



Community Participation Plan



**Comprehensive Master Plan
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City of Cartersville, Georgia**



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Community Participation Program

■ Introduction

In order for a jurisdiction to maintain their Qualified Local Government status (that is, to remain eligible for a wide range of State grants, assistance and permitting programs), a Comprehensive Plan must be updated from time-to-time—in the case of Cartersville, by the end of June 2007. This current update is characterized by the State as the ‘tenth-year update,’ which, because of the significant changes that have occurred in Cartersville over the past decade, coupled with the adoption of new planning standards by the State, requires a complete reevaluation, reorganization and rewrite of the Plan elements.

The picture of tomorrow should be approached holistically, imaginatively, and innovatively. This picture lays our foundation, while and provides a blueprint to achieve our vision

Planning requirements for the preparation and adoption of Comprehensive Plans are adopted by the State’s Board of Community Affairs pursuant to the Georgia Planning Act, and administered and supplemented by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). The most recently applicable planning standards took effect May 1, 2005. These new standards have reorganized the plan into three parts: The Community Participation Program, the Community Assessment, and the Community Agenda.

The first part of the comprehensive plan is an adopted Community Participation Program. The Community Participation Program describes the strategy for ensuring adequate public and stakeholder involvement in the preparation of the Community Agenda portion of the plan.

The Community Participation Program forms the underlying foundation of the Comprehensive Plan through the development of a community-based vision and the creation of guiding principles. The formation of goals, objectives, policies and strategies within the framework of the guiding principles will be developed through the planning process to achieve this vision within the Plan. Effective citizen involvement in a comprehensive plan can be achieved through the efforts of a dedicated group of citizens and staff, and informative outreach to the public at large. Because the Plan deals with long-range issues, it will be important for the process to be productive, thought provoking, and interesting to maintain the involvement of a diverse citizenry. The citizens must

Create a Comprehensive Vision that holistically includes all essential components and coordinates them into a document that provides concrete direction in the future. The Vision will provide guidance through specific goals, strategies and implementation measures to achieve this Vision.

feel that their participation is making a difference and is a good use of their time in order to keep them active throughout the process.

■ Public Participation History

Over the last decade, Cartersville has had an extensive history with on going public participation in all of their planning work. The public has been actively involved in the creation of the City's Historic Districts and the Ordinance that regulates them; during the interim update to its Comprehensive Plan, a 2002 Land Use Plan Amendment; with its many housing programs, such as the Community Home Investment (CHIP) program, the Georgia Initiative for Community Housing and Project Neighborhood; as part of the Countywide Strategic Plan and the preliminary visions that were developed; and as active participations in two community-wide citizen surveys have been completed to gauge the issues relevant and important to residents. Following this spirit, Visioning Subcommittees were organized by the City Council to advise and create a vision for governmental, services and quality of life aspects of the City. The Comprehensive Plan Community Participation Plan will build on these past efforts and continue the spirit of inclusiveness that the City embraces.

■ Process and Expectations

The community participation process is seen as an interactive and fluid process that is circular in nature. This process will all lead up to the development of a holistic Comprehensive Plan for the City of Cartersville. Information, comments and desires will be collected from the public, council, and staff. Visioning subcommittees and the Stakeholder Committee will offer recommendations and advisory comments. Public input will serve as the basis of the City's future development plan map and implementation policies and programs over the next 20 years. Product expectation is as follows:

- Refine the current City Vision: "Cartersville is...A progressive, attractive community providing opportunity to work, learn, live and play in connection with one another."
- Develop individual components (economic, recreation, etc.) to be added to the citywide vision, i.e., this vision means...;
- Outline issues relating to each individual element and the City as a whole;
- Create guiding principals that will provide the roadmap for all plan policies, strategies and implementation specifics;
- Look at best and innovative processes, projects and examples to apply to the City of Cartersville; and
- Develop concrete objectives and implementation actions to achieve the citywide Vision.

Three objectives are important in a Community Participation Program:

- The process must promote legitimate opportunities for the public to be actively involved in shaping the Comprehensive Plan;
- The process should be designed to build community consensus and ownership in the Comprehensive Plan, so it is not perceived as a Plan written by a few people in a closed process; and
- The process must also provide information to people who are interested in knowing what is going on, but choose not to actively participate.

