Organizations**

1071 Coalition  
 The Bell Research Center  
 Historical Society of Forsyth County  
 Homeowners Associations  
 Lake Lanier Association  
 Roswell-Alpharetta Mountain Bike Association (RAMBO), a chapter of Southern Off Road  
 Bicycle Association (SORBA)  
 Sawnee Mountain Foundation  
 Smart Growth Forsyth County, Inc.  
 Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper  
 Upper Etowah Alliance

## Identification of Participation Techniques

### Kick-off Public Information Meeting

This will be an open house event to announce the Community Agenda phase of the Comprehensive Plan update. The focus of this meeting will include an overview of the purpose and process of comprehensive planning, a general presentation of the Community Assessment portion of the plan, which consists of an inventory as well as analysis of existing conditions, and an outline of public participation opportunities during the Community Agenda segment.

### Steering Committee

The committee shall be composed of nine representatives from a county government commission, the business community and non-profit agencies. The committee shall meet seven times as the Community Agenda is being developed to provide feedback and advisement to the project management team. These meetings shall be announced and will be open to the public.

- Forsyth County Planning Commission
- One representative from the Cumming-Forsyth Chamber of Commerce: Tracy Moon
- One representative from the Forsyth County School System: Tim Amerson
- One representative from a local power utility: Blake House, Sawnee EMC
- One representative from a regional public agency: Stephanie Harmon, GMRC

### Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one interviews shall be conducted by the project management team with community leaders and others who represent crucial organizations within the county in order to identify issues and opportunities that should be addressed by the Community Agenda.

### Community Workshops

A series of seven workshops will be conducted to focus on the various segments of the Community Agenda. The purpose of this series is to solicit community-wide input on the following elements:

- **Discuss and provide comment on the preliminary Issues and Opportunities list developed and adopted during the partial update process (2 workshops to be held at the county administration building)**

A summary of the partial update process will be provided by the project management team. Feedback will involve breakout groups who will assess the potential Issues and Opportunities list adopted during the partial update. Each group will select a person to document the results of each team through the use of a standardized form that will be submitted at the close of the workshop. The initial workshop will address the first half of the previously identified Issues and Opportunities with the second workshop focusing on the remainder, which shall allow ample time to review and confer on all material.

- **Discuss and prioritize scenario options for the Future Development Map (3 work shops: One to be held at the county administration building and the others at two public school sites; one in the north and the other in the south portion of the county)**  
A presentation by the project management team will be given of the Issues and Opportunities component generated from the initial two workshops. In addition, a synopsis of the various map scenarios shall be provided. Input will then be solicited through the use of sticking dots to represent each participant's choice for their preferred scenario. Participants will also be encouraged to record likes and dislikes on comment cards. The results of all three workshops and any Web site generated comments shall determine which scenario option, with select modifications based on community input, moves forward in the draft Community Agenda.
- **Discuss and offer feedback for the draft Implementation Program (1 workshop to be held at the county administration building)**  
A summary of the Issues and Opportunities element with the Future Development Map based on previous workshops will be provided by the project management team so that participants will have the information necessary to comment upon potential implementation measures. Feedback will involve breakout groups who will review the potential Policies list adopted during the partial update with any modifications based on emerging issues identified during the first two workshops. Each group will select a person to document the results of each team through the use of a standardized form that will be submitted at the close of the workshop. This form will include a prioritization request for each policy category that will later be integrated into the short term work program draft.
- **Respond to the draft Community Agenda (1 workshop to be held at the county administration building)**  
A synopsis of the Community Agenda, including exhibit maps, shall be presented by the project management team in an open house format. Feedback will be solicited through comment cards and participants will have an opportunity to ask the project management team specific questions on the plan's components.

### Public Hearings

Two public hearings are required by the state. The first one transmits the Community Assessment and the Community Participation Program so that community members are able to offer responses to the existing conditions analysis as well as become aware of the upcoming participation options during the visioning period of the update. The second public hearing occurs at the conclusion of the visioning process when the Community Agenda has been completed and is ready to be reviewed by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. The public will have an opportunity to comment on the plan prior to both transmittals. There will also be an additional public hearing before the Forsyth County Planning Commission after the community workshops, but prior to the second required hearing so that further input maybe gathered prior to transmittal to the state.

Outreach

- Web site**  
 A Web page regarding the Community Agenda will be available with an ability for users to comment online concerning posted text and map drafts after each community workshop has been conducted; there will be a 10 day comment period for each component of the plan that undergoes the workshop feedback process.
- Media Plan**  
 Forsyth in Focus segment on TV Forsyth describing the update process and encouraging public participation  
 Public Service Announcements on TV Forsyth  
 Electronic Bulletin event notices on TV Forsyth  
 The Current electronic monthly newsletter for event notices  
 Press Release event notices  
 Forsyth Herald monthly full page event & information announcements
- Printed Public Information**  
 Printed event flyers to be posted at county buildings and forwarded to the Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce
- Community Correspondence**  
 E-mail correspondence to identified stakeholders and workshop participants

