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# Carroll County, Georgia

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## Public Participation Program

2008 Update prepared by:

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<b>Carroll County Department of Community Development</b>	<b>University of West Georgia</b>
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from the 2005 Update prepared by:

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## ***I. Purpose***

The purpose of this document, the Public Participation Program, is to ensure that Carroll County’s Comprehensive Plan accurately reflects the community’s vision for the future. This is accomplished by identifying those members of the public that have a vested interest in the proposals of the plan and by specifying the techniques that will be used to reach those people, as well as the public at large.

Public input is vital to a successful plan, as it is ultimately a reflection of the people’s vision for their community. It is important, therefore, to understand that a successful public participation program will not be measured merely by the fact that the public has been informed about the comprehensive planning process but, more importantly, by the evident contribution of the public to a workable plan that represents a large portion of the population.

## ***II. History of Public Participation – 2005 Update<sup>1</sup>***

Planning has been an ongoing process in Carroll County. This Plan update began after Carroll Tomorrow identified the need to plan for the rapid growth being experienced within the County. Both Carroll Tomorrow and the County’s planning staff conducted numerous workshops and background analyses that produced information used in the Plan.

The development of the Plan included a multifaceted citizen participation process that employed a number of public input techniques. Public workshops, focus groups, interviews, a broad-based Coordinated Planning Committee (CPC) and public hearings provided various avenues for gathering information from a broad range of stakeholder groups in the County. The following public participation events solicited public input:

### **A. Public Hearings & Workshops**

The County conducted a series of public hearings and informal public workshops to provide public education, as well as opportunities for comment and discussion of planning issues, alternative strategies to address those issues, alternative growth patterns, and the draft Plan. Each of these workshops provided a broad range of stakeholders with opportunities to discuss their concerns and voice their opinions about the County’s future. Comments generated through the workshops reflected the fundamental values of County residents and shaped the plan’s goals, objectives and policies.

### **B. Focus Group Interviews**

In January 2002, the County conducted a series of focus group discussions with representatives of the economic development and business community, farm and ranch owners and operators, developers, builders, environmental groups, city

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<sup>1</sup> The text in the section, “History of Public Participation – 2005 Update” was taken verbatim from the *Carroll County, Georgia Comprehensive Plan Update*, Chapters 1, prepared by Michael Lauer, Planning Works, adopted in October, 2005.



representatives, and public service providers. These focus groups provided valuable background information on the strengths and weaknesses of existing public policies, defined many of the issues that needed to be addressed by the Plan and provided initial feedback on potential strategies to address those issues. Subsequent meetings were conducted with each these interest groups to keep them abreast of the planning process.

**C. Coordinated Planning Committee Meetings**

The Coordinated Planning Committee (“CPC”) included representatives from a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups selected for their knowledge of the issues. The CPC was charged with debating policy issues and making recommendations to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The CPC’s work was initiated in March of 2002, in a joint meeting with the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission. The CPC met throughout 2002 and the spring of 2003 to select a preferred growth scenario that is defined by the policies and maps in this Plan. The CPC forwarded a recommended draft plan to the Planning Commission to initiate the public review process early in 2004.

**D. Adoption**

The County conducted several public hearings prior to adoption of the plan. The initial public hearings, conducted in April, 2002, were held prior to the development of the plan to inform the public about the purpose of the plan and the process to be followed in the preparation of the plan, as well as to elicit community input on needs and goals. To attract the participation of as broad a cross-section of the public as possible, the County exceeded the notification requirements for public hearings. After development of the plan and final recommendations from the Committee, the County deferred action until additional transportation information could be provided by the Georgia Department of Transportation. Other information related to greenway planning was also added to the draft plan. In the autumn of 2004, the Planning and Zoning Commission (October 18 & 19, 2004) and the Board of Commissioners (November 16, 2004) held Comprehensive Plan public hearings to solicit final comments prior to plan adoption.