In order to accomplish these objectives, the citizen involvement effort will be continuous throughout the planning process. The City recognizes the importance of using a public participation process as a way to build consensus in the Plan and in building a constituency for the Comprehensive Plan. There will be many times over the years when the Plan will be tested and attempts will be made to deviate from, or ignore, the Plan. It will be difficult for elected officials to maintain the integrity of a Plan unless there is a constituency that will help to defend it.

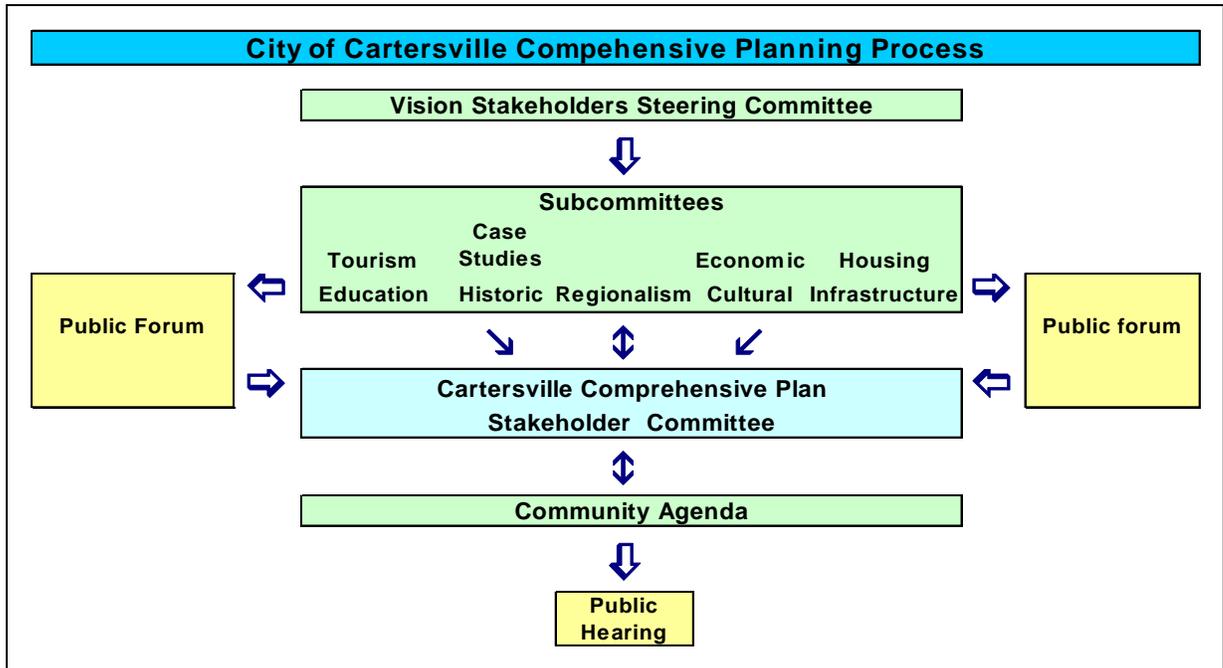
■ Elements of the Program

The Community Participation Program establishes a deliberative approach in which all interested parties, as well as the general public, will be fully involved through a series of public participation opportunities resulting in adoption of the Community Agenda – the “Plan” portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

In a nutshell, the public participation effort includes the following:

- Conduct Vision Subcommittee meetings from April to September 2006.
- Form a Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder’s Committee. Target: October 2006.
- Hold the first of two required DCA public hearings as the kick-off to the planning process. This meeting will be advertised on the Web, and the media will be notified. Target: October 2006
- A Public Forum to gather input from the public at large on issues, vision and land use patterns. Target: January 2006.
- A series of four Council Workshops to review issues, policy and milestones in the planning process. These workshops will be held between May 2006 and June 2007.
- A series of four topic-related workshops with the Stakeholders’ Committee to review the Plan in detail, resolve problems and identify policy issues requiring direction from the Council. These stakeholder meetings will be held between October 2006 and February 2007.
- Release of the Community Agenda Public Review Draft and posting to the website for general public review and comment April 2007.

