

**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM
FOR THE CITY OF
PINE LAKE GEORGIA
2005 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE**

February 2006

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Introduction

The community participation program for the comprehensive plan provides for input which:

- Involves stakeholders in shaping the vision for the future,
- Generates commitment to the community's future and
- Creates the likelihood of community involvement in carrying out the plan.

The participation program supplements the required public hearings by using techniques which encourage active engagement from the community, culminating in a visioning process. The program ensures that diverse values and perspectives are reflected in the planning process. Stakeholders are presented with current social, physical and economic realities and demographic projections so that their vision for the future can be realistic as well as exciting.

REQUIREMENTS

The Pine Lake Community Participation Program defines a process that will:

- (1) take advantage of the existing participatory nature of this small city government and
- (2) meet the requirements of regional and state agencies (ARC and DCA).

The community agenda to be developed as part of the comprehensive plan update must include:

- a community vision setting out the overall goals and specific goals for character areas, to include maps and pictures,
- selection and definition of the key issues and opportunities to be addressed during the plan period, and
- implementation of the strategic plan.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: BACKGROUND AND GOALS

As a small city with a neighborhood feel, Pine Lake has strives to ensure that its citizens feel invited to participate in government decision-making. A Community Relations Committee was founded in 1999 to create occasions for participation outside of formal council meetings. The committee held Town Hall meetings hosting discussions ranging from open discussions of any issues to community visioning to policing issues. In 2003 The City Council formally committed to holding four Town Hall meeting/year. Recently, with the election of 3 former Community Relations Committee members to City Council, the council has facilitated its own quarterly meetings to address issues that concern our residents and to inform the community about their government.

Other city committees also host discussions of strategic issues. For example, the Community Development Committee held an open discussion on citizen concerns about residential development issues. The neighborhood association, PLAIN, meets monthly, and the Neighborhood Watch is being revitalized to deal with safety concerns.

Techniques used at these meetings range from general discussion and informational presentations to illustrations, comment cards, brainstorming, and visual preference.

Attendance at community meetings waxes and wanes. Participation was highest in 1999 – 2003 when the city was engaged in some intense political activities. It has been difficult to engage a broad audience of Pine Lake citizens in long-term planning meetings. In general, we can expect to see between 4 to 7% of our population at our quarterly town hall meetings and substantially less than that at committee level events. Considerable interest, and higher attendance, can still be generated by “hot” issues such as an unpopular construction project or, as recently occurred, an organizational meeting for Neighborhood Watch.

Goal 1: Revive interest in holistic discussions of the long-term development of the city.

Goal 2: Involve historically disengaged groups (apartment dwellers, youth, minorities).

Goal 3: Inform the residents effectively about planning goals in order to improve their understanding of current economic and social realities and likely trends so that community visioning is realistic.

STAKEHOLDERS

STEERING COMMITTEE - COORDINATING PARTNERS

- The Mayor, City Council and administration of the City of Pine Lake
- Mike Tarnower, Director, Downtown Development Authority
- Elisabeth Shields, current City Council member
- Ellen Mintzmyer, Finance Committee member, former chair, Community Relations Committee
- Martha Renfroe-Garner, former City Council member
- Development Authority of DeKalb County

STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN CITY LIMITS

- Citizens of Pine Lake
- Pine Lake Downtown Development Authority
- Business Owners
- DeKalb County Commissioners, Department of Economic Development, Planning Department
- Banking Institutions
- Pine Lake First Baptist Church, Pine Lake United Methodist Church
- Pine Lake City Committees:
- Neighborhood Association: Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors – PLAIN

STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN 3 MILES

- ARTS DEKALB
- DeKalb County Schools: Allgood Elementary, Rockbridge Elementary
- Les Chateau Subdivision
- Carlisle Estates Subdivision
- Subdivisions bordering Pine Lake and along Rowland and Algood Roads.
- Pride Rings In Stone Mountain (PRISM)
- Georgia Perimeter College, Clarkston Campus
- DeKalb Technical College, Clarkston Campus
- City of Clarkston
- City of Stone Mountain
- City of Avondale Estates
- DeKalb County Chamber of Commerce
- DeKalb County Water Authority