**E. Comprehensive List of Meetings**

**2002**

April 8, 2002	Initial Public Hearing in Carrollton
April 11, 2002	Initial Public Hearing in Sand Hill
April 11, 2002	Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting
May 2, 2002	Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting
June 6, 2002	Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting
June 19, 2002	Community Workshop in Whitesburg (unattended)
June 24, 2002	Community Workshop in Bowdon
June 26, 2002	Community Workshop in Mt. Zion
July 9, 2002	Rotary Club
July 10, 2002	Friends of McIntosh/Sierra Club
July 10, 2002	Community Workshop in Temple



July 11, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
August 1, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
August 15, 2002 School Board  
August 15, 2002 Optimist Club  
August 15, 2002 Farmland Preservation Group  
September 10, 2002 Agriculture Community  
September 20, 2002 Chamber of Commerce  
September 26, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
October 3, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
November 13, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
December 5, 2002 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting

**2003**

January 9, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
February 6, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
March 18, 2003 BOC Work Session  
March 19, 2003 Home Builders Association  
March 20, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
April 16, 2003 Joint Meeting with Water Authority and BOC  
April 17, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
May 14, 2003 Joint session with Coordinated Planning Committee, BOC & P&Z  
June 23, 2003 Community Workshop in Carrollton  
June 24, 2003 Planning Commission Work Session  
June 24, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
July 22, 2003 Planning Commission Business Session  
July 22, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
August 11, 2003 Joint Meeting with BOC and School Board  
August 12, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
November 12, 2003 Carrollton  
November 13, 2003 Environmental Projects Committee Forum  
December 4, 2003 Coordinated Planning Committee Meeting  
December 4, 2003 School Board

**2004**

May 25, 2004 League of Women Voters  
October 11, 2004 Planning Commission Work Session  
October 18, 2004 Public Hearing in Carrollton  
October 19, 2004 Public Hearing in Villa Rica  
November 8, 2004 Planning Commission Work Session  
November 16, 2004 BOC Public Hearing/Work Session



### *III. Public Participation Strategy – 2008 Update*

#### **A. Stakeholders**

Carroll County has identified the following list of stakeholders that shall be invited to participate in its Comprehensive Plan Update.

- American Association of Retired Persons
- Board of Realtors
- Carroll County 4-H
- Carroll County Commissioners
- Carroll County Farm Bureau
- Carroll County Historical Society
- Carroll County Housing Authority
- Carroll County School Board
- Carroll Tomorrow
- Chamber of Commerce
- Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center
- Community Action for Improvement
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- County Department Officials (including Sheriff, Fire and EMA, Community Development, and Tax Assessor)
- Elected City Officials
- Farmer's Co-Operatives
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Regional Transport Authority
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home Builder's Association
- Homeowner's Associations, such as: Fairfield Plantation, Oak Grove, and Hickory Level
- Local Churches
- Local Civic Organizations
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- Perpetual Motion Cycling
- Sons/Daughters of the Confederacy
- Tanner Health System
- Temple Inland
- University of West Georgia
- West Central Technical College
- West Georgia Regional Airport

#### **B. Participation Techniques**

There are four general types of public participation techniques per DCA's State Planning Recommendations: informative, public input, interactive, and partnerships. Many different and specific techniques can be identified under each



category. This section highlights those that will be most effective for Carroll County during its planning process.

**1. Informative**

- **Kick-off Public Information Hearing**  
The County held its kick-off meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008. At this meeting the Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the public were informed of the purpose, schedule, and activities that would be undertaken as part of the comprehensive planning process.
- **Slogan**  
A slogan will allow the comprehensive planning process to be more relatable to the public. The effective use of a “catchy” slogan will help citizens identify opportunities to participate and will make the process, as well as the plan, memorable. The slogan should consistently be used with any public mention of the Comprehensive Plan or the planning process, and it should be widely broadcasted throughout the County. The County will pursue the development of a slogan during its Comprehensive Plan update.
- **Website- Information Only**  
The County will create a web page on its website that will be dedicated to the planning process. Information will include schedules, announcements, potential goals and objectives, initial recommendations, and maps. This information will be updated until the Comprehensive Plan has been adopted.
- **Press Releases**  
Building on its relationship with the Times-Georgian and the Carroll Star, the County will provide the local newspapers with timely information about significant events and public meeting notices.
- **Media Strategies**  
Using the Times-Georgian, Carroll Star and local radio stations, WUWG 90.7 FM, WLBB 1330 AM and WBTR 92.1 FM, the County will to disseminate information in a very effective way through printed advertisements, public announcements, and other relative means.

**2. Public Input**

- **Public Hearings**  
Multiple public hearings will be held, as required by State law. Specifically, hearings will be held for each section of the Comprehensive Plan before it is transmitted to the RDC and DCA for review and approval.
- **Website Response Capability (email)**  
The ability to email staff who are working on the Comprehensive Plan will be easily recognizable on the County’s website. Preferably, a web page (mentioned above) dedicated to the planning process will provide this capability.



- Surveys  
A survey will be of invaluable assistance to the planning process. The County will work with the University of West Georgia's Department of Sociology and Criminology to prepare a telephone survey for the Comprehensive Plan Update.

**3. *Interactive***

- Email Blasts  
Periodically, the County will send mass mailings by email for the purpose of providing important notices, valuable information, and reminders about upcoming Community Workshops. The list for the email blasts will be compiled by staff using contact information they already have, by obtaining contact information from identified stakeholders, and by encouraging attendees of public hearings and community workshops to provide their email addresses.
- Community Workshops  
There are four planned community workshops. These meetings may be the crux of the County's public outreach efforts. The meetings will allow the public to meet with staff for the sole purpose of discussing the Comprehensive Plan and what it should seek to accomplish. These workshops should have qualities of charrettes and community preference meetings. Charrettes are highly interactive meetings that allow the public to work in groups and create designs for their community. Community preference meetings allow the public to compare visual images and choose those that they find favorable. These visual images include housing, streetscapes, commercial areas, and other aesthetic elements of the communities.

**4. *Partnerships***

- Stakeholder Interviews  
Interviewing stakeholders will allow the County staff to gather more detailed information about the area of expertise that a specific stakeholder represents.

**C. *Schedule***

- The following schedule is supplied to provide the public with insight into the intricacies of the comprehensive planning process, as well as an understanding into the length of the process.  
P&Z- refers to the Carroll County Planning and Zoning Commission  
BOC- refers to the Carroll County Board of Commissioners  
RDC- refers to the Chattahoochee-Flint Regional Development Center, a regional State agency offering several services (including assistance with comprehensive planning) to local governments
- The dates provided for Community Workshops are subject to change. Proper notification will be provided to the public should a change occur.
- If an event/activity has a precise date, it is specified under the month it will take place. Otherwise, timing is provided in general months.

**Public Participation Plan**  
**Carroll County, Georgia – Comprehensive Plan Update**



Event/ Activity	Dates (2008)											
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
<b>Phase I</b>												
Preparation of Assessment & Participation Program												
Kick-Off Meeting		15th										
Update P&Z Concerning Planning Process		22nd										
Meet with P&Z to discuss Character Areas			26th									
Public Hearing on Assessment & Participation Program				27th								
P&Z Meeting for Recommendation of Transmittal to BOC					14th							
BOC Approval of Transmittal of Community Assessment and Participation Program to RDC					15th							
Transmittal to RDC for Completeness Review					16th							
If Complete, 30 Day Review												
Notification from RDC to Proceed with Agenda						21st						
	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
<b>Phase II</b>												
Preparation of Agenda												
Bowdon Workshop							2nd					
Temple Workshop							5th					
Sand Hill Workshop							9th					
Whitesburg Workshop							10th					
Other Participation Techniques (identified in Participation Program)												
BOC and P&Z Receive Draft Plan							17th					
Public Hearing on Agenda							19th					
P&Z Meeting for Recommendation of Transmittal of Agenda to BOC							24th					
BOC Approval of Transmittal of Agenda to RDC & DCA								1st				
Transmittal to RDC for Completeness Review								2nd				
If Complete, 60-120 Day Review												
Notification from RDC & DCA to Adopt Plan										23rd		22nd
Adoption of Comprehensive Plan	BOC will adopt plan at next meeting following notification from RDC and DCA to adopt											
Notification to RDC & DCA of Adoption	County must notify RDC and DCA of adoption within 7 days of adoption											