- A second public forum for review of the draft Community Agenda. Target: May 2007.
- Hold a legally advertised Public Hearing to transmit the final Draft Community Agenda to CVRDC/DCA for review. This public hearing will be held in June 2007.



■ Detailed Community Participation Program

Citywide Kick-Off Meeting (First Required Public Hearing)

A Kickoff Meeting will be held in October 2006 at the beginning of the Planning Process to “unveil” the Draft Community Assessment and the Comprehensive Planning Process. This public hearing will be legally advertised. This meeting is intended primarily to inform the public about the process, share highlights of the Community Assessment and outline the public participation opportunities. This meeting will be structured to be educational and informational. This meeting will serve to forward the Draft Community Assessment to the CVRDC/DCA for review.

Vision Subcommittees

Nine Subcommittees have been set up as the first step in the community participation plan. The Vision Subcommittees will initially meet to discuss expectations and schedules in May, and conduct meetings over the summer to revise their recommendations, outline best practices and pinpoint issues. These committees will present their recommendations to City Council in September. After review and acceptance by City Council, these recommendations will be passed on to the Stakeholder’s Committee to be reviewed on a citywide basis and to be refined.

Stakeholders’ Committee

The new DCA standards require the development of a Vision and Guiding Principles that form the basis for each plan element, land use patterns and eventually concrete goals, objectives and policies to implement the Plan. To accomplish this efficiently and effectively, a Stakeholders Committee will be formed, consisting of a cross section of residents, businesses, and other interests. A stakeholder group of various interest groups from the city will be appointed by the City Council to form the backbone of the public involvement process. This Committee will be all-inclusive with regard to groups—both organized and in general—that have an interest in the future development of City.

The purpose of the Stakeholders Committee will be to assist in the preparation of the Draft Community Agenda through their collective and individual concerns and issues, and to make recommendations to the City Council for final decisions and direction.

Identification of Stakeholders

The Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder’s Committee will be formed with two representatives from the visioning subcommittees, in addition to other essential persons to represent the diverse interests within the City.

A list of potential representation on this committee for appointment could include:

- Residents—resident participants will be chosen from established residential neighborhood organizations, and from areas that are newly developing. Residential selection will include both new and long-term residents.
- Business Community—business participation may include long-term business residents and newcomers. Small businesses, newly developing busi-

Stakeholders

- General Public/Citizens
- Homeowner Associations
- Planning Commissions
- Board of Education
- Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations
- Developers

ness, and established businesses should be represented. The Chamber of Commerce will be specifically represented.

- Development and Investment Community—a subcategory of the business community is the development and investment community that is actively working in Cartersville. This group may include commercial developers, residential developers, homebuilders, real estate agents and brokers, and banking.
- Special Interests—this group includes special interest representation in such areas as the environment, historic preservation, the Board of Education, and public infrastructure development. This group also includes representation from the planning commission.

Four meetings will be held during this process as follows:

- October, 2006—Initial start up meeting to focus on organization, goals & objectives, development of a vision statement and concentration on issues, strengths and weaknesses of the community, and a review of the Community Assessment demographics and related issues.
- November 2006—Review Community Assessment natural, historic and infrastructure issues.
- December 2006—Review guiding principles, policies and initial character areas.
- February 2006--Review implementation strategies and land use patterns, visions and character areas; wrap up and development of final recommendations.

Although primary activities will specifically involve the Stakeholder Committee, all meetings will be advertised on the web site and open to the general public.

Meeting results will be documented and presented to City Council by staff at regularly scheduled public briefings.

Council Workshops

Workshops will be scheduled at key planning milestones to review and discuss input from the Stakeholders Committee meetings and the Public Forums.

- May 2006—workshop to review CCP and initial character areas.
- September 2006—Organizational meeting of the elected officials to discuss Goals & Objectives, available data, and existing plans and to organize the Stakeholder Committee, finalize the CPP, and review the draft Community Assessment.
- March 2007—Workshop to review final stakeholder committee recommendations, land development strategies and implementation measures, and Future Development Map.

- June 2007—Workshop to review public forum comments, STWP and final Community Agenda.

Public Forums

There will be two public forums to assist in the development of the Community Agenda. These meetings will focus on both citywide and local land use issues. These meetings will be open to anyone who wishes to attend. Unlike the kick-off public hearing, which is intended to educate and inform these workshops are intended to solicit input in a structured manner.

The purpose of the first public forum will be to inform citizens of the current progress, of the findings of the initial Community Assessment and estimated land demand, and to solicit input on the critical issues facing the City. Comments will be received in oral and written form. This meeting will be held in January.

The second Public Forum will be to present the Draft Community Agenda. This meeting will be conducted in an educational format and input will be solicited through a question and answer session at the end of the presentation. Comments will be received in oral and written form. The primary objective will be to give the citizens an opportunity to comment on specific issues in the draft before it is submitted to the local officials and regional development center. This meeting will be held in May.

Citywide Second Public Hearing

The Second Public Hearing will be held in June of 2007, prior to transmittal of the Final Draft Community Agenda to the RDC and DCA for review. This public hearing will be legally advertised and communicated on the web site. This meeting will begin with a brief presentation of the results of the planning process, major issues facing the City and a summary of the Future Development Plan Map. The purpose of the public hearing is to receive comments from citizens and to discuss any final changes with the elected officials at the meeting. Following this meeting, and the addition of public comments, the City Council will adopt a Resolution authorizing the transmission of the Community Agenda for state review.

■ Other Public Involvement Opportunities

The City will strive to utilize other public advertising opportunities to keep the general public informed during this process, and to involve as many citizens in the process as possible. This may include having press coverage at City Council and/or Stakeholder Committee Meeting, utilizing the City's web sites to include meeting dates and document information, as it is available, utility mail outs and the development of a citywide email blast list for interested parties and past committee members.

Internet Access

The Cartersville web page will be continually updated throughout the planning process. All documents distributed at meetings and community events will be included on the web page, including such items as draft maps, the planning process, schedules, frequently asked questions, related links and an interactive page where the public would have an opportunity to provide comments and suggestions.

Create a comprehensive and inclusive community participation plan that will manifest the heart of a true Community written plan.

■ **Conclusion**

This effort is intended to provide opportunities for the citizens of Cartersville to participate meaningfully in the development of the update to the Comprehensive Plan. As the process unfolds, the process will be reviewed periodically and revisions may be made to assure that this intent is realized.

■ **Schedule**

Following is a milestone schedule of how we proposed to proceed with this plan:

Community Participation Plan City of Cartersville		
Month	Meeting Type	Expected Outcome
April	Visioning Steering Committee Organization and Formation	Appoint individuals to Committees
May	Subcommittees--Assessment	Revise and Add to Issues, tweak city vision
	City Council Workshop--issues, Guiding Principals, Character Areas	Final List of Preliminary Character Areas and Preliminary Issues
June	Subcommittees--issues and examples	
July	Subcommittees--issues and examples	
August	Subcommittees--finalize vision	
September	PH--appoint CP Stakeholders Committee, Transmit Assessment	Formalize CSC, transmit Assessment
	Subcommittee--Presentation to City Council	Preliminary Vision Statements
	Council Workshop--review committee recommendations,	Resolution for Transmittal; Final Vision Statements
October	CSC--Community Assessment (deomographics, SC work, and preliminary issues	Citywide Vision Statement, Preliminary Issues, GP
November	CSC--Review housing, natural and historic resources, infrastructure issues	Final Issue List
December	CSC-Ecomonic Development & Land Use Issues, Character areas	Initial Community Agenda Draft
January	Public Forum #1	Initial General Public Comments
February	CSC--FDM, Implementation and Wrap Up	Draft Community Agenda
March	Council Workshop-CSC Recommendations	Finalize Draft
April	Public Review Draft Released	General Public Comments
May	Public Forum #2	Final General Public Comments
June	Council Workshop--Final Draft Community Agenda	Final Community Agenda
	PH for transmittal of Community Agenda	