

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM
CITY OF NICHOLSON, GA, COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
February 2009**

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. According to local planning requirements of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, the community participation program is prepared in conjunction with the “community assessment” part of the comprehensive plan, then submitted along with the community assessment, after public hearing, for regional and state review (see “review process” below).

There are three required components of the community participation program:

- (a) Identification of Stakeholders
- (b) Identification of Participation Techniques
- (c) Schedule for Completion of the Community Agenda

Objective

The program seeks to obtain meaningful involvement of stakeholders and the general public in the preparation of the comprehensive plan. This community participation program describes the City of Nicholson’s strategies for ensuring meaningful public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the *Community Agenda portion* of the comprehensive plan. It is important to emphasize here that this means little if any active involvement in preparing and conducting the “community assessment” part of the plan, other than what is obtained through the required public hearing for the community participation program and the community assessment.

Review Process

The community participation program is submitted along with the Community Assessment to the Northeast Georgia Regional Commission for review, after holding a public hearing. Within seven (7) days of receipt, the commission 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 commission 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 commission 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.

Stakeholders Suggested in the State Planning Recommendations and their Applicability in the City of Nicholson

The State Planning Recommendations provide a list of almost fifty suggested stakeholders. For simplicity, they have been grouped into like or similar interests below.

Private Business and Related Interests

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Agricultural and forestry interests	May be important in Nicholson
Banks	No banks exist in the city
Business owners, managers	Nicholson has limited existing businesses
Chamber of Commerce	Mail all notices and materials
Developers, for-profit	Identify one or more to participate
Employers – major	Nicholson has limited existing businesses
Entrepreneurs	Unknown at this time
Homebuilders association	Has participated in countywide participation program
Insurance companies	None identified
Media – local and regional	Mail all notices and materials
Real estate professionals	(see Developers, for profit)
Schools and universities -- private	None identified -- there is one county public school in city
Utilities -- private	None identified

Non-Profits and Community/Environmental Organizations

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Bicycle, hiking clubs	None identified
Churches, ecumenical councils	None identified
Community development corporations	Unknown at this time
Community service organizations	Unknown at this time
Developers, non-profit	Unknown at this time
Downtown or area business people	City has no downtown development authority
Environmental organizations	None identified except regionally (Athens)
Ethnic and minority groups	Very limited applicability in Nicholson
High school / college students	Active involvement of students not sought at this time
Historic or preservation society	Has participated in countywide participation program
Immigrant groups	None identified (see ethnic and minority)
Land trusts	Conservation opportunities within city may be limited
Low-income groups	(see ethnic and minority)
Neighborhood organizations	None identified but outreach may be initiated
Under-represented/marginalized groups	(see ethnic and minority)

Public Agencies and Organizations

Stakeholder Segment	Comment
Agricultural and forestry interests	Cooperative Extension Service; Georgia Forestry Commission (inform); not central to municipal plan
City Council	Decision makers (will hold hearings and adopt plan)
Cities in County – planning depts.	No municipalities about Nicholson
City agencies – others not listed	Not applicable
Convention and Visitor’s Bureau and/or Local/regional tourism officials	Not applicable in Nicholson (see Chamber)
Federal agencies with local jurisdiction	None stands out as justifying specific involvement
Health – public	Involve in facility planning process
Library boards	Nicholson municipal library to be consulted in process
Military base planners	Not applicable
Public utilities	Nicholson Water Authority – must be consulted
Planning commission (city)	City does not have a local planning commission
Regional agencies	Northeast Georgia Regional Commission (RC)
Safety – public	Sheriff; Nicholson fire district – involve through facility planning process
Schools – public	Jackson County Public School System
State agencies with local jurisdiction	None stands out as justifying specific involvement
Zoning board of appeals	Inapplicable in city of Nicholson
Universities -- Public	University of Georgia – in Athens – an important stakeholder given proximity

List of Stakeholders and Persons to Receive Communications

Defined broadly, a stakeholder is anyone who has a stake in an outcome of the comprehensive planning process. Based on the suggestions in the State Planning Recommendations, a final (not necessarily limiting) list of stakeholders has been identified and compiled with input from the City of Nicholson’s Mayor who is authorized to appoint committees.

The Mayor of Nicholson has appointed a diverse group of stakeholders to serve as a comprehensive plan steering committee. The appointed members are as follows:

Nicholson Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Paul Cartledge P.O. Box 160 Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-2290

Faye Seagraves 226 Stapler Dr. Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-2610

Jimmy Ford P.O. Box 395 Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-3481

Ginger Dempsey P.O. Box 457 Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-2230 (work)

Bobby Boyland 335 JS Williamson Court Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-2263

Gene Wood 4331 Hwy 441 S Nichoslon, Ga. 30565 706-757-2511

Doug Ayers 112 James Maxwell Road Commerce, Ga. 30529 706-757-3834

Wayne Holcomb 1198 Galilee Church Rd. Jefferson, Ga. 30549 706-367-7627

Walter Barnett 148 Staplers Bridge Road Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-2640

Randy Bennett- no current information

Jan Webster 270 G W Webster Rd. Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-757-3877

John and Lynn Ring 332 Old Kings Bridge Rd. Nicholson, Ga. 30565 706-340-4718

Identification of Participation Techniques

The following techniques were considered and as applicable included in the Community Participation Program.

Community Participation Techniques Considered

Participation Technique	Included in Program?	Explanation
Kiosk/Lobby displays	No	Limited space available in city hall; however, consider at Nicholson city library
Speaker's Bureau – briefings, presentations to civic clubs	No	Limited opportunities
Kick off public information meeting	No	Steering Committee will serve this function
Printed public information	Yes	City should rely on electronic media (web page); steering committee members will receive written copies of materials
Website – information only	Yes	Central communication tool (City Website)
Website – interactive	No	Not part of budget for project
Website – e-mail response capability	No	City clerk will reply to e-mail inquiries or forward to consultant as appropriate
Cable TV information	No	Not part of budget for project
Press Releases	Yes	Consulting Planner may prepare press releases at strategic intervals as appropriate
Posters, fliers, brochures, mailouts	No	Budget limitations have led to use of website as primary dissemination media
Direct mail surveys	No	Budget limitations preclude this option
Visioning exercises, workshops and charrettes, and community preference meetings	Yes	One workshop proposed to be held – emphasis on downtown place-making but also covering character citywide and issues
Student programs	No	Not planned, budget is limited
E-mail blasts	Yes	Notices of meetings, drafts, etc. will be sent to all e-mail addresses compiled
Technical advisory committee	No	information will be distributed or notice of all drafts available for download and comment
Steering committee	Yes	To be appointed by the Mayor and includes a diversity of representation
Stakeholder meetings and interviews	Yes	If not represented on steering committee, Consulting Planner will interview stakeholders
Intergovernmental partnerships	Yes	Coordination with county through consulting planner

Schedule for Completion of the Comprehensive Plan Including Community Agenda

Month (2010)	Community Assessment	Community Participation	Community Agenda
February	Complete	Complete	
March	Council Public Hearing	Council Public Hearing	
March	Regional/State Review	Regional/State Review	
March-April		Steering Committee Meeting	
April		Downtown Place-making and Character Areas Public Workshop	
April		Stakeholder Interviews (if not represented on steering committee)	
April-May		Steering Committee Meeting	
May-June		Steering Committee Meeting (if needed)	
May-June			Council hearing and submit for review
June			Regional/State Review
July			Regional/State Review
August			Regional/State Review
September – October			Council adopts

Recertification Deadline: October 31, 2010