State Rep. Michelle Henson
State Rep. Billy Mitchell
State Sen. Steve Henson
State Sen. Gloria Butler

COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

The principal communication channel for stakeholders within Pine Lake is the community newsletter, PLAIN Talk, which is delivered monthly to every household and business in Pine Lake. Announcements of all discussions at City Council meetings and work sessions (2 per month), Town Hall meetings, and special comprehensive plan information meetings, public hearing, and workshops will appear in PLAIN Talk. This will be supplemented with announcements on the city website <http://www.pinelakega.com> and various email lists and electronic discussion forums. Public hearings will be announced, as required by law, in the city's legal organ, *The Champion*.

All City Council members' phone number and email addresses are published in the newsletter so that citizens can raise their concerns at any time.

Meetings will be held in either the Clubhouse or Beachhouse, both of which are centrally located and conducive to participatory meetings. They will be divided evenly between Saturday mornings and weekday evenings, a well-established city tradition.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

Apart from the 2 required public hearings:

Kick-off public information meeting, Nov. 2005

- Overview of process
- Comment cards
- Sign-up forms

Website Information:

The City has an official website to post these documents, news and events related to this process.

- Timeline
- Community Assessment and associated documents
- Details of participation opportunities
- Summaries of public input

Meetings:

Within Pine Lake, we typically draw up to 40 people and utilize these resources to present information and facilitate discussion.

- Exhibits
- Presentations
- Visual preference surveys
- Brainstorming

Council members and City Officials participate in email discussions on the PLAIN (Pine Lake Association of Involved Neighbors) sponsored forum.

Stakeholder meetings

Some outside stakeholders are unlikely to attend community meetings located in Pine Lake. City officials and task force members will communicate separately with those stakeholders and hold meetings in locations more accessible to those people.

Workshops

Three specific workshops are planned and will be supported by interim activities:

Workshop Number One: Presentation of Community Assessment and Identification of Top Priorities

Tools: Power Point, handouts, maps, exhibits, flip charts, input cards

Workshop Number Two: Community Visioning

Presentation of previous discussions
Brainstorming
Draft outline

Workshop Number Three: Achieving the Vision

Presentation and validation of visioning from previous workshops
Identification of general strategies to achieve goals

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING TOPICS

2004 Quarterly Town Hall meetings – topics from previous plan

February: Stormwater, lake and greenspace

May: Character areas – residential area

Sept.: Use of public areas including lake and greenspace

Nov: Public services; annexation; policing

2005 Quarterly Town Hall meetings – topics from previous plan

February: Mixed use and commercial zoning

May: Traffic

September: Lake & stormwater

November: Stormwater; overview of update for comprehensive plan

2006 Quarterly Town Hall Meetings

March 4: Comprehensive Plan

May 18: Comprehensive Plan

August 10: Topic to be determined

November 4: Topic to be determined

2006 Town Forums Following Council Work Sessions Schedule of Topics

January: Community Visioning

March: Stormwater

April: Comprehensive Plan and Light Commerce

May: Finances

June: Park rules and recreation planning

July: Heavy commerce and identity stamping

August: Sanitation, streets and lighting

September: Schools

October: Public buildings

November: Future budgets

Schedule and milestones - 2006

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.
Submit draft community assessment & participation plan to public			■							
Community workshops			■							
Public hearing # 1; Council vote to transmit community assessment to ARC/DCA					■ ■					
C.A. & P.P. review period						■				
Revisions to participation plan & C.A.							■			
Refine community opportunities & issues							■			
Visioning & priority setting workshops							■ ■	■		
Develop future development map & narrative								■		
Develop implementation plan									■	
Develop short term work program									■	
Public comment workshop									■	
2 nd Public hearing; council vote to transmit community assessment to ARC/DCA										■
Community agenda review period										■
Community agenda revision period										■
City Council vote to adopt plan